

Moving Censorship: Transnational Performances of Banned Irish Plays, 1957–63

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University of Pittsburgh, 2021

In 1958, the archbishop of Dublin protested against the inclusion of a new play by Seán O’Casey and a dramatic adaptation of James Joyce’s novel *Ulysses* in that year’s Dublin International Theatre Festival. When news of the archbishop’s protest broke, pressure mounted for Festival organizers to expel the plays. After O’Casey withdrew his play and Festival organizers dropped the Joyce adaptation, Samuel Beckett, whose mime plays were also slated for the Festival, withdrew his contributions in solidarity. Deprived of their headliners, the organizers ultimately cancelled that year’s Festival. The plays didn’t vanish with their de-facto censorship, however. Instead, censorship swayed how artists performed these plays and audiences interpreted them.

In this dissertation, I argue that censorship moves and that attending to censorship’s mobility in the performances of these plays uncovers transnational Irish performance’s deep entanglement with local and national cultural and political formulations in the mid-twentieth century. Ireland’s unique experience of modernity ensured that Irish censorship’s political and cultural effect of cultivating identities, discourses, and histories and constellating the relationships between them continued beyond the Republic’s borders through Irish theatrical performances as they moved. This is to say that this dissertation discloses how transnational Irish cultural performances acted like censors, themselves, within the particular circumstances of their local productions, shaping and influencing both performance and reception. I also develop a methodology for studying censorship’s mobility. After first analyzing the historical conditions

that enabled censorship to move from the collapse of the 1958 Dublin International Theatre Festival, each subsequent chapter offers a case study in a different way censorship moves through performances – specifically those that were slated to appear at the 1958 Festival. Using a microhistorical approach to scrutinize the performances, I question how they and the censorious effects I study dialogued with local, national, and transnational issues like communism, gender and sexuality, Holocaust memory, and perceptions of Ireland and the Irish. Ultimately, analyzing mobile censorship in the performances of these plays reveals how transnational Irish cultural production worked to entrench hegemonic ideologies or stifle progressive politics even as the productions sometimes laid claim to progress, freedom, or universal humanity.

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List of Abbreviations

AdK - Akademie der Künste

AWWI – Act Without Words I

AWWII – Act Without Words II

BBC – British Broadcasting Corporation

BL – British Library

BNF - Bibliothèque nationale de France

DDA – Dublin Diocesan Archives

DITF – Dublin International Theatre Festival

DT - Deutsches Theatermuseum

FRG – Federal Republic of Germany

HUAC – House Un-American Activities Committee

LLT – Lafayette Little Theatre

LCP – The Lord Chamberlain’s Plays

LCP CORR – The Lord Chamberlain’s Plays Correspondence

MP – McQuaid Papers

NAI/DFA – National Archives of Ireland, Department of Foreign Affairs

NLI – National Library of Ireland

PTP – Pike Theatre Papers

SOCP – Seán O’Casey Papers

SS – *Schutzstaffel* (Nazi paramilitary organization)

TCD – Trinity College Dublin

Preface

I completed this dissertation while I lived and worked in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on the ancestral lands of the Haudenosaunee, Lenape, Shawandasse Tula, and Osage peoples, among others. I respectfully acknowledge that the land upon which I have lived and worked is the seized land of these and other peoples. I honor with gratitude the land itself and the peoples who have stewarded it – past and present.

I've been extremely fortunate to receive generous funding for my research from several sources. A Klinzing Pre-Dissertation Grant from Pitt's European Studies Center and a Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences Summer Fellowship enabled me to travel to Europe in 2018 to conduct archival research. I also received a second Arts and Sciences Summer Fellowship that allowed me to fund the digitalization of archival materials I wouldn't have been able to study otherwise because of the global COVID-19 pandemic, and to commission the translation of German-language archival documents into English. Finally, I was awarded an Andrew W. Mellon Predoctoral Fellowship for the 2020–21 academic year, which provided me with a year of financial support to focus on my research and writing. My thanks to all.

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A number of people allowed me to interview them for this project, including: cast members from the world premiere production of *The Drums of Father Ned*, Richard "Dick" Jaeger and Nicholas Bielenberg; Jessica Orr Ulery, whose grandmother was co-director of that same production; and Fergus McClelland, the son of playwright Allan McClelland who wrote *Bloomsday*. Your insights and memories were invaluable to my research and I hope that recording them in this dissertation helps preserve them for future scholars. Thanks, too, to Steven Koehler, then Producing Artistic Director of the Civic Theater of Greater Lafayette, for sending me scans of documents from their archives when I first started researching this topic.

Thanks to the rest of the faculty and staff in Pitt's Department of Theatre Arts for your support, answers to emails, office treats, and elevator conversations. I'd also like to thank

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1.0 Introduction: Transnational Irish Performance and Moving Censorship

In the last days of 1957 and into 1958, the archbishop of Dublin protested against the inclusion of a new play by Seán O’Casey and a dramatic adaptation of James Joyce’s novel *Ulysses* (1922) in the coming Dublin International Theatre Festival. Only in the second year of its life, the Festival was a remarkable success in 1957, showcasing Dublin’s local theatrical talent and importing top-notch foreign productions from Europe.¹ The Dublin International Theatre Festival was itself part of a larger, nation-wide festival called An Tóstal. Bord Fáilte Éireann, the state Tourism Board, established An Tóstal in 1953 in order to boost Ireland’s poor economy by extending the summer tourist season into spring. An Tóstal also aimed to cultivate and project a specific image of Ireland to both its own citizens and the world beyond Éire’s shores that centered Ireland’s traditional Gaelic character.² Every year of An Tóstal’s existence, His Grace, the Reverend Dr. John Charles McQuaid, archbishop of Dublin and primate of Ireland, gave permission for or presided over a mass to inaugurate Dublin’s Tóstal. Although Archbishop McQuaid initially approved the Dublin Tóstal Council’s regular, annual request for a Tóstal mass, he retracted his consent after the Council confirmed his inquiry asking whether it was true that the coming Theatre Festival would include Joyce and O’Casey.³

¹ Patrick Lonergan, “‘Feast and Celebration’: The Theatre Festival and Modern Irish Theatre,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Irish Theatre*, eds. Nicholas Grene and Chris Morash (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 641–6.

² Eric G. E. Zuelow, *Making Ireland Irish: Tourism and National Identity Since the Irish Civil War* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2009), 67–71, 124–35.

³ John Charles McQuaid, *His Grace is Displeased: Selected Correspondence of John Charles McQuaid*, eds. Clara Cullen and Margaret Ó hÓgartaigh (Dublin: Merrion/Irish Academic Press, 2013), 233–5.

In the weeks that followed, confusion and indecision plagued the Dublin Tóstal Council over how to handle the cleric's protest. In the overwhelmingly Catholic Republic of Ireland, Archbishop McQuaid held enormous sway over public, civil, and cultural life. After the press reported on McQuaid's actions, pressure mounted, urging the Dublin Tóstal Council to drop the two plays from the program. Ultimately, O'Casey, himself, withdrew his new comedy, *The Drums of Father Ned* (1959) after producers tried to coerce the author into granting them permission to make "alterations" to his script as they saw fit. O'Casey came to believe that McQuaid's furor over his inclusion frightened the producers so much that they decided to demand he hand over creative license to his script, an ultimatum to which they knew he would never acquiesce. To O'Casey, the producers' unreasonable request was a way out of the scandal that also let themselves off the hook by appearing to give O'Casey a choice.⁴ Shortly thereafter, Bord Fáilte accused the Dublin Tóstal Council of violating the terms of their funding by causing and failing to handle a public scandal and threatened to defund them if they didn't put an end to it by dropping Allan McClelland's dramatic version of *Ulysses* – called *Bloomsday* (1958). The Council dutifully dumped the play.⁵ Samuel Beckett, whose mime plays were also slated for the Theatre Festival, then withdrew his offerings in solidarity with his peer, O'Casey, and one-time mentor, Joyce.⁶ Deprived of their headliners, the Dublin Tóstal Council announced the Theatre Festival's postponement. They would later cancel it altogether.⁷

⁴ Christopher Murray, *Seán O'Casey: Writer at Work: A Biography* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004), 387–404.

⁵ "Memorandum on the Circumstances Leading to the Postponement of the Dublin Theatre Festival, 1958," Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), National Archives of Ireland (NAI), NAI/DFA/10/2/342; "Stage Version of 'Ulysses' Dropped," *Irish Times*, February 15, 1958, 1.

⁶ James Knowlson, *Damned to Fame: The Life of Samuel Beckett* (New York: Grove Press, 1996), 401–2.

⁷ "Theatre Festival 'Postponed,'" *Irish Times*, February 19, 1958; "No Theatre Festival This Year," *Evening Herald* (Dublin), April 19, 1958.

The Council and public correctly took Archbishop McQuaid's refusal to perform a mass in connection with that year's Tóstal as a condemnation of Joyce and O'Casey, even though he never publicly said as much. Everyone connected the dots for themselves. Neither would the high churchman explain what he found objectionable in the particular or in general about *Bloomsday* or *The Drums of Father Ned*, Joyce or O'Casey. Indeed, the chances that McQuaid ever read either play are virtually zero. Rather, McQuaid decided to boycott An Tóstal on the basis of Joyce and O'Casey's reputations. In the archbishop's massive archive of papers collected across his nearly five decades in the priesthood are press clippings and letters with associates that offer clues about why he felt it necessary to distance the Church from An Tóstal.

To many Catholics, Joyce and his writing were obscene, deviant, and blasphemous, a mass of slander against faith and fatherland. O'Casey, on the other hand, was a known communist. As was the case elsewhere in the western world, many Irish and especially Catholics associated communism with forced atheism, Godlessness, and immorality thanks to the state atheism practiced in the Soviet Union and other communist states. Further, many interpreted his recent plays *Cock-a-Doodle-Andy* (1949) and *The Bishop's Bonfire* (1955) as anticlerical and irreligious.⁸ McQuaid sought to distance the Church from art that he considered incompatible with Catholic values. He likely also hoped that his opposition would stop the plays from performing at all, which would exhibit and make manifest the close linkage between Catholic

⁸ See for example, Colm Brogan, "Ulysses," unknown newspaper, date unknown, McQuaid Papers (MP), Dublin Diocesan Archives (DDA), DDA/AB8/XXV/54/25; "City Council to Debate Two Tostal [*sic*] Plays," unknown newspaper, date unknown, MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/54/22; "Not Fair," *Evening Mail* (Dublin), February 20, 1958, MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/54/13; Alfred O'Rahilly, "An Tostal [*sic*] and the Archbishop of Dublin," *Standard*, February 28, 1958, 1 and 7, MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/54/18; Alfred O'Rahilly, "The Archbishop of Dublin and An Tostal [*sic*]," unknown publisher, date unknown, MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/54/17; "Sean O'Casey Play Ban," unknown newspaper, date unknown, MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/54/26. On the scandal of *The Bishop's Bonfire*, see Joan FitzPatrick Dean, *Riot and Great Anger: Stage Censorship in Twentieth-Century Ireland* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), 150–3.

and national identities. McQuaid used a form of censorship as a means of crafting, policing, and enforcing identity.

Thanks to the global publicity on the Theatre Festival's crash and O'Casey, Joyce, and Beckett's celebrity, though, these plays didn't vanish. Rather, their censorship motivated later productions within and beyond Ireland. In the case of O'Casey's *The Drums of Father Ned* and McClelland's Joyce adaptation, *Bloomsday*, the memory of their censorship lingered over and traveled with the play texts as they performed in Britain, Ireland, and the United States, influencing their performance and reception. In the case of Beckett's mimes, their Irish censorship was likely part of the rationale for the artist who was to perform them in 1958 to later stage them in West Germany when a theatre there gave him the opportunity to direct and star in an evening of Beckett shorts. As produced in West Germany, the performance of these plays responded directly to Germany's horrific and recent history of censorship and exclusion. Censorship swayed how artists performed these plays and audiences interpreted them. This is to say that censorship's effects are not necessarily limited to the singular moment when a censor pronounces a ban but can continue far beyond that time and place. The national space of Ireland did not and could not fully contain the theatre and performance censorship enacted within it, although its effects were most immediately and obviously felt there. Censorship moves.

This dissertation argues that attending to censorship's mobility uncovers transnational Irish performances' deep entanglement with local and national cultural and political formulations in the mid-twentieth century. Specifically, analyzing mobile censorship in the performances of the plays that I study reveals how transnational Irish cultural production worked to entrench hegemonic ideologies or stifle progressive politics even as the productions sometimes laid claim to progress, freedom, or universal humanity. Ireland's unique experience of modernity ensured

that Irish censorship's political and cultural effect of cultivating identities, discourses, and histories and constellating the relationships between them continued beyond the Republic's borders through Irish theatrical performances as they moved. This is to say that this dissertation discloses how transnational Irish cultural performances acted like censors, themselves, within the particular circumstances of their local productions, shaping and influencing both performance and reception.

Through this dissertation, I develop a methodology for studying censorship's mobility. After first analyzing the historical conditions that enabled censorship to move from the collapse of the 1958 Dublin International Theatre Festival, each subsequent chapter offers a case study in a particular modality of mobility using performance. Performance, I contend, is vital to censorship's movement precisely because censorship is embodied and enacted. Further, performance's physical materiality and location in specific historical moments allows for its historicization, which opens up the possibility of tracing how the transnational Irish performances and censorious effects I study dialogued with local issues like communism, gender and sexuality, the Holocaust, and perceptions of Ireland and the Irish. The dissertation thereby also offers the opportunity to consider how these performances might intervene into local, national, and trans- or international historiographies of the issues the performances addressed.

As I show across this dissertation, Ireland's mobile censorship is not benign. Like the "initial act" that stirs it, mobile censorship has the power to reinforce, challenge, or break down how people understand themselves and others, what they stand for, and their histories. In many ways, the censorship that moved through the Irish cultural productions this dissertation analyzes extend censorship to other spheres. What this means, however, is that censorship's effects can perpetuate its claims and even lead to censorship's re-enactment and further recirculation. In

other words, Irish censorship begat more censorious effects elsewhere. Irish performance censorship cannot be fully understood without attending to its travels. Understanding censorship's movement is therefore vital to understanding the cultural work that transnational Irish performances undertook and the political saliency of Irish theatre and drama for the mid-twentieth century, a period that has only recently attracted sustained scholarly attention.

1.1 Methodologies

To be clear: there was nothing legally barring any of these plays from performing. There was no formal, state-operated theatre censorship in Ireland. Yet, when McQuaid issued his protest, it had the effect of marking the plays for censorship and jettisoning them from the national stage, at least for a time. By "censorship," I follow the thinking of censorship theorists like Judith Butler and Richard Burt to indicate not a legal term but a cultural (and therefore political) process of selection and deletion by which a person or group of people attempt to curate a terrain of the knowable and the unknowable (whether intentionally or not). By delineating the acceptable from the unacceptable within a given social or political space, censorship works to create, encourage, or sustain imagined communities united in what they accept and do not, propping up ideologies and socio-political structures in the process. Censorship is a project of building consensus. However, censorship often fails to totally cordon off what it seeks to eject. McQuaid's protest brought new attention to the plays within and beyond Ireland, transforming them and allowing them to circulate differently than had the archbishop simply let them perform. What tools can help scholars understand this central paradox that puts censorship on the move?

My methods of study rest at the confluence of new censorship theory and microhistorical theatre and performance analysis. I summarize each of these below and articulate how my project uses, grapples with, or contributes to the strategies from each. Along the way, I also define key terms and explain how and why I use them. From the new censorship theory, I especially draw on Judith Butler's ideas about the relationship between censorship and subject formation and her formulation of how censorship operates. I also adapt literary historian Richard Burt's theory that dispersal and displacement characterizes censorship – not removal and replacement. In addition, each of my case studies constitutes a theatrical microhistory following István M. Szigjártó's practice. I propose that the methodology I develop in this dissertation both registers censorship's movement as a vital component to understanding its effects and can shift the discourse on censorship in new directions.

1.1.1 New Censorship Theory: Genealogies and Definitions

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the conservatism of the Reagan/Bush agendas and the fall of the Soviet Union and Eastern bloc (which made troves of state archives available for the first time) led to a renewed interest in the mechanics and effects of censorship. The scholarly discourse that emerged came to be known as “the new censorship” school or theory.⁹ Although not unified around a single definition or even approach to censorship, the interdisciplinary group of scholars who contributed to this discussion were particularly interested in understanding or contesting exactly what constitutes censorship. Collectively, one of their key insights was to

⁹ Richard Burt, “Introduction: The ‘New’ Censorship,” in *The Administration of Aesthetics: Censorship, Political Criticism, and the Public Sphere*, ed. Richard Burt (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 1994), xi; Beate Müller, “Censorship and Cultural Regulation: Mapping the Territory,” in *Censorship and Cultural Regulation in the Modern Age*, ed. Beate Müller (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2004), 3.

demonstrate some of the ways that censorship occurs other than through what I will term “traditional” or “top-down” forms of censorship: those acts of censorship that state regimes exercise through the repression of speech and other forms of expression. Another is that censorship is not merely reductive but “productive” – by which I mean “generative” or “constitutive” rather than “good.” In particular, Michel Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu’s works are major influences on the field. Before I address the main theories of this study, it is first necessary to address some of its foundations and to explain why I gravitated towards the work of particular theorists.

Pierre Bourdieu pushes the idea of what constitutes censorship to an extreme. For Bourdieu, all forms of communication are necessarily the result of internalized self-censorship. Bourdieu argues that all discourses are “the production of a *compromise* between an *expressive interest* and a *censorship* constituted by the very structure of the field in which the discourse is produced and circulates.”¹⁰ For Bourdieu, censorship is an unavoidable and structural necessity that makes communication and subjectivity possible. It is in this sense “productive.” More insidiously, though, this self-censorship functions according to the matrices of language, cultural values, social mores, and other systems of power which people internalize. This less-obvious form of censorship is far more effective and difficult to combat than top-down forms because it is an impersonal, barely-visible form of censorship that subjects naturalize as intuitive.¹¹

Although Bourdieu’s insights are particularly valuable for discourse analysis and so-called “soft” forms of censorship like those Bourdieu describes, to see censorship everywhere is to see it nowhere. At pains to draw a distinction between traditional forms of censorship and

¹⁰ Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, ed. John B. Thompson, trans. Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1991), 137, original emphasis.

¹¹ Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 138.

those that are internally generated, legal philosopher Frederick Schauer argues, “If the use of the word *censorship* presupposes that censorship is a relatively identifiable subset of the set of human activity, then it makes no sense to identify as such a subset something that is part and parcel of all human activity.”¹² As Beate Müller succinctly puts it, such a broad definition of censorship “runs the risk of equating very different forms of control by confusing censorship with social norms affecting and controlling communication.”¹³ Recognizing the confusion that emerges from using the same word (“censorship”) to describe such a huge range of phenomena, Judith Butler suggests using the psychoanalytic term “foreclosure” to describe that interior, psychic process Bourdieu identifies and to distinguish it from top-down forms of censorship.¹⁴ Helen Freshwater forcefully and, I think, rightly argues that while new censorship theory is theoretically rigorous, “it does not reflect the experience of censorship as the unwelcome imposition of external constraint.”¹⁵

This is not to say that analyses of top-down forms of censorship couldn’t benefit from new censorship theory. On the contrary, my hope is that this dissertation models an answer to historian Matthew Bunn’s call to explore “how New Censorship Theory can reinvigorate older concepts,” like more traditional forms of censorship.¹⁶ Because I am concerned with forms of censorship that more closely resemble top-down models like the archbishop’s protest, I follow

¹² Frederick Schauer, “The Ontology of Censorship,” in *Censorship and Silencing: Practices of Cultural Regulation*, ed. Robert C. Post (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1998), 149, original emphasis.

¹³ Müller, 9.

¹⁴ Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 138.

¹⁵ Helen Freshwater, “Towards a Redefinition of Censorship,” in *Censorship and Cultural Regulation in the Modern Age*, ed. Beate Müller (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2004), 233.

¹⁶ Matthew Bunn, “Reimagining Repression: New Censorship Theory and After,” *History and Theory* 54, no. 1 (February 2015): 28.

new censorship theories that attend to external modes of repression as productive in order to rethink Irish censorship and its effects.

The theories I draw upon have more in common with Foucault's work in *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction* (1976).¹⁷ In this book, the philosopher-historian is concerned with both traditional censorship like the banning of pornography and what he terms "the logic of censorship." Here, Foucault holds that the history of Victorian sexual repression reveals censorship's paradoxical nature, arguing that Victorians obsessed over sex exactly because it was so taboo. Censorship drew attention to that which it ought to have banished and thereby helped to produce new knowledge about the object of anxiety. The logic of censorship describes this power/knowledge relation. For Foucault, power is that which can prohibit and shape existence, which takes three forms when acted upon: the inexistent, the forbidden, and the illicit. The logic of censorship is paradoxical in that it never fully erases that which power seeks to erase: "one must not talk about what is forbidden until it is annulled in reality; what is inexistent has no right to show itself, even in the order of speech where its inexistence is declared; and that which one must keep silent about is banished from reality as the thing that is tabooed above all else."¹⁸ Even in the case of the illicit, Foucault theorizes that people and/or institutions implicitly acknowledge what is taboo in order to make it so. Censorship and its logic operate as a kind of power which produces knowledge and ways of being even if through exclusionary means.

¹⁷ It's worth noting that in works like *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975), Foucault theorizes how people come to internalize the structures of self-censorship that Bourdieu discusses. This is to say that Bourdieu and Foucault are not in opposition. See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage, 1995), 195–228. For more thorough discussions of Foucault and Bourdieu's theories in relation to new censorship theory, see Bunn; Freshwater, "Towards;" and Müller.

¹⁸ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: Volume I: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1990), 17–35, 84.

For Judith Butler, censorship is explicitly “a productive form of power.”¹⁹ Butler argues that censorship never completes its task of erasure because there is something about the fluidity and human reliance upon language that ensures that “texts” (broadly defined to mean written and spoken word as well as any number of cultural objects and actions) exceed or slip from the censor’s grasp, often in surprising ways. To take one example, if an authority bans a word, they must state the word in order to ban it, thereby reproducing what they sought to destroy. Further, by banning the “text” the censor transforms it, forcing it to function differently. As a banned text, it now paradoxically “takes on new life as a part of the very discourse produced by the mechanism of censorship.”²⁰ For Butler, “The regulation that *states what it does not want stated* thwarts its own desire, conducting a performative contradiction that” raises questions about censorship’s efficacy and “establishes [what the censor sought to ban] as a site of contestation.”²¹

The recirculation of that which is banned entails mobile possibilities: across national borders, discourses, and time. One of the reasons censorship can move is because of the “slippages” that censorship creates. When the archbishop of Dublin refused to deliver a mass in connection with a national event that included Joyce and O’Casey, he brought international attention to the plays and transformed them into “banned plays,” giving them “a new life.” For instance, as “banned plays,” *Father Ned* and *Bloomsday* both held the capacity for people to remember their censorship, potentially bringing the issues that compelled McQuaid to “ban” them into conversation with the themes and depictions within the dramatic texts as well as the local issues particular to the culture of the performance’s location. This is only one example, and

¹⁹ Judith Butler, “Ruled Out: Vocabularies of the Censor,” in *Censorship and Silencing: Practices of Cultural Regulation*, ed. Robert C. Post (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1998), 249.

²⁰ Butler, “Ruled Out,” 248.

²¹ Butler, *Excitable Speech*, 130, emphasis in original.

the performances I examine refer to censorship in multiple ways, yet through censorship's performative contradiction each play could also reflexively disrupt the limitations censors and other cultural regulators try to impose precisely by bringing histories of censorship to light. As sites of contestation, censored objects and subjects invite people to performatively renegotiate their own understanding of themselves, others, and history vis-à-vis that which was banned. In other words, studying performances illumines how censorship moves and continues to contour and shape how locals understand their identities and histories.

Unlike Butler, literary historian and theorist Richard Burt takes the view that all texts emerge from multiple acts of censorship.²² Burt argues that typical paradigms of censorship assume an operation of removal and replacement: the censor scours the text looking for offensive lines, dangerous political ideas, and blasphemies and then demands the author cut them and replace them with something else. By examining the production of dramatic texts in early modern England, Burt contends that censorship is more than one kind of practice. He posits, instead, a model of censorship defined by the dispersal and displacement of texts. For Burt, censorship in Renaissance England “was dispersed among a variety of regulatory agents and practices; it was productive as well as prohibitive” and “displaced from one channel or medium to another.”²³ By “dispersed,” Burt means that there were far more hands on any given early modern English dramatic text than previously recognized. Actors who improvised or misquoted their lines, printers who took liberties with or made mistakes on the texts, and others were agents

²² Butler ultimately refuses to pit the two models in opposition and instead sees them as potentially feeding into each other. She uses both the “censorship is always incomplete” and “the uncensored text is incomplete” models in her analysis. See Butler, *Excitable Speech*, 127–63.

²³ Richard Burt, “(Un)Censoring in Detail: The Fetish of Censorship in the Early Modern Past and the Postmodern Present,” in *Censorship and Silencing: Practices of Cultural Regulation*, ed. Robert C. Post (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1998), 17.

who influenced the creation of textual products, which were multiple thanks to this dispersal. Editing and censorship overlap for Burt.²⁴ By “displaced,” Burt means that acts of censorship (broadly defined) displaced one version of the text with another and across forms. In Burt’s conceptualization, a printed edition displaces the centrality of a manuscript, a performance is as legitimate a version as the printed version, and so on.²⁵

My theorization of censorship and its effects finds variations of Burt’s formulations. Like Burt, I argue for a pluralized conceptualization of censorship. The Dublin Tóstal Council’s decision to postpone the 1958 International Theatre Festival came about not just because Archbishop McQuaid resisted O’Casey and Joyce but also because Beckett and O’Casey withdrew their plays; because the news of McQuaid’s protest broke in the press, encouraging others to weigh into the debate and apply social and economic pressure where they were able; and because the organizers themselves tried to haggle with the cleric, delaying and drawing out the scandal. All of these agents and others contributed to the fall of the 1958 Festival, staked a claim in the debate, and kept censorship in motion. To this end, I also reapply Burt’s terminology as a way to track and name censorship’s movement. I argue that when an act of censorship takes place, censorship’s performative contradiction disperses and displaces what the censor seeks to ban instead of eradicating it. Censorship brings the banned texts greater attention – dispersing it (or at least the idea of it). This happened, for instance, when the Irish presses reported on McQuaid’s disapproval. They expanded the range of places where the sites of contestation, as Butler calls them, could be debated. Censorship can also displace such texts and issues beyond the spaces where the immediate contests take place. For example, people in France, Italy,

²⁴ Burt, “(Un)Censoring in Detail,” 21–5.

²⁵ Burt, “(Un)Censoring in Detail,” 28.

Canada, and Australia eventually read about the 1958 Theatre Festival scandal in their newspapers. Censorship also dispersed and displaced the plays themselves. In the immediate aftermath of the Festival's collapse, the authors sought productions elsewhere and ultimately gave permission for them to perform in the UK and US, for instance. The language of "dispersal and displacement" speaks to the material changes of a shifting performance time and/or place and vitally registers the changing status of censored objects and subjects as they move. In this way, the case studies in this dissertation stretch the purview of new censorship theory by utilizing them to highlight understudied dynamics of censorship's effects. Such histories thereby become the means by which I rethink and move the extant discourse on censorship. It also opens up ways of rethinking Irish censorship, itself, as more diffuse and involving more actors than previously acknowledged, which is part of why censorship was able to move through these Irish performances in the first place.

1.1.2 Microhistorical Analysis: Magnifying Remains

For my historiographical strategy, I have elected to write microhistories of each of the performances I study. I follow István M. Szijártó's definition of a microhistory: "the intensive historical investigation of a relatively well-defined smaller object, most often a single event... [that] allows an intensive historical study of the subject."²⁶ In Szijártó's analogy, this methodology views miniature portions of history under a microscope rather than the *longue durée* through the telescope. The benefits of this approach are multiple. By attending to relatively

²⁶ István M. Szijártó, "Part I," in *What is Microhistory?: Theory and Practice*, by Sigurður Gylfi Magnússon and István M. Szijártó (London: Routledge, 2013), 4–5.

small events (in my case, the performances of specific dramatic texts at specific places and moments in history), microhistorians stress the agency of individuals and tend to see those in their case studies as actors and not puppets in a historical drama. Further, microhistorical analysis arguably lends the historian a greater capacity for representational fidelity because “they try to show the historical actors’ experiences and how they saw themselves and their lives and which meanings they attributed to things that happened to them.”²⁷

In this dissertation, I illuminate the performances’ remains – the dramatic texts, archived correspondence between participants, interviews from original cast members and relatives of those who took part in the productions, production ephemera, newspaper articles, and reviews – in order to recreate the performances as fully as I am currently able. By scrutinizing the available evidence on a microscopic scale and embedding the performances in their local and national contexts, I am able to posit a host of reasonable possibilities when the archive doesn’t offer up clear, direct answers to historical questions. Crucially for my purposes, too, this same combination of thorough contextualization and painstaking attention to archival detail allows historians to understand how their subjects responded to more macro-level historical issues and thereby intervene into broader historiographical conversations.

In short, opting for microhistorical analysis opened up ways of exploring the potential cultural work that censorship undertook as it moved through theatrical performances. Microhistory’s emphasis on human agency further grants me permission to explore how people might have responded to the mobile censorship in transnational Irish performances, resisting the temptation to read censorship as completely overdetermining their responses. Bringing new censorship theories to bear on microhistorical case studies permits me to trace censorship’s

²⁷ Szijártó, 8.

movements and particular effects across a range of socio-political constructs. Implanting the performances in detailed contexts additionally opens up space to explore how the issues around the acts of censorship I track interfaced with those contexts and to what socio-political effect. Microhistorical practices are thus indispensable to understanding the impact of censorship's mobility as fully as possible.

1.2 Literature Review

1.2.1 Censorship and Performance Histories

For the past two decades, scholars in theatre history and performance studies have complicated notions of what counts as censorship, where it is located, how it is enacted or practiced, and how those practices changed or otherwise influenced performance practices, meanings, and histories. Several of these projects also shed new light on historical concerns beyond the footlights, thinking through the relationships between politics, identity, and culture in different forms and incidents of censorship. Almost without exception, however, historians (and the occasional practitioner who writes on censorship experiences) situate their cases in primarily nationalist contexts. This is hardly surprising given that traditional forms of coercive censorship often come down from official state censors who supposedly act in the interests of the nation and/or government – in the interests of maintaining at least the illusion of consensus. The other rationale, of course, is that that such top-down acts of censorship are only sovereign over the geo-political space that state borders or other definitional boundaries demarcate. Studies of censorship have therefore tended to confine their investigations to the limitation of the nation-

state or some other clearly delineated space. I am indebted to past historians and the important work they have conducted, especially with regard to reconsidering where and when censorship happens and relating censorship to questions of national identity and cultural production.

This dissertation departs, however, from studies of censorship that functionally take the nation-state to be a limit for studying the effects of censorship. If the anthropologist James Clifford is right when he claims that “cultures do not hold still for their portraits,” then how might censorship, as a cultural process itself, be differently understood as always in motion?²⁸ What would a history of censorship look like that doesn’t treat nation-states as discrete containers where acts of censorship take place and fizzle out but as starting places for complex cultural processes that take place across borders? I build upon the insights of censorship historians, especially of theatre censorship, to consider the implications of moving censorship towards a mobile conceptualization that reveals how censorship constellates historical discourses, cultures, and histories transnationally – that is, beyond the nation-state.

In her survey of the history of theatre censorship in twentieth-century Ireland, *Riot and Great Anger: Stage Censorship in Twentieth-Century Ireland* (2004), Joan FitzPatrick Dean takes a mimetic approach to interpret the riots, protests, and scandals she studies. This means that, for Dean, Irish theatre – not just dramatic texts, but their performance onstage between audience and actor – is reflective of “subtle distinctions and submerged conflicts within and among the nationalist, Catholic, intellectual, and artistic communities.”²⁹ Dean argues that the conflicts that arose between audience and performance point toward “a country that is more pluralistic, heterogeneous, and complex than one constructed on simplistic binary polarities of

²⁸ James Clifford, “Partial Truths,” in *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, eds. James Clifford and George E. Marcus (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 10.

²⁹ Dean, *Riot*, 9.

Catholic or Protestant, urban or rural, pro- or anti-Treaty.”³⁰ She further convincingly holds that it was precisely because there was no state apparatus for theatrical censorship that there was such a rich “tradition” of public contestation around theatre and the representations it embodied.³¹ Dean recognizes the peculiar nature of Irish stage censorship as related to but not emanating from the state. Censorship took place through popular protest, disavowals from the Church, and, in the last third of the century, the control of public and private funds – a recognition without which my project may not be possible.

Much of my work builds from the solid foundation Dean established. Dean contextualizes theatre history to consider the historical significance of any given scandal in her study and how those contexts inform the contestations of identity and politics that took place against Irish theatrical productions. The study’s willingness to grapple with the complex instabilities of Irish identity and politics that the act of censorship can belie or reveal is likewise fundamental to my own understanding, and which I carry out into other national contexts to consider how censorship is itself a generative process that performatively participates in the delineation of identities.

Taking a historical materialist approach to W. B. Yeats’ leadership at the Abbey Theatre from 1916 to 1939, Lauren Arrington postulates that censorship and self-censorship were vital to the Abbey’s producing practices. In *W. B. Yeats, the Abbey Theatre, Censorship, and the Irish*

³⁰ Dean, *Riot*, 9. “Pro- and anti-Treaty” here refers to the primary political division that emerged in Irish society following Britain’s offer to grant Ireland autonomy within the British Empire as a part of the treaty that ended the Irish War for Independence (1919–21). Those who opposed the treaty took exception to the provision that the northern Protestant counties could vote to remain in the UK and a slew of other issues that kept Ireland nominally tied to the UK, like an oath of allegiance to the British monarch that members of the Irish Parliament would have to take in order to take their seats. The refusal of some to accept the terms of the treaty led to the Irish Civil War (1922–3), a brutal and bloody conflict that had lasting consequences for nationalist sentiments for decades to come. For a succinct history of these issues, see Mike Cronin, *A History of Ireland* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), 202–5.

³¹ Dean, *Riot*, 9–10.

State: Adding the Half-Pence to the Pence (2010), Arrington sees censorship as a strategy to monetize scandal and keep the Abbey financially afloat. Even though Yeats cared deeply about aesthetics, by necessity artistic interests were often subservient to economic realities. Drawing on the minutes of the Abbey's board meetings and financial records, Arrington argues that the process of show selection was a form of self-censorship tied to the company's state subsidy, first granted in 1925. Although Yeats was extremely vocal about the importance of artistic freedom, Arrington shows that Yeats's advocacy was part of a scheme that afforded the company the opportunity to turn any censorious activity directed at the Abbey into a publicity spectacle for financial purposes.³² Censorship therefore took a central role in the Abbey Theatre's longevity: shows had to be "controversial enough to provoke a riot" or "formulaic enough to guarantee financial success."³³

Arrington contributes to the massive body of scholarship chronicling and analyzing the Abbey Theatre's history, complicating notions of artistic liberty and the freedom of expression by holding up censorship from within and without as pivotal to the company's cultural output and politics. As in the case of Dean's work, I extend Arrington's exploration of how censorship shapes cultural production in alternative directions, at different theatres, and in a later time period. By bringing such thinking into other theatrical spaces, geographies, and times, I argue that in addition to the acts of censorship and self-censorship that Arrington and Dean describe, theatrical performance, itself, provides opportunities to explore how censorship circulates and creates meaning.

³² Lauren Arrington, *W. B. Yeats, the Abbey Theatre, Censorship, and the Irish State: Adding the Half-Pence to the Pence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 6–14.

³³ Arrington, 122.

Freshwater's monograph *Theatre Censorship in Britain: Silencing, Censure and Suppression* (2009) examines twentieth-century British theatre censorship through the prism of Butler's new censorship theories. In particular, Freshwater names and treats seriously a wide range of practices as censorship, expanding the history of British theatre censorship beyond the offices of the Lord Chamberlain. Freshwater also acknowledges differences between the forms of censorship she studies and locates them along what she calls a "continuum" of practices that range from Bourdieu's internalized "censorship" on one end to state executions on the other.³⁴ This allows Freshwater to analyze performances and the cultural practices that seek to regulate them. Freshwater's stated purpose in adopting new censorship theory as a methodology is to "help distinguish between those forms of censorship which are contingent and alterable, and those which are not."³⁵ While such a project of identification is groundbreaking in theatre studies in its own right, I diverge from Freshwater in my own use of new censorship theory. My work is nevertheless aligned with and inspired by Freshwater's research that broadens scholars' understanding of what counts as censorship and how it operates in relation to theatrical performance.

Laura J. B. Bradley's study *Cooperation and Conflict: GDR Theatre Censorship, 1961–1989* (2010) also leans into new censorship theory as a way to expose the relationship between historical instances of censorship and theatre practices. Bradley explicates the Soviet-bloc German Democratic Republic's multi-faceted censorious past with the aid of Bourdieu's theories of censorship. Bradley's project shares an interest with my own in its meticulous effort to show how censorship worked in a state where, officially anyway, no theatre censorship existed. As in

³⁴ Helen Freshwater, *Theatre Censorship in Britain: Silencing, Censure and Suppression* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 1–15, at 11.

³⁵ Freshwater, *Theatre Censorship in Britain*, 15.

the case of Ireland, though, top-down forms of censorship did take place in communist East Germany. Like Freshwater, Bradley approaches censorship inclusively but without collapsing distinctions between forms or calling everything a form of censorship. Bradley instead argues that different kinds of censorship in the German Democratic Republic helped to institutionalize how theatre actually came to happen there at all. Here, censorship constituted and produced the means for theatrical practice and came to be rooted in the theatres themselves. Bradley's work shares with Arrington an investment in exploring how theatre companies might engage in censorious activity, but she thinks about the question in a completely different way. Bradley is not nearly so concerned with economics as Arrington, but in the relationships between and between theatre practitioners, state/party ideologies and figures, and representation. The picture Bradley paints is one of cooperation and conflict between the constituents. Bradley thereby uses new censorship theory to delve into how censorship generates the conditions of theatrical production.³⁶ While I also see censorship as productive (albeit, not in Bourdieu's sense of the idea), I use new censorship theory to think about censorship's role in the cultivation of subjectivities and histories and to locate censorship within the movement of bodies, texts, and memory that emerge from and alongside performances rather than as a structural condition as such of theatre and creativity.

Although all of these scholars essentially confine their studies of censorship to a singular national state, this is not to say that historians have only ever focused on a single nation's censorship history at a time. When historians do look at censorship beyond a single national space, they generally take a comparative framework. For instance, Robert Darnton compares

³⁶ Laura J. B. Bradley, *Cooperation and Conflict: GDR Theatre Censorship, 1961–1989* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 1–28.

how censorship impacted literary creativity and production in eighteenth-century France, the nineteenth-century British Raj, and the twentieth-century East German state.³⁷ Deana Heath's brilliant history examines the moral regulation of culture in three different spheres of the British imperial polity (Britain, India, and Australia) from the late eighteenth to early-twentieth centuries, comparing and analyzing the different ways Britain's officers practiced censorship within the same empire.³⁸ While she doesn't call it "mobile censorship," and although her project ultimately highlights the differences between censorship practices and outcomes in Britain, India, and Australia, Heath's focus on censorship across the British Empire thinks through the areas she studies as a transnational configuration with wildly inconsistent practices. Of all the research projects I have outlined so far, the transnationalism of Heath's study of censorship comes the closest to my own aims. Unlike Heath, however, I do not seek to compare strategies of censorship and do not have an imperial network to work through. Instead, I look for the ways censorship moved through time and space to disrupt, renegotiate, and thereby produce subjectivities, memories, and histories via transnational performances.

1.2.2 Irish Theatre Histories

As in the case of the censorship histories, for the past two decades, Irish theatre historians have pushed the envelope both conceptually and historically. This includes writing histories about underrepresented performances, theatres, geographic spaces, people, practices, and periods. The field has made remarkable strides in the sheer scope of its intellectual and material

³⁷ Robert Darnton, *Censors at Work: How States Shaped Literature* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2014).

³⁸ Deana Heath, *Purifying Empire: Obscenity and the Politics of Moral Regulation in Britain, India and Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

coverage to include such topics as the Irish diaspora and globalization. My project continues this trend by adding significant histories of productions by major Irish playwrights that have gone unnoticed or under-analyzed. Their censorious origins make restoring these performances and bringing them back into the historical fold vital to understanding the scope of Irish theatre in the late 1950s and early 1960s, how these plays and the ideas and histories they contained and carried circulated, and to what effect. This is to say that rather than end the story with the plays' censorship and the collapse of the Theatre Festival where they were supposed to appear, I see them through to production. This dissertation also intervenes into histories of Beckett, Joyce, and O'Casey, offering new arguments about the transnational influence of their work and how their work spoke to a wide array of cultural and political circumstances.

My work builds upon and contributes to a recent turn in Irish theatre historiography that gives greater attention to the neglected mid-century period. Early work in Irish theatre history gravitated towards the establishment of the Abbey as the nation's national theatre. Against the backdrop of the nationalist Gaelic Cultural Revival of the late nineteenth century, the tumultuous revolutionary period of the early twentieth, and the first years of Irish independence, the plays of J. M. Synge, W. B. Yeats, Augusta, Lady Gregory, and O'Casey's earliest works dominated Irish theatre historiography. Important historical surveys by Christopher Morash and Mary Trotter helped pave the way for this shift by shedding light on the significance of the mid-century period. This move has somewhat decentered that earlier period as Irish theatre and culture's historical lodestone (although new work continues to shed light on this period which, nevertheless, remains important).³⁹ Both Morash and Trotter see Irish theatre in the 1950s and

³⁹ For a bibliographic and historiographic overview of this earlier period, see Christopher Morash, *A History of Irish Theatre 1601–2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 307–10. For an excellent essay surveying the wide scope of Irish theatre and historiography, see Eamonn Jordan, "Irish Theatre and Historiography," in *The*

1960s as a period of phoenix flames that gave way to a creative re-birth for Irish theatre’s “second wave” of great playwrights, including John B. Keane, Tom Murphy, and Brian Friel.⁴⁰ Similarly, Patrick Lonergan begins his recent history of contemporary Irish drama and theatre in the 1950s. Rather than survey the past sixty years in a chronological manner, Lonergan adopts a thematic approach, allowing him to uncover continuities and transformations as Irish theatre, society, and culture progressed. As such, Lonergan sees the 1950s and 1960s as a decisive moment rather than a period of drab conservatism and staid dramaturgy, stagecraft, and playwrighting that historians can ignore.⁴¹ I take cues from all three of these studies. For instance, all three highlight the contributions of actors, directors, producers, and others to the development of Irish theatre, de-centering the playwright as the locus or primary agent – a trend I follow. However, while I gesture towards how the performances I study relate to the theatrical past and anticipate its future, my microhistorical approach rather allows me to focus on fleshing out Morash, Trotter, and Lonergan’s more macro-scaled studies. I therefore see my work as complimentary to theirs, and elaborate on the brilliant insights they first established by analyzing in greater detail the cultural work these plays (and the censorship they moved through them) performed.

One of the contexts against which scholars have interpreted Irish theatre of the 1950s and 1960s is the economic turn towards modernization ushered through under the reforms of Minister for Industry and Commerce and later Taoiseach (Prime Minister) Seán Lemass.

Oxford Handbook of Modern Irish Theatre, eds. Nicholas Grene and Chris Morash (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 673–93. For an example of a recent study of this period, see Ruud van den Beuken, *Avant-Garde Nationalism at the Dublin Gate Theatre, 1928–40* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2021).

⁴⁰ Morash, *A History of Irish Theatre*, 209–32; Mary Trotter, *Modern Irish Theatre* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008), 119–48.

⁴¹ Patrick Lonergan, *Irish Drama and Theatre Since 1950* (London: Bloomsbury, 2019).

Recognizing that decades of economic protectionism was a primary reason why Ireland remained so poor relative to the rest of western Europe, Lemass began internationalizing Ireland's economy through initiatives like An Tóstal. Lionel Pilkington's cultural-materialist survey of twentieth-century Irish theatre focuses primarily upon the Abbey as the self-proclaimed and later official national theatre of Ireland. For Pilkington, the twenty years from 1948 to 1968 remained essentially conservative despite the emergence of international modernization. Outside of the Abbey, especially, however, Irish theatre mirrored and took part in the "process of extensive cultural readjustment... a renovation of the country's nationalist ideology in a manner that both appropriated and contained the threat posed by militant republicanism."⁴² While the Abbey remained rather insulated and dedicated to the state's commitment to cultivating a traditional picture of Irish life, Pilkington points to productions outside of the Abbey as radically opposed to the Abbey's orthodoxy. Events like the Dublin Theatre Festival fiasco in 1958 manifested anxieties about "the pace and extent of liberalization in Ireland and the prestige and political status the Church had hitherto been accorded."⁴³

My project agrees with Pilkington's assessment, but my microhistorical approach offers opportunities to nuance and log the fraught tensions inherent in Ireland's experience with modernity. Under successive governments led by Éamon de Valera and his Fianna Fáil party from 1932 to 1959 (during which time de Valera stood as Leader of the Opposition for only two relatively brief periods), Ireland pursued conservative nationalist policies.⁴⁴ De Valera's desire to

⁴² Lionel Pilkington, *Theatre and the State in Twentieth Century Ireland: Cultivating the People* (London: Routledge, 2001), 144.

⁴³ Pilkington, *Theatre and the State*, 158.

⁴⁴ For more on de Valera's politics and their effects, see Mary E. Daly, *Sixties Ireland: Reshaping the Economy, State and Society, 1957–1973* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 18–24; Tom Garvin, "The Destiny of the Soldiers: Tradition and Modernity in the Politics of de Valera's Ireland," *Political Studies* 27, no. 3 (September 1978): 328–47; Tom Garvin, *Preventing the Future: Why Was Ireland So Poor for So Long?* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 2004).

preserve Ireland as a predominantly rural, agrarian society rooted in Gaelic traditions and normative Catholic values is perhaps best crystalized in his 1943 St. Patrick's Day speech:

The ideal Ireland that we would have, the Ireland that we dreamed of, would be the home of a people who valued material wealth only as a basis for right living, of a people who, satisfied with frugal comfort, devoted their leisure to the things of the spirit – a land whose countryside would be bright with cosy homesteads, whose fields and villages would be joyous with the sounds of industry, with the romping of sturdy children, the contest of athletic youths and the laughter of happy maidens, whose firesides would be forums for the wisdom of serene old age. The home, in short, of a people living the life that God desires that men should live.⁴⁵

As Morash notes, however, de Valera delivered his speech over the radio and a multi-national label recorded and sold it on vinyl around the globe through the 1950s. Ironically, then, de Valera's clarion vision of traditional Irish culture circulated not only or even primarily through the fireside forums of Ireland's elderly – not, that is, through the unmediated oral tradition – but through an instrument of modernity that connected people separated by time and space.⁴⁶

Morash's history of de Valera's speech challenges the false binary between tradition and modernity, and my dissertation picks up on this tension. Even under Lemass's taoiseachship, which did so much to modernize Ireland's economy by ending protectionism and embracing economic internationalization, historian Mary E. Daly argues Ireland maintained strong social and cultural connections with the past, hoping to limit the effects of modernization to the

⁴⁵ Éamon de Valera, "The Ireland That We Dreamed Of," *Raidió Teilifís Éireann*, accessed September 15, 2020. <https://www.rte.ie/archives/exhibitions/eamon-de-valera/719124-address-by-mr-de-valera/>.

⁴⁶ Christopher Morash, *A History of the Media in Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 150–1.

economic realm.⁴⁷ McQuaid, himself, was at the vanguard of Irish anti-modernism, and devoted a great deal of time and effort to make sure the Church maintained an outsized role in running the nation's institutions that regulated and administered domains of knowledge that shaped people's perceptions: schools and education policy, hospitals and healthcare policy, and the state censorship of publications and films.⁴⁸ My case studies – especially in Chapters One and Four – grapple with how Irish theatre navigated this period of transition and encouraged progress through complex performances that refused to break with the past. Rather, imagining the past differently opened up alternative political possibilities for the present and future even as the plays remained tethered to the past. Ambivalence might, this suggests, be a strategy for progress. In its own way, the 1962 production of *Bloomsday* I analyze tests this thesis.

The past twenty years or so have also seen studies that wrestle with Irish theatre's international interactions. Trotter and Morash both, for example, analyze how European and North American practices influenced Irish theatrical art. For instance, the melodramas and other entertainments so popular with Dublin audiences at the Queen's Royal Theatre owed much to Irishman Dion Boucicault's work adapting British and American melodrama and variety forms to Irish perspectives and contexts, and W. B. Yeats's efforts took many aesthetic cues from the Norwegian Henrik Ibsen's mythic poetic dramas and Englishman Edward Gordon Craig's scenography.⁴⁹ Anthony Roche compares contemporary Irish and Northern Irish playwrights like Marina Carr and Frank McGuinness to Samuel Beckett in order to highlight similar aesthetic

⁴⁷ Daly, 6–12.

⁴⁸ John Cooney, *John Charles McQuaid: Ruler of Catholic Ireland* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1999), 63–4, 82–5, 88–9, 93–9, 107–8, 159, 165, 199–200, 242–3, 252–76, 281–2, 298–303, 397. On the push for educational reform that began in the late 1950s and took place through the 1960s, see Daly, 214–32; Garvin, *Preventing the Future*, 156–60.

⁴⁹ Mary Trotter, *Ireland's National Theaters: Political Performance and the Origins of the Irish Dramatic Movement* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2001), 47–58; Morash, *A History of Irish Theatre*, 86–93, 117–8, 146.

occupations, including a rejection of naturalism and linear plot which, he argues, illuminates international influences and concerns that speak to Ireland's postcolonial status.⁵⁰ Three edited collections on the "Irish Theatrical Diaspora" explore how Irish theatre travels through the literal Irish diaspora of Irish-descended immigrant populations as well as through texts and representations of the Irish and Ireland performed elsewhere. Rather than a recent development, these collections take seriously the claim that international exchange and performances abroad have been a part of the Irish theatrical story for at least three centuries, and the essays investigate how Irish theatre functions as a site of international cultural negotiation.⁵¹

Two more studies that belong to this same group of research into Irish theatre's international or multicultural dynamics particularly guide my work. Nicholas Grene's literary-historical analysis of *The Politics of Irish Drama: Plays in Context from Boucicault to Friel* (1999) figures the international as an essential component of all drama from Ireland that self-consciously constructs and performs Ireland and the Irish as its subject of analysis. For Grene, such Irish drama gains its unique characteristics by directing its representations to audiences both at home and abroad – they are "outward-directed." This results in an "othering" of Ireland in these plays that provides critical distance, allowing audiences to reinterpret Irish identity, history, and culture.⁵² Grene's work provides a framework I adopt in several of my chapters for analyzing the reception of Irish representations. Building on Grene, Lonergan's landmark study *Theatre and Globalization: Irish Drama in the Celtic Tiger Era* (2010) provides paradigmatic

⁵⁰ Anthony Roche, *Contemporary Irish Drama* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 4–5.

⁵¹ Richard Cave and Ben Levitas, eds. *Irish Theatre in England* (Dublin: Carysfort Press, 2007); Nicholas Grene and Chris Morash, eds. *Irish Theatre on Tour* (Dublin: Carysfort Press, 2005); John B. Harrington, ed. *Irish Theatre in America: Essays on Irish Theatrical Diaspora* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2009).

⁵² Nicholas Grene, *The Politics of Irish Drama: Plays in Context from Boucicault to Friel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 3.

methodologies for studying theatre in relation to globalization and its effects upon representation and reception. For instance, Lonergan argues that when Irish plays that deal with specific Irish histories and issues perform abroad, they must be framed in such a way so that local audiences can understand them. This is because, Lonergan rightly holds, audiences tend to interpret plays reflexively, relating them to their own life experiences and their relationship to any given play's topics. I call upon Lonergan's work throughout this dissertation to help analyze how the banned 1958 Festival plays functioned within the transnational contexts I explore. In the process, I extend Lonergan's theories to an earlier period of Irish cultural production and into the particular contexts of my case studies.

This dissertation finds solidarity with all of these international/multicultural projects. As I trace the plays' movement and censorship's odysseys, I analyze both the influence of international movement on Irish culture and Ireland's influence on other national cultures within the particular context of mid-century modernity and the principle historical issues of the day. I attend to the political and social meanings these travels produce as well as their cultural ones.

1.3 Chapters

In Chapter One, I tell the story of the cancellation of 1958 Dublin International Theatre Festival. In the process of narrating that story, I analyze what it was about this act of censorship that enabled censorship to move. I first argue that the conflicting politics of Ireland's emergent postwar tourist economy laid the conditions for battles over Irish national identity. The government intended to use An Tóstal to showcase and cultivate what I call neo-traditional representations of Irish life. These included traditional Gaelic cultural events as well as modern,

global sports like bike races that did not otherwise complicate or clash with the traditionalist ideology of figures like de Valera and McQuaid. However, An Tóstal's representations were outward-directed, as in Grene's term, and the state meant to ultimately attract tourists to Ireland to boost the economy. At the same time, the Irish had to ultimately produce what was on An Tóstal's program, performatively enacting Irish identity in the process. An Tóstal also projected to the rest of the world that whatever found its way onto its program, though, effectively signaling these activities as representative of the global Irish "brand." The stakes of An Tóstal's capacity to mark anything that appeared on its program as representative of contemporary Ireland and Irish values became clear during the inaugural Dublin International Theatre Festival in 1957, when the Pike Theatre performed its infamous production of Tennessee Williams's *The Rose Tattoo* (1950). The production aroused the Irish by staging a performative contradiction that compelled audiences to contend with their own relationship to modernity in international and sexual terms. The play was so scandalous that the state arrested its director and brought him to court. Although this performance preceded the 1958 scandal, I address it in some detail because it demonstrates how the country's cultural guardians like McQuaid came to rethink the representational stakes of what the Dublin Tóstal Council and especially the Theatre Festival Committee included in its program.

I then detail the story of the archbishop's protest, the Theatre Festival's subsequent collapse, and how censorship and the discourses around it proliferated. First, I focus on the primary people involved in the Theatre Festival's cancellation like McQuaid, the Theatre Festival's organizers, O'Casey, and others, arguing that each tried to include or exclude the plays in order to produce consensus on Irish identity and its relationship to various issues. In this process (aided by An Tóstal's representational rubric), this group of agents transformed the plays

and issues into sites of contestation that could, in turn, travel. Finally, I move my focus to the press reports of the archbishop's protest and the broader scandal. After drawing attention to the plays, the press ensured they would receive all the more attention by moving the debate into the public limelight. Picked up in national and international presses, the reports led other people to debate and take action in support of whatever view they held about the scandal. In this way, they added additional pressure on those with the power to make decisions about the Theatre Festival and were therefore agents of censorship in their own right. Every additional action could spread censorship wider and wider.

Each subsequent chapter examines a different way that censorship moved through the performances of plays that were slated to appear at the 1958 Dublin International Theatre Festival. For instance, Chapter Two shows how the memory of the play's censorship in Ireland acted as a frame for understanding *The Drums of Father Ned* in its world premiere. However, unlike in Ireland where the 1958 scandal would be remembered for quite some time, there was no memory of those events in the place where the world premiere took place: an amateur community theatre in Lafayette, Indiana. The producers built a memory of the play's censorship for the small rural city. In this chapter, I argue that censorship moved through the construction of what memory theorist Alison Landsberg calls "prosthetic memory" – cultural memories that people don't remember through their own lived experiences but which they can take on by engaging with forms of media.⁵³ The prosthetic memory of censorship that the producers at the Lafayette Little Theatre built framed their production of O'Casey's play in light of its censorship in Ireland. This framework characterized Ireland as an "other" in opposition to the United States.

⁵³ Alison Landsberg, *Prosthetic Memory: The Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 2.

Where Ireland was oppressive, the US was free. The production attempted to play into American nationalist sentiments. However, the procommunist politics within O’Casey’s play radically complicate the cultural work that the memory of censorship worked to produce – a politics that directly clash with Lafayette’s own, local memories of fervent anticommunism. The memory of censorship invited the Hoosier audience to reaffirm their own patriotic national identities, but O’Casey’s play challenged the mythos of American exceptionalism and freedom upon which they predicated such formulations. Further, if prosthetic memory fosters progressive politics through the production of empathy, as Landsberg argues, the case study demonstrates that it can also work to confuse clear lines of political action and value, producing complacency or worse.⁵⁴

Chapter Three charts censorship’s movement through the process that performance historian and theorist Joseph Roach calls “surrogation” in the West German performance of Beckett’s mimes, *Act Without Words I* (1957) and *Act Without Words II* (1959), in 1963. For Roach, performance constitutes acts of surrogation, whereby different forms and figures attempt to fill the spaces left by death and other forms of absence in history. For Roach, no surrogate is a perfect match for what it replaces, and so surrogates enable cultural forgetting.⁵⁵ Drawing on production photographs and reviews and situating the performance in the postwar West German context, I argue that Beckett’s pained, tortured, gaunt, and grotesque figures acted as surrogates for victims of the Nazi regime. Beckett’s not-quite representations of people at life’s extremis are stripped of just enough particularity to allow audiences to interpret them in humanist and philosophical rather than historical and political terms. This, I argue, is part of the critique Beckett performs through the plays: they invite masses of spectators to abstract depictions of

⁵⁴ Landsberg, 3, 21.

⁵⁵ Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York: Columbia University Press), 2–3.

atrocities and thereby become complicit in the violence they depict. Beckett models the ways in which suffering is democratized. Unfortunately, by modeling such politics, the plays risk reproducing them.

In the context of West Germany's attempt to move past the horrors of the Holocaust and other Nazi crimes, the state supported a culture of mass amnesia and historical denial for the nation. If Beckett's plays could bring reminders of the Nazi past into the minds of the spectators, the modes of interpretation his mime plays invite can result in audiences papering over those same reminders. In this way, I argue that the surrogates in Beckett's mime plays operate as technologies of forgetting, and further censor the past. Performed and directed by the same mime who was supposed to go to Dublin to perform the plays in 1958, the production, itself, was a kind of surrogate for the cancelled one he never got to perform. Beckett, who in West Germany was known as an Irish writer, attended rehearsals to advise the director. This gave the public an impression that the production had his authorial and Irish stamp. I conclude the chapter by exploring how the West German understanding of Ireland and Irish culture might have influenced the performance and its politics, arguing that Ireland most likely served as a deterritorialized and apolitical imaginary upon which to project West German desires for a past without history. If this is the case, it means framing the performance as an Irish cultural product likely aided in the plays' dangerous invitation to evacuate politics from their contents, effectively censoring history, memory, and politics in the process.

The final chapter of this dissertation follows Allan McClelland's *Bloomsday* to Britain and then back to Ireland, where it made its Irish debut just four years after the shuttering of the 1958 Festival. Censorship here moves through the reputation of Joyce and *Ulysses*'s transnational censorship, of which McQuaid's protest was only one part. Drawing on Astrid

Erl's theory of "travelling memory," I argue that Joyce and *Ulysses* both amounted to what Erl refers to as memory "forms" – a kind of mnemonic shorthand that reduces events like 9/11 and the Holocaust into simple and transportable forms.⁵⁶ As I explained above, Joyce had a reputation in Ireland (and abroad) for obscenity and blasphemy, but also as a censored artist. As in the case of *Father Ned* in Indiana, the forms "Joyce" and "*Ulysses*," complete with their censorious pasts, framed the Dublin premiere of *Bloomsday*. Rather than provide the opportunity to compare nations, as in the Lafayette performance of O'Casey's play, this time the memory of censorship worked to frame the Ireland of 1962 with earlier versions of itself where *Bloomsday* and *Ulysses* could not appear. Once "banned" but now visible, the performance and its adjacent mnemonic forms seemed to stand as a testament to the cultural progress underway in Ireland.

The case was more complicated than that, though, because McClelland's version of *Ulysses* curbs much of the subversive power of Joyce's novel. In some regards, McClelland's text even performs conservative expressions of Irish culture. This is not to say that the play scrubs *Ulysses* clean; rather, it performed the uneven and at times ambivalent politics of a postcolonial nation in the process of cultural transition. Further, the forms that bracketed the play were not the only memory of censorship that invaded the production. Anna Manahan, who also starred in the Pike Theatre's *Rose Tattoo*, played the principal role of Molly Bloom, and I argue that the attempted censorship of that earlier performance haunted Manahan's portrayal. Here, censorship moved through the body. In this way, this chapter provides an opportunity to explore how different kinds of mobile censorship meet in performance. Ultimately, the memories of censorship that framed the production mediated the performance via their recourse to past

⁵⁶ Astrid Erl, "Travelling Memory," *Parallax* 17, no. 4 (2011): 13–14.

histories of censorship, casting the illusion of the show's progressiveness even as the show performed ambivalence.

I conclude this dissertation with some final thoughts about the politics of Irish censorship and transnational Irish performance with which I hope to underscore this project's relevance and the necessity of additional research into censorship's mobility.

2.0 Chapter One: What Makes Censorship Move: Performing and Contesting Irish Culture in Mid-Century Modernity

In December of 1942, as United States forces bombed Italy and the Soviet Red Army defended Stalingrad from Nazis, Irish politicians feared another kind of invasion. Senator Martin O'Dwyer highlighted the severe stakes of this invasion during a debate in the Seanad:

Hundreds of thousands of our people are watching along the coast and are ready to lay down their lives to prevent [foreign military] invasion. There is even a greater danger confronting us, the danger of this tide of immorality which is pervading the whole world. It is the duty of the Government to defend the virtue of the Irish people against the immoral literature that threatened to overwhelm it. If these modern ideas, as I call them, got hold, the virtue of the whole Irish race would be in danger.¹

To O'Dwyer, the modern threatened to corrupt Irish identity, and this, he insisted, was a fate worse than death. Modernity was on the move, and the senator was determined to marshal political support for censorship that could halt its invasion of the Republic of Ireland.

O'Dwyer speaks as if censorship didn't exist in Ireland, but by the time he spoke these words, Ireland already had multiple forms of formal, government-backed censorship that banned and regulated films (1923), print publications including literature, newspapers, magazines, postcards, and advertisements (1929), and even public dancing (1935). When the Second World

¹ "Seanad Éireann debate – Wednesday, 9 Dec 1942," *Houses of the Oireachtas*, accessed February 20, 2020, <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/seanad/1942-12-09/3/>.

War broke out in 1939 and the Irish government declared a state of emergency, they intensified their already-strict press and customs procedures, and extended postal censorship as well.

Following World War Two, in 1946 the government recommitted itself to censorship in a revised Censorship of Publications Act that clarified and expanded prohibitions and strengthened the authority to seize and expel publications banned by the board of censors.²

Neither were the issues O'Dwyer addressed new. His speech rather relies upon issues and fears that had already been circulating in Ireland for at least two decades. The senator ties the corruption of “the whole Irish race” to immorality, obscenity, and the foreign – all of which he equates with a decidedly un-Irish modernity. Earlier in this same Seanad debate, he argued that the books and periodicals encouraging or depicting “forbidden practices” entering the country “from England and foreign countries... have been coming in here for years.”³ The practices O'Dwyer references relate to sex and the family. As historian Chrystel Hug argues, the Irish anxiety over sexual morality hinged on normative and especially Catholic purity standards. The logic went that the corrupt individual threatens to corrupt the family, and as the basic social and a special legal unit in Irish society, to corrupt the family was to threaten all of society and especially the hegemonic order.⁴ Censorship was a way to safeguard Ireland by reducing the

² Michael Adams, *Censorship: The Irish Experience* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1968), 99–114; “Censorship of Publications Act, 1946,” *Irish Statute Book*, accessed July 11, 2021, <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1946/act/1/enacted/en/print.html>. For expansive studies on legislated forms of Irish censorship, see also Robert Cole, *Propaganda, Censorship and Irish Neutrality During the Second World War* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006); Peter Martin, *Censorship in the Two Irelands: 1922–1939* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2006); Kevin Rockett, *Irish Film Censorship: A Cultural Journey from Silent Cinema to Internet Pornography* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004); Helena Wulff, *Dancing at the Crossroads: Memory and Mobility in Ireland* (New York: Bergham Books, 2007), 125–33.

³ “Seanad Éireann debate – Wednesday, 9 Dec 1942.”

⁴ Chrystel Hug, *The Politics of Sexual Morality in Ireland* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 3.

circulation of “harmful” information and art – which also meant safeguarding Catholic interests, by and large.⁵ To engage with such material was to breach the state’s ideal Irish identity.

By the 1950s, the Republic of Ireland slowly began breaking with Taoiseach Éamon de Valera’s longstanding policies of economic protectionism that had typified the previous two decades of Irish life. It was becoming more internationalized, less isolated, and less centered on agriculture. After de Valera finally stepped down as taoiseach in 1959, his successor, Seán Lemass, quickly set about internationalizing the economy and, with it, modernizing much of the country’s socio-cultural landscape. This is not to say that Ireland changed overnight or that the cultural impact of economic modernization was total, but that Lemass’s willingness to embrace at least some of what Ireland had rejected for so long had major effects on the country. These changes came in fits and starts but began before Lemass’s taoiseachship. Lemass helped pave the way for this transition as minister for industry and commerce from 1951–54 and again from 1957–59.⁶

An Tóstal and Dublin’s International Theatre Festival were among the kinds of programs that Lemass supported in the 1950s. Both initiatives were international in scope, seeking to stimulate the economy both by attracting more visitors and encouraging local projects across the 28 counties. They also advertised Ireland to the world, putting Ireland on display for tourist consumption. As Patrick Lonergan argues, theatre produced in international contexts can produce anxiety in local audiences precisely because of its mobility. While branding productions

⁵ Indeed, the political opportunity that Ireland offered the Holy See was to protect Catholic interests in the British Isles. See Dermot Keogh, *Ireland and the Vatican: The Politics and Diplomacy of Church-State Relations, 1922–1960* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1995), xxi.

⁶ Mary Daly, *Sixties Ireland: Reshaping the Economy, State and Society, 1957–1973* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 1–12, 15–28; Gary Murphy, “From Economic Nationalism to European Union,” in *The Lemass Era: Politics and Society in the Ireland of Seán Lemass*, eds. Brian Girvin and Gary Murphy (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2005), 28–48.

with markers of national characteristics and symbols can help to manage risks and audience expectations, the first two Dublin Theatre Festivals' international offerings conflicted with the branding of An Tóstal as a national cultural festival.⁷

The explosive but very different responses to the first two Dublin International Theatre Festivals highlighted the symbolic power of the modern, the foreign, and the “indecent” when placed under the specific cultural spotlight of Irish national identity. The cultural battles surrounding the Festivals evinced the degree to which those who endorsed or subscribed to the dominant national ideology still defined Irish identity in opposition to “modern ideas.” As much as the Republic of Ireland attempted to resist and censor “corrupting” influences, the national imaginary ironically needed to reject such categories in order to continuously reaffirm itself. An Tóstal and the International Theatre Festival showcased Ireland to the world, and this heightened visibility maximized the domestic cultural potency of the Festival plays. By so forcefully attacking the Festivals' plays, the officers of the Irish state, Archbishop McQuaid, and Festival organizers who agreed with them executed what Judith Butler calls censorship's “performative contradiction.” For Butler, every act of censorship holds the potential to establish the censored object as a site of contestation, draw attention to it, and paradoxically enable it to circulate more widely or in different ways than had it not been censored at all.⁸ Censorship's performative contradiction is central to censorship's mobility in this dissertation's case studies.

The performative contradiction gets censorship moving, but it was Ireland's mid-century experience of modernity that made the 1958 Theatre Festival's censorship so particularly fraught and mobile. Modernity greatly expanded censorship's space of influence. By “modernity,” I refer

⁷ Patrick Lonergan, *Theatre and Globalization: Irish Drama in the Celtic Tiger Era* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 85–6.

⁸ Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 130.

to anthropologist Arjun Appadurai's work where he argues that the speed, integration, and saturation of media and mobility upon the imagination are the constitutive features of modern subjectivity. For Appadurai, the movement of people and media create imaginative irregularities for subjects because both media and people move in ways that are not easily contained within local, national, or regional spaces in the modern world. It's no coincidence that the Dublin Catholic Hierarchy moved against migrant authors featured in the Festival program, as migration challenges "the certainties of home," as Appadurai puts it.⁹ An Tóstal internationalized and modernized local theatrical events in such a way that it created conflict between multiple different expressions of modernity and "traditional" Irish culture.

Archbishop McQuaid and his supporters' refusal to accept the 1958 program was an attempt to halt modernity's imaginative influence and disconnect the Church from plays that they believed went against their faith and identity. Although this led to the collapse of the entire 1958 Dublin International Theatre Festival, their attempt to quash modernity's influence on the Irish imagination ultimately failed, but not in the way censors would have expected. Censorship's performative contradiction not only marks sites or symbols of contestation, but also ensures their abjection. As theorized by philosopher Julia Kristeva, abjection describes that which a subject jettisons from itself. Not unlike Butler's theorization of censorship, the subject excludes the abject but never completely exorcises it. The abject rather challenges the subject's perception of its own neat, clean borders of self-definition. Taken in national terms, the abject threatens the social order because the nation must continually acknowledge it, if only to reject it again.¹⁰ If the

⁹ Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996) 2–6.

¹⁰ Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 1–4; Norma Claire Moruzzi, "National Objects: Julia Kristeva on the Process of Political

censored is abject, that means it appears and reappears in forceful ways, including feelings of revulsion, disgust, and hate – feelings that certainly appeared in the discourse around censorship in Ireland. Many Irish people had negative emotional responses to censored objects and ideas even when encountering noticeable absences or even casual references, and these feelings and thoughts carried an imaginative and political influence. Censorship can move in part because people are moved by censorship to read and interpret the world in relation to acts of censorship.

By banning certain elements of modernity and retaining others, the acts of censorship doubly proliferated. The act of censoring just some of modern life reproduced it in odd and affective ways. At the same time, because Irish society and culture retained other elements of modernity like technological advancements and an increasingly internationalized economy, media coverage and the international group of actors, playwrights, and commentators involved in the censorship carried information about it widely and rapidly, producing multiplicity and movement rather than silence and stasis.

Archbishop McQuaid's objections to the International Theatre Festival program did not shut it down instantly but moved others to act with and against him. The more agents involved, the more opportunity there was for the dispersal of censorship. The more censorship moved, the greater potential there was for multiple and contradictory effects and narratives to spring from it. Theatrical performance, as an embodied art, offers historians and censorship theorists a kind of laboratory in which to examine the effects and affects of censorship: how it moves because of how it moves us. This chapter thus theorizes how censorship becomes mobile.

Self-Identification," in *Ethics, Politics, and Difference in Julia Kristeva's Writing*, ed. Kelly Oliver (New York: Routledge, 1993), 135–49.

The chapter is divided into four parts. First, I briefly situate An Tóstal within the context of Ireland's emergent postwar tourist economy. I argue the conflicting politics of that market laid the groundwork for intranational debate over the defining characteristics of Irish national identity within international contexts. Before moving on to the 1958 Theatre Festival, I study a production featured in the inaugural Theatre Festival of 1957: the Pike Theatre's infamous performance of Tennessee Williams's *The Rose Tattoo*. The production magnetized Irish attention by staging a performative contradiction and probing Ireland's relationship to modernity in international and sexual terms. Although not a part of the cancelled 1958 Festival, the Pike's performance and the Irish state's legal action against it changed the ways that politicians, the archbishop, and Festival organizers understood the representative power of the theatrical productions that took place within An Tóstal. The next section details the archbishop's protest against the 1958 Dublin International Theatre Festival and subsequent collapse. In this section, I focus on the key figures of the event and argue each used the inclusion or exclusion of the plays to build a consensus on Irish identity's relationship to various issues. Such actions made the plays and issues sites of contestation that could travel. The final section focuses on press reports, one of the main ways that this act of censorship traveled and expanded. Journalists picked up on the story and wrote about it in the modern Irish and international press. This, in turn, led to more action and debate by people beyond the immediate circle of those making decisions about the Festival (such as McQuaid). The press and the actions of these other people had an accumulative effect on those making the decisions and contributed in a major way to the Festival's collapse which journalists, in turn, reported on again. What began as a local battle became a way for people all over the world to interpret and understand Ireland, its history, people, and culture as well as themselves.

2.1 Regulating An Tóstal and the Irish Brand

Among the events that attendees to Ireland's first national festival in 1954 attended was the Tóstal National Turf-Cutting Championship. A program booklet described native turf, "or peat, [as] a distinctively Irish fuel," and explained that "the cutting of this fuel may be regarded as one of the oldest and most skillful of Irish crafts." The booklet also posited peat's vital importance for contemporary Ireland, explaining that energy shortages during the Second World War led to an extensive renewal of its use throughout the country, including its exclusive use in one of the Republic's largest power plants.¹¹ This brief description for the turf-cutting competition blends notions of an ancient, pastoral Irish tradition with modern industrial innovations, comporting with the values de Valera crystallized in his 1943 St. Patrick's Day "Dream" speech. However, the Irish didn't need peat or turf-cutting or any other well-known national customs explained to them.

Rather, An Tóstal's 1954 program booklet directs its descriptions of Irish culture toward those less familiar with Irish culture, like foreign tourists. For Nicholas Grene, playwrights historically presented Irishness as different or other from the urbanized audiences before which they imagined their plays would perform. These representations defined Ireland and the Irish in an "outward-directed" way.¹² Building on Grene's work, Lonergan argues that modernity's globalizing force reconfigured Irish identity's "otherness" into a brand for international consumption.¹³ An Tóstal undertook just such work by cultivating Irish identity and culture,

¹¹ *An Tóstal Clár Náisiúnta National Programme* (Fógra Fáilte, 1954), 8, McQuaid Papers (MP), Dublin Diocesan Archives (DDA), DDA/AB8/XXV/52/8.

¹² Nicholas Grene, *The Politics of Irish Drama: Plays in Context from Boucicault to Friel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 1–3.

¹³ Lonergan, *Theatre and Globalization*, 90–2.

framing its events as nationally representative, and projecting this version of Irishness as a brand to the outside world.

Just because it was “outward-directed” doesn’t mean such constructions didn’t also impact the Irish imagination. An Tóstal mediated Irish identity within Ireland, too, and An Tóstal’s identity politics conflicted with the Dublin International Theatre Festival’s attempts to incorporate international plays and ostensibly “foreign” or “non-Irish” ideas into what the Irish state explicitly packaged as representative of Ireland’s national culture. As Grene argues, defining Irish identity as an other had “the effect of estranging exteriority” and imaginatively bifurcated Irish culture from all else.¹⁴ In his analysis of Irish dramatic performance abroad, Lonergan writes that Irish subjects and narratives must be framed in such a way so that audiences without knowledge of the island’s history can interpret and relate Irish plays to their own lives.¹⁵ In a similar way, An Tóstal identity politics framed the festival’s events. Any event that appeared under its banner could claim to represent the nation across local, national, and global scales. As such, the national hegemony sought to retain control over what counted as Irish and what didn’t. The logic went that the introduction and acceptance of foreign objects and ideas could fundamentally alter and ruin Ireland. Although the tourist industry brought the international into contact with the national, Lemass and other state actors guarded the threat of greater international cultural influence by branding Irish identity and culture through a recourse to the Gaelic tradition. The state’s tourist projects in the 1950s gave expression to this neo-traditionalism in which an internationalized economy was to propel traditional nationalist ideologies and, in turn, mitigate the internationalizing influence on national culture. The failure

¹⁴ Grene, 3.

¹⁵ Lonergan, *Theatre and Globalization*, 92.

to reconcile the two (or attempting to maintain cultural differences between the national and the international), highlighted their imagined incompatibility at particular moments of contact.

The tensions between the national and the international played out in public scandals under the watchful gaze of an international audience (both real and imagined), heightening their stakes. Journalists, playwrights, and others would reproduce these conflicts in local and global outlets, ensuring the mobility of censorship's history. Irish tourist politics laid the groundwork for those conflicts precisely because of its attempt to broadcast a particular brand of Irish identity to the world while keeping the world at bay in nearly every way but with their money. Putting Ireland on display meant making the idea of Ireland more mobile within and beyond Ireland, and that was a contentious project. Supporting tourism was at once a patriotic duty and a destabilizing force, a paradoxical view that demanded change to maintain traditional life.¹⁶

To achieve this difficult balance, the 1950s saw the state seek greater control over both the attractions that would bring tourists to Ireland as well as the industry's discourse. Tourism suffered during the Second World War, failing to substantially help the already-weak economy. Lemass passed tourist reform legislation in 1952, recognizing more and more with each passing year that the protectionist policies he had helped construct in the 1930s were untenable in western Europe's increasingly international economy and burgeoning consumer culture. The Tourist Traffic Act of 1952 gave the state much greater control over the industry through the establishment of a centralized agency called An Bord Fáilte – later reconstituted as Bord Fáilte Éireann (“Irish Welcome Board”). Through this agency, the Republic invested in tourism by bankrolling the construction of hotels, hiring and training workers, and curating attractions. This

¹⁶ A good example of how the state enacted this neo-traditionalism is Lemass's sponsorship of a national airline. See Eric G. E. Zuelow, *Making Ireland Irish: Tourism and National Identity since the Irish Civil War* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2009), 17–18, 28–9, 30–3.

agency became the conduit through which the state worked to balance its desire to modernize the economy while maintaining traditional cultural ideals. For instance, the 1952 Act empowered the state's tourism arm to write tourist guides like the one described above and mandated that such literature adhere to the agency/state's policies and perspectives, tightening the state's grip over the narratives and images the industry used to attract tourists to Ireland.¹⁷ An Tóstal was one of if not the largest project Bord Fáilte undertook during the period, and so was a primary tool for the state's efforts to use economic incentives to reinforce traditional cultural values.

Informed by both political and economic motivations, An Tóstal's brand of Irish culture and identity was especially nostalgic. An Tóstal ("The Gathering") was a yearly spring festival Bord Fáilte managed in their efforts to boost the Republic's economy by increasing the number of tourists visiting the country and sponsoring local and national projects that would support that industry and inspire national pride. By scheduling An Tóstal across several weeks in spring, Bord Fáilte further hoped to extend the tourist season and encourage them to stay for longer periods of time. Although they were happy to have any tourists, the industry particularly targeted Ireland's global diaspora in the belief that they would be the easiest to sway into an Irish holiday in the chillier spring months. The decision to try to appeal to the diaspora both contributed to and was informed by An Tóstal's emphasis on cultural nostalgia. Bord Fáilte's publicity counterpart Fógra Fáilte printed posters featuring Ireland covered in lush green fields, patriotic symbols like the golden harp, and silhouetted figures dancing and playing Gaelic sports. Its tagline, "Ireland at Home," conjured homecoming sentiments while also encouraging domestic participation: this was Ireland's cultural festival, and its events and narratives would promote traditional Irish life

¹⁷ Zuelow, 65–71; "Tourist Traffic Act, 1952," section 34, *Irish Statute Book*, accessed July 4, 2021, <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1952/act/15/enacted/en/print.html>.

while inviting the world's Irish (and anyone else so inclined) to join.¹⁸ Directing its representations toward an imagined diasporic nostalgia had the effect of doubly emphasizing a pure Irish culture estranged from foreign influence. Advertising a stable and untroubled authentic experience that could only be experienced in the homeland to potential tourist-consumers, this imagined Ireland, itself, was the product for sale.

An Tóstal events varied from community to community, but all of them put national “cultural attractions... on display,” as a Bord Fáilte proposal put it. From its conception, the government set up An Tóstal as a cultural commodity with global currency and mobility.¹⁹ Bord and Fógra Fáilte endeavored to connect Ireland's past and present through its curation of Irish life. Their programs for An Tóstal framed events as varied as the turf-cutting competition in Mayo, a traditional song festival in Westmeath, and a golf tournament in Kildare in terms of their almost-mythic Irish history.²⁰ Musical performances made up a large portion of the programing, including concerts of traditional harp, pipe, and folk music, a choral competition in Cork, and the Wexford Music Festival. In 1954, dramatic offerings included an international amateur drama festival in County Donegal to which amateur companies from other countries traveled to perform.²¹ Another major theatrical event was the All-Ireland Drama Festival, an amateur theatre competition begun in 1953.²² Pageantry was another major An Tóstal staple. In addition to the

¹⁸ Zuelow, 67–9, 96, 124–8.

¹⁹ Qtd. in Zuelow, 127.

²⁰ *An Tóstal Clár Náisiúnta National Programme*, 8, 12, 19.

²¹ *An Tóstal Clár Náisiúnta National Programme*, 13–14. I have been unable to determine which countries were represented at this festival and what plays were performed.

²² *An Tóstal Clár Náisiúnta National Programme*, 13. The All-Ireland Drama Festival came to nurture some of the period's most recognized playwrights, including John B. Keane, M. J. Molloy, and Tom Murphy. See Christopher Morash, *A History of Irish Theatre*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 310–13. On the quality of *Tóstal* performances, see Patrick Lonergan, “‘Feast and Celebration’: The Theatre Festival and Modern Irish Theatre,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Irish Theatre*, ed. Nicholas Grene and Chris Morash (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 644.

pomp and circumstance of opening events and festivities like military parades, speeches from politicians like de Valera, and a host of symbolic rituals, historical pageants performed key moments of Ireland's past. One such pageant, written and produced by Michael Mac Liammóir and directed by Hilton Edwards – the queer couple who founded Dublin's Gate Theatre – performed the story of St. Patrick's conversion of the Irish people to Christendom as a myth of epic proportions. Deploying thousands of volunteer performers and professional actors, Mac Liammóir and Edwards's production was only one of multiple like pageants staged during An Tóstal's brief existence.²³ An Tóstal was a project of performing national values both for the cultivation of a traditional identity and for the international consumption of that performance.

In addition to an abundance of explicitly Gaelic-centric events, Ireland's national festival also included globally recognized sports and cultural productions, using them to highlight other aspects of Irish life. For example, hunting, fishing, sailing, and hiking all appeared on the Tóstal program without explanations or descriptions linking them to the Gaelic past. Some of these, like the national bicycle races and tours, showcased the nation's unique geography and landscape. Other events served to position Ireland as a modern nation and competitor on the world stage. The Ireland vs. England basketball game, for instance, performed the nation's legitimacy and equal footing with its old imperial master.²⁴ Similarly, offerings like the Longford Productions presentation of William Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* (c. 1601) at the Globe Theatre during the 1954 Tóstal could have implied Irish mastery of English cultural material and surely benefited

²³ Zuelow, 128–32. For more detailed accounts and analyses of Tóstal historical pageants, see Joan FitzPatrick Dean, *All Dressed Up: Modern Irish Historical Pageantry* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2014), 187–222.

²⁴ Basketball was a remarkably popular sport in 1950s Ireland and a sign that some forms of foreign culture found a place in Ireland, providing Irish teens and young adults with a way to connect to the emerging global youth culture. There nevertheless also were hardline traditionalists who discouraged Irish people from participating in foreign sports. See Eleanor O'Leary, *Youth and Popular Culture in 1950s Ireland* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), 127–9.

from Shakespeare's global prestige, both of which would have protected it from any claims that the company was privileging English heritage over Irish. Events like these also performed Ireland's modernity, its contact with foreign cultures, without compromising its own traditional values.²⁵

Brendan Smith, on the other hand, aimed to modernize Irish theatre and Irish culture more broadly by establishing an international theatre festival within An Tóstal's modernizing engines. Smith was a major player in the Dublin theatre scene, a producer at Dublin's Olympia Theatre where he also trained up-and-coming artists. Smith felt that an international theatre festival could help jolt theatrical aesthetic development in Dublin through infrastructural investment and exposure to high-quality international performances.²⁶ By exposing Irish audiences and artists to foreign innovations in dramaturgy, stagecraft, and thematic content, Smith's coordination of the Dublin International Theatre Festival (DITF hereafter) during its early years demonstrates a willingness to criticize nostalgic depictions of Irish history, introduce controversial (un-Irish) sexual representations, and to generally embrace modernity in ways that were contrary to typical nationalist lines.

Smith's strategies for modernizing Dublin theatre were multiple, though, and not all of them challenged the Tóstal's Irish brand or hegemonic politics. For instance, international productions and collaborations with safe, "brand-friendly" dramatic content could bring prestige to Dublin theatre and modeled professional and technical achievement beyond what was otherwise present in Ireland.²⁷ For example, Wicklow native Ninette de Valois brought Britain's

²⁵ *An Tóstal Clár Náisiúnta National Programme*, 15, 17. It is also possible (in An Tóstal's first years especially) that some "Tóstal events" were in actuality what various groups had simply planned to produce and they happened to coincide with the festival, rather than being picked especially for it.

²⁶ Lonergan, "'Feast and Celebration,'" 642–3.

²⁷ Lonergan, "'Feast and Celebration,'" 643–4.

Royal Ballet to Dublin's Theatre Royal to perform Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake* (1877) and shorter pieces like Arthur Bliss's *Checkmate* (1937, choreographed by de Valois). Jean Vilar's Parisian Théâtre National Populaire played Molière's *Le Malade imaginaire* (1673) and Vilar's new version of Honoré de Balzac's *Le Faiseur* (1848/1957) at the Olympia. As in previous Tóstals, the first DITF in 1957 included nineteenth-century Italian operas starring singers from Rome. These productions were one example of how the DITF furnished direct international collaboration that could spur modernization. In addition to seeing the productions, Irish artists and theatre workers worked with their foreign visitors, as in the case of the operas, where the Dublin Grand Opera Society served as the chorus.²⁸ None of these pieces were particularly threatening to Tóstal nationalism.²⁹

With the exception of the Pike Theatre and their staging of Tennessee Williams's *The Rose Tattoo*, for the first DITF, Dublin theatres produced plays that generally matched the Tóstal's brand of Irishness through a combination of canonicity and/or alignment with traditional values. The Abbey Theatre offered up two of its major staples, Seán O'Casey's *Juno and the*

²⁸ Advertisement for the Dublin International Theatre Festival, *Times*, April 20, 1957, 2. Performing at the Gaiety, the DITF's operatic contributions included Giuseppe Verdi's *La Traviata* (1853) and *Aida* (1871), Puccini's *Tosca* (1900), Gioachino Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* (1816), Gaetano Donizetti's *Don Pasquale* (1843), and Umberto Giordano's *Andrea Chénier* (1896). Several of the Italian singers brought in for the leading roles were, indeed, major figures in Roman opera and included Caterina Mancini as *Aida* and Umberto Borsò as *Radames*, for example. The productions included both Italian and Irish elements. The Dublin Grand Opera society provided the chorus and Radio Éireann the orchestra. The stars and scenery were Italian. This kind of internationalism largely comported with Tóstal nationalism. *La Traviata* might be supposed to offer a challenge to Irish sexuality; however, it is likely that the courtesan Violetta's death rendered a moral to the story. Irish films sometimes permitted depictions of divorce, for example, if movies showed them in a negative light. Further, Irish radio stations had long played Irish folk music alongside European classical music, projecting Ireland's coequal place with European prestige. See "Opera in Dublin," *Times*, May 16, 1957, 3. On divorce in movies that played in Ireland, see Rockett, 78, 115–16. On Irish and European music on Irish radio, see Christopher Morash, *A History of the Media in Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 135.

²⁹ Advertisement for the Dublin International Theatre Festival, *Times*, April 20, 1957, 2. It's worth noting that other works by Balzac were banned in Ireland, but it is unclear to me what his reputation was in the Republic of 1957. See Adams, *Censorship*, 247. Unlike the foreign-language films that could potentially be shown to Irish cinemagoers across the country for extended periods of time, each foreign theatre performance at the DITF was scheduled for an extremely limited run of small, local audiences, mitigating any concerns that may or may not have existed around them. On the censorship of foreign-language films during the period, see Rockett, 175–87.

Paycock (1924) and J. M. Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World* (1907). The Gate similarly produced a revival of their canonical hit, Denis Johnston's *The Old Lady Says No!* (1929). A newer group, the Dublin Globe Theatre Company, staged an evening of seven W. B. Yeats plays. The company An Compántas did produce a play based on at least somewhat-controversial source material, but their use of the Irish language likely helped to shield the production from scandal. Advertised as a "Bi-Lingual Late-Night Revue (based on *Midnight Court*)" at the Pocket Theatre, *The Midnight Court/Cúirt An Mheán Oíche* (1780) is a bacchanalian Irish-language fantasy by Brian Merriman/Mac Giolla Meidhre. The Irish censors banned an English translation in 1945, likely for sexual content (although the Irish text remained available, as Lonergan notes). The title was both an accurate description and perhaps a bit sly. Performed in both English and Irish, the production implicitly challenged Irish censorship's linguistic inconsistencies if nothing else. At the same time, its turn to a mythic depiction of the Irish past and use of the native language probably helped it avoid scandal for any illicit sexual content the play may have retained.³⁰ All of these plays were "on-brand," as it were.

Not all of Smith's choices were so safe, however, and the state even stopped him from including some plays and companies he wanted in the DITF because of the messages that their inclusion could transmit. When Smith learned in October of 1956 that the Moscow Art Theatre would be performing in London just before the scheduled DITF, Smith wrote to the Department of External (Foreign) Affairs to probe whether or not it would be a problem if he invited the Soviet company to Dublin. In his letter, he tried to calm any political anxiety, writing:

³⁰ Advertisement for the Dublin International Theatre Festival, *Irish Times*, May 8, 1957, 11; Lonergan, "'Feast and Celebration,'" 644. It is unclear whether or not the company knew that a translation of the poem had been banned. Additional research is necessary to make more claims about the performance. This is one of the many interesting performances adjacent to this dissertation that I hope to research in more detail at a later time.

the interest of my Committee and myself in such a visit is a purely artistic one. As you are probably aware, the Moscow Arts Theatre since its foundation and irrespective of regime, has enjoyed a world wide [*sic*] reputation as a centre of the highest artistic standards in legitimate theatre.... [Their] repertoire is strictly classical, non-propaganda and non-political. I understand that the productions the Company is bringing to London include [Richard Brinsley Sheridan's] 'School For Scandal' [1777], [Anton Chekhov's] 'Uncle Vanya' [1899] and a Shakesperian [*sic*] production.

In the same letter, Smith adds that he is also interested in the "Hungarian State Company of Dance, Song and Music."³¹ A few weeks later, Smith wrote back saying that he had since heard that his proposal was not favorably received within the Department. Nevertheless, he pressed the case for the Hungarian as well as a Polish company, noting the "very recent developments in Eastern Europe" as his motivation. These "developments" were the 1956 uprising against Hungary's Soviet-backed government and Poland's push for greater autonomy from the USSR.³² The department refused all three proposals, warning that all communist countries were out of the question for the DITF.³³ Both the Catholic Church and Irish state stood vehemently opposed to communism. The state's officers refused Smith's proposal for companies from beyond the Iron

³¹ Brendan Smith to Miss S. Murphy, Secretary, Department of External Affairs, 22 October 1956, Department of Foreign Affairs Files (DFA), National Archive of Ireland (NAI), NAI/DFA/415/267/8.

³² Brendan Smith to Miss S. Murphy, Secretary, Department of External Affairs, 1 November 1956, NAI/DFA/415/267/8. On the Hungarian Revolution, see Paul Levendai, *One Day That Shook the Communist World: The 1956 Hungarian Revolution and Its Legacy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010). On Poland, see Pawel Machcewicz, *Rebellious Satellite: Poland, 1956* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009).

³³ John A. Belton to Brendan Smith, 9 Samhain (November) 1956, NAI/DFA/415/267/8.

Curtain to perform in Dublin, and cast them as rejected, international others against which to define Irish culture, values, and identity.³⁴

This exchange and the state's censorship of communist companies from Dublin's stages evince its continued repulsion of some forms of international exchange: there were limits, and Smith may not have appreciated the depth of their opposition. His planning for the first several DITFs illuminates a willingness to include challenging theatre whose remit lay beyond the proscriptions of dominant Irish institutions, including those to whom he ultimately answered in Bord Fáilte Éireann and the Dublin Tóstal Council. Smith's acceptance of *The Rose Tattoo* for the first DITF created just such a challenge through the play's exposure of Irish censorship and incorporation of un-Irish material into the Irish national brand. As a local production, the performance became representative and even exemplary of local cultural expression. An Tóstal's capacity to absorb Irish cultural production regardless of content into the Irish brand is part of what made the Pike Theatre's production of *The Rose Tattoo* such an explosive event at the first DITF. The archbishop of Dublin and Tóstal organizers subsequently policed Smith's proposed 1958 program with such vigor because *The Rose Tattoo* demonstrated how An Tóstal could link the Catholic Church and Irish state with material they found incompatible to their values.

³⁴ It's worth noting, however, that the 1954 Tóstal's International Folk Dance Festival included representative teams from communist states, including Hungary and Estonian and Lithuanian teams from the USSR. The explicit focus on folk dances that harkened to pre-revolutionary days may have shielded the event, but it seems more likely and relevant that External Affairs does not appear to have been consulted on the event.

2.2 Making Censorship Visible: The Pike Theatre's *Rose Tattoo* at the 1957 DITF

In May of 1957, Gardaí (police) officers arrested Alan Simpson, the owner of the Pike Theatre and the director of its then-running smash hit, Tennessee Williams's *The Rose Tattoo*, charging him with the crime of producing an indecent and profane performance for gain. The case would drag on in court for over a year (well past the scandal surrounding the 1958 DITF in the early months of that year), but the case never proceeded past its preliminary hearings. Judge Cathal O'Flynn ultimately dismissed the case because he did not believe any jury could reasonably convict Simpson based on the evidence and case the state put forward. The case nevertheless dealt a huge financial blow to Simpson and the Pike Theatre (which saw audience numbers and memberships decline by 90%), ultimately leading to the company's folding.³⁵

However inadequate Judge O'Flynn felt the state's case was from a legal standpoint, the state represented the hegemonic ideology and those who supported it. The Pike's production of *The Rose Tattoo*, the state felt, was too sexual, generally, and in specific instances sexual in the wrong ways. This sexuality constituted un-Irish abjections that threatened to penetrate and corrupt the nation even as they remained on the periphery of the imagination by virtue of their forced ejection and stigmatization. The state sought to reverse any headway that such deviancy had made and correct the oversight of inclusion in the national festival. The state's case against Simpson's production of *The Rose Tattoo* turned again and again to the play's generally adult

³⁵ Gerard Whelan with Carolyn Swift, *Spiked: Church-State Intrigue and The Rose Tattoo* (Dublin: New Island, 2002): 70–2, 82–3, 88, 129, 136; Alan Simpson, *Beckett and Behan: And a Theatre in Dublin* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962), 164. The state later changed the charge from indecency to obscenity and dropped profanity from the charge altogether. That Simpson was charged at all was exceptional given that there was no censorship of theatre in the Republic. The state dug up Britain's Vagrancy Act of 1824, which includes a statute against "indecent Exhibitions" to concoct the charge. This law had not been recognized in Ireland in at least several decades if ever. Whelan and Swift, 147; "Vagrancy Act, 1824," Section IV, *Legislation.gov.uk*, accessed September 12, 2020, <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Geo4/5/83/section/IV/enacted#text%3Dindecent%20exhibition>.

atmosphere and sexuality as a theme, but especially emphasized one particular cultural lodestone – a moment in which a character drops a condom onto the stage. The state prohibited the sale and importation of condoms under the 1935 Criminal Law Amendment Act.³⁶

As Simpson’s defense established, though, the Pike’s performance did not actually use a real, physical condom. They didn’t use a prop at all, miming the sequence instead. According to Simpson’s then-wife, Carolyn Swift, no one at the Pike knew where or how to get a condom, so they decided to pretend the material object was physically present.³⁷ The acting was apparently convincing enough, and the feared (if imagined) item small enough that many in the audience really thought the prophylactic was materially present.³⁸ Under cross-examination, the Garda officer who surveilled the production multiple times on the state’s behalf ultimately supposed that perhaps the mimed condom wasn’t indecent since there was not a physical condom present, despite his statement testifying to the disgust he felt at the theatre for the production as a whole.³⁹

I argue that the condom sequence in the Pike Theatre’s performance of *The Rose Tattoo* staged censorship’s performative contradiction, marking a site of contestation, drawing attention to it, and making censorship circulate in strange and unexpected ways. The condom’s conspicuous absence from the performance paradoxically illuminated its banishment not just from the stage but from Ireland more broadly, allowing the Pike Theatre audience to “see” or feel it not despite its invisibility but because of it. For performance theorist Andrew Sofer, invisible bodies and objects like Samuel Beckett’s ever-absent Godot or the dagger that floats before Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* carry an affective weight that pulls on performer and audience

³⁶“Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1935,” Section 17, *Irish Statute Book*, accessed May 13, 2021, <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1935/act/6/enacted/en/print>.

³⁷ Whelan and Swift, 51–3.

³⁸ Ian R. Walsh, *Experimental Irish Theatre: After W.B. Yeats* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 169.

³⁹ Whelan and Swift, 89–97.

alike.⁴⁰ The condom's particular history in Ireland only further magnetized the invisible object, drawing the audience (and state) to it in fascination and revulsion. By censoring the condom from the stage but leaving it in the dramatic scenario, the performance made it "visible," calling into question one of the purposes of censorship: to erase or silence. The scene performed the paradox of censorship, brought the audience into contact with the abject in the form of the invisible condom, and moved spectators and the state to respond in multiple ways.

An Tóstal heightened the significance of the performance by framing its content in national terms, branding its alternative forms of Irish cultural expression as belonging to the state-sanctioned version of Irish identity. *The Rose Tattoo*'s visible, mobile, and radical divergence from the hegemonic brand was almost bound to create conflict and spawn debate. The subsequent court case only lent more attention to these issues, allowing them to move more. The performance and court case drew An Tóstal's representational power into sharp relief, and this would have profound consequences for how figures like Archbishop McQuaid navigated modernity, theatre, and An Tóstal moving forward. *The Rose Tattoo* made clear the political stakes and malleability of An Tóstal's outward-directed nationalism. Its attempted censorship precipitated and contributed to the conditions that made the censorship of the 1958 DITF mobile.

The Pike was predisposed to clash with the Tóstal brand. Irish theatre historians have argued that confrontation with Irish nationalism typified Pike productions.⁴¹ In Simpson's words,

⁴⁰ Andrew Sofer, *Dark Matter: Invisibility in Drama, Theatre, and Performance* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013), 1–15. Sofer's project is specifically interested in how playwrights use invisibility in their texts, not mime in performance that is not written into the script. Still, I argue that the basic principles Sofer explores hold, and so this section also seeks to extend his project to extra-textual, material reality.

⁴¹ Joan FitzPatrick Dean, *Riot and Great Anger: Stage Censorship in Twentieth-Century Ireland* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), 155; Patrick Lonergan, *Irish Drama and Theatre Since 1950* (London: Bloomsbury, 2019), 49–50; Lionel Pilkington, *Theatre and the State in Twentieth-Century Ireland: Cultivating the People* (London: Routledge, 2001), 151–2; Mary Trotter, *Modern Irish Theatre* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008), 131–5; Walsh, 164–8.

“we wanted our theatre to be a revolutionary force of small means which, by its ingenuity, would stir up the theatrical lethargy of post-war Ireland.”⁴² Founded in 1953, Simpson, Swift, and their colleagues set the Pike up as a private theatre to give themselves some measure of freedom to produce politically and/or aesthetically modern shows.⁴³ For example, they premiered Brendan Behan’s attack on the Irish state’s complicity with state violence, *The Quare Fellow*, in 1954, and introduced Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot* to Ireland not long after its 1955 English premiere in London.⁴⁴ The company also produced a cavalcade of foreign playwrights like Jean-Paul Sartre, Ugo Betti, and Christopher Fry, hoping (like Smith) that they would stimulate Irish theatre by introducing external ideas and forms.⁴⁵ Another regular performance option at the Pike were Swift’s original revues. Highly popular, these included satiric political sketches and songs that “attack[ed] everyone in Dublin most viciously” (as Simpson put it in a letter to Beckett), encouraging Pike audiences to laugh at Ireland.⁴⁶ Finally, Simpson wasn’t above provocation for its own sake. When he produced Ireland’s first performance of an Eugène Ionesco play, *The Bald Prima Donna* (1950), Simpson began his production with a loud recording of the rock song “Rock Around the Clock.” The title song from an American musical film, the movie brought teenagers to dance and tear up cinemas across Ireland when the censored version hit theatres in 1956, the same year as Simpson’s production. Closely associated with rebellion, illicit sex, and foreign culture, Simpson used the song to affront the more prudish in his audience, writing, “It

⁴² Simpson, *Beckett and Behan*, 1.

⁴³ Pilkington, *Theatre and the State*, 152.

⁴⁴ For more on the specific political and aesthetic modernity of these productions, see Lonergan, *Irish Drama and Theatre*, 30–4; Morash, *A History of Irish Theatre*, 199–208; Walsh, 175–7; Lionel Pilkington, “The Little Theatres of the 1950s,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Irish Theatre*, ed. Nicholas Grene and Chris Morash (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 294; Pilkington, *Theatre and the State*, 153–4.

⁴⁵ Pilkington, “The Little Theatres,” 292–4; Walsh, 164–7.

⁴⁶ Pilkington, “The Little Theatres,” 293–4; Walsh, 167–8; Alan Simpson to Samuel Beckett, January 10, 1957, James and Elizabeth Knowlson Collection, University of Reading, UK, JEK A/2/272.

was fun watching the cultural vultures jump!”⁴⁷ If, as Ian Walsh argues, the Irish state feared the Pike’s popularity because their experimental, modern productions challenged national identity and gender expressions, the Tóstal’s emphasis on serving traditional Irish culture for the world highlighted such tensions.⁴⁸ The Pike specialized in the variety of modernity that the hegemony rejected and brought it into An Tóstal.

The Pike’s selection of Tennessee Williams and *The Rose Tattoo* played directly into the typical mold of their productions. The Irish film censors permitted Elia Kazan’s 1951 film version of *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947) but only after stripping it of virtually all of the sexual allusions and tensions that underpin its dramaturgy. Before the Pike’s 1957 production, the Irish film censors banned two cinematic adaptations of Williams’s plays altogether, including Daniel Mann’s 1955 film of *The Rose Tattoo*.⁴⁹ The film version of *The Rose Tattoo* won a slew of awards that brought it additional attention. Similarly, the print censors banned a Williams novel and the text of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1955).⁵⁰ Irish theatregoers also associated Williams with the Pike as it was the first theatre on the island to produce one of his plays, *Summer and Smoke* (1948) in 1954, which Simpson chose because of its “remarkable insight into mental and sexual frustration,” as he wrote in the Pike’s newsletter.⁵¹ Breaking the illusion of uniform, normative, “healthy” sexuality, the imported depictions in Williams’s work simply couldn’t be represented in any other medium in Ireland at the time. Williams and his play were dangerous, and that the Pike acted as producer made it all the more so.

⁴⁷ Alan Simpson to unknown, October 14, 1957, Pike Theatre Papers (PTP), Trinity College Dublin (TCD), TCD MS 10813/394/303. On *Rock Around the Clock* in Ireland, see Rockett, 146–8.

⁴⁸ Walsh, 169.

⁴⁹ On Williams and the film censors, see Rockett, 130–4.

⁵⁰ Adams, *Censorship*, 249; Dean, *Riot*, 155.

⁵¹ Pilkington, “The Little Theatres,” 293.

The Rose Tattoo concerns an Italian immigrant, Serafina, who lives along the US Gulf Coast. At the start of the play, Serafina's husband dies after crashing his truck. Widowed, Serafina goes into deep mourning and miscarries in the process. Three years pass, and she learns that her husband was having an affair. Heartbroken anew, Alvaro, a truck driver like her departed husband, wanders into her life and the two connect. Late in the play, the two sweet-talk:

ALVARO: For me it is winter, because I don't have in my life the sweet warmth of a lady. I lie with my hands in my pockets. [*He stuffs his hands violently into his pants' pockets, then jerks them out again. A small cellophane-wrapped disc drops to the floor, escaping his notice, but not Serafina's.*] You don't like poetry? How can a man talk to you?

SERAFINA [*ominously*]: I like the poetry good. Is that a piece of the poetry that you dropped out of your pocket? [*He looks down.*]—No, no, right by your foot!

ALVARO [*aghast as he realizes what it is she has seen*]: Oh, that's – that's nothing! [*He kicks it under the sofa.*]

SERAFINA [*fiercely*]: You talk a sweet mouth about women. Then drop such a thing from your pocket?—Va via, vigliacco!⁵²

Furious with Alvaro, Serafina pushes him away and demands he leave. Although the Garda officer claimed at court that the sequence was offensive, the Catholic Serafina's initial response elicits exactly the kind that would be expected in Catholic Ireland: outrage. After a brief row, though, they both admit mistakes and make up. Alvaro then proves Serafina's husband did, in fact, have an affair. Gutted, she smashes her husband's urn and invites Alvaro to stay for the night. It is unclear if the couple uses the condom during their lovemaking, but it is clear that the

⁵² Tennessee Williams, *The Rose Tattoo* (New York: New Directions, 2010), 97.

unmarried pair have sex: Serafina's daughter Rosa and the audience hear them in bed, and it encourages Rosa to be more forward about wanting to sleep with her beau Jack before he leaves for his South American naval tour. He indicates that they almost had sex earlier, but that he stopped himself because of a promise Serafina made him make on his knees before the Holy Virgin to not take advantage of her daughter. Rosa fears she'll never see him again, and asks Jack what he plans to do before he leaves the next afternoon. He confesses that he plans to get drunk, rent a hotel room, and presumably hire a prostitute. Rosa tells him she'll meet him there, and asks that he give her his gold earring as a wedding ring. The next morning, Rosa screams when she sees Alvaro (a stranger to her) in the house, and Serafina tries to pass him off as an intruder. Rosa sees through it and calls her a hypocrite for making Jack promise to not sleep with Rosa. During the commotion, Alvaro slips out, and Rosa puts on the white satin slip Serafina made for her daughter's wedding day. Now exposed, Serafina tells Rosa to go to the boy. Rosa leaves, and Serafina tells her neighbors that she feels the same heat in her chest that she felt both times she was previously pregnant. She believes she's conceived. Serafina hears Alvaro's voice offstage, leaves the house, and moves toward her lover as the curtain falls.⁵³

Gerard Whelan and Swift suggest in their narrative of the events that the state's response was at odds with the Pike audience's. Instead of any offense that their staging might have aroused, they posit that the state targeted Simpson and the Pike's production out of some show of force to assuage McQuaid from making statements against the government's handling of censorship and Catholic moral principles. The state's plans, they argue, were in motion before the production even opened, and Garda surveillance of the production provided the avenue for the particular charges. In Whelan and Swift's estimation, the state's pre-meditation suggests that

⁵³ Williams, 54, 98–121.

their particular staging of Williams’s text was not at fault because it didn’t prompt a complaint that led to investigation. To them, the play was only a pretext for the charges the state brought against Simpson. Even though the officer who testified at the hearing that “illicit sex [was] the main motif. The only lawful sex was at the beginning when the widow mentioned love-making with her husband,” and Brendan Smith received Catholic hate mail ahead of the performance, Whelan and Swift insist such negative responses were biased, prejudicial, and exceptions.⁵⁴ Theatre critics from every outlet that reviewed the performance did praise nearly every element of the performance. Further, Whelan and Swift also note that one of the actors asked their priest to screen the play before agreeing to perform in it. The priest not only called the play moral but said that it could even yield converts! Whelan and Swift’s history of the production suggests that the Pike’s audiences had similarly positive sentiments about the performance.⁵⁵ The theatre’s archive tells a more complicated story.

Simpson wrote two letters in response to two different Pike Theatre members who expressed their disapproval of the play. Simpson didn’t try to change their minds, but did defend the play’s reception as he understood it – or, at least, the narrative he wanted to project, writing, “There was no adverse public reaction whatsoever to the play; in fact you are the only person so far since the opening night who has seen the play who has expressed disapproval to us, or to anyone we know, either verbally or in writing.”⁵⁶ A week later, Simpson responded in remarkably similar terms to a second claim of offense:

I much regret that you did, in fact, find the play offensive, as it is most certainly not our policy to present plays that members could not see with their families and,

⁵⁴ Whelan and Swift, 89–91, 55.

⁵⁵ Whelan and Swift, 141–79, 57–62, 54.

⁵⁶ Alan Simpson to William J. O’Brien, July 22, 1957, PTP, TCD MS 10813/402/110.

in our opinion, have never done so in the Pike Theatre. Perhaps, as you are the only member of our audiences who having seen the play, found it offensive, you would be kind enough to indicate to us what scene or passage you objected to, so that we may be guided by its erasure in our future choice of play.⁵⁷

In both letters, Simpson further explains (with almost the exact same language) that it is “usual” in theatre “to have people walking out in protest” of plays or write complaints to the theatre or public press. He claims that no such dissent took place in the case of *The Rose Tattoo*.

This evidence suggests that the popular response to *The Rose Tattoo* was very likely more plural than previously recognized. The fact that Simpson told both addressees they were the first to express offense is suspicious. That said, Simpson had every legal and financial incentive to maintain innocence. Neither are the letters contemporary to the production but to the subsequent (and widely reported) hearings, raising questions about the legitimacy of the playgoers’ claims.⁵⁸ Still, the letters nevertheless point to the likelihood that Irish audiences did not totally agree with the critics who unanimously commended the show, and some were probably offended by it.

The play’s mediation by An Tóstal’s national, mobile brand helps to explain the varied reaction to the play. *The Rose Tattoo*’s place within An Tóstal not only effectively canceled the company’s privacy shield but positioned it and the performance as a part of a very specific representation of Ireland to the international community. Even reviews from the DITF couched the Festival’s shows in relationship to An Tóstal. For instance, the London *Times* review for the Pike’s *Rose Tattoo* began by describing “the Irish national Tóstal, in which sport, industry, and

⁵⁷ Alan Simpson to Mr. McDonagh, July 29, 1957, PTP, TCD MS 10813/402/120.

⁵⁸ By explaining that complaints only reached the Pike after the press reported on the play and arrest, Simpson implicitly asks them if they had actually seen the show. It’s also worth noting that the first of the two did send a monetary contribution to their legal defense fund along with his letter.

art are on show in the national shop window.”⁵⁹ The reviewer subsumes the performance within a particular nationalist project by emphasizing An Tóstal’s theatricality and framing it through the capitalist metaphor of the shop window. Harold Hobson, writing for London’s *Sunday Times* similarly considered the DITF and the Pike’s *Rose Tattoo* in national terms. As if to manifest the hegemony’s fear of selling an Ireland that in any way countered their constructed, traditionalist narratives, Hobson’s glowing review in the major foreign newspaper specifically noted that the characters dropped “something not mentionable in Ireland” onto the stage.⁶⁰ Spectators would have internalized An Tóstal’s nationalist logic in their viewing of the performance, interpreting it either in a positive or negative way according to their views.

The production’s explicitly nationalist frame heightened the cultural ambiguities and tensions that animated the mimed condom and the significance of *The Rose Tattoo* as a whole. Contraceptives only had a peripheral place in the Irish national imaginary, contributing to the definition of Irish identity by their almost-complete absence. Artificial birth control and condoms in particular did not have a place in the state’s idealized Ireland and continued to evoke strong reactions across the island.⁶¹ In the Pike’s production, the mimed condom enacted a kind of double-negative where the condom is absent from both the stage and Ireland, present dramaturgically but physically absent, banned from Irish society and yet made suddenly a viable part of Irish cultural production. This double-negative corresponds with censorship’s performative contradiction whereby erasure can paradoxically propel that which is banned to

⁵⁹ “Pike Theatre, Dublin,” *Times*, May 14, 1957, 3.

⁶⁰ Harold Hobson, “Dublin Delights,” *Sunday Times* (London), May 19, 1957, 23.

⁶¹ A medical doctor recalled seeing a condom in the home of a woman who had just suffered a miscarriage and feeling “that the miscarriage served her right, because she had been flying in the face of God.” Similarly, Simpson’s wife Swift recalled an occasion before *The Rose Tattoo* in which she went to the British north where condoms were legally available only to be harassed at every chemist’s shop she visited. Qtd. in Diarmaid Ferriter, *Occasions of Sin: Sex and Society in Modern Ireland* (London: Profile Books, 2009), 301; Whelan and Swift, 52.

circulate in unintended ways. The mimed condom gained a power to move the audience and by extension the discourse around Irish values in multiple directions. This is not to say that the condom sequence alone dictated audience responses to the performance, but that its in/visibility scrambled the play's politics and thereby splintered its response.

The sexual coupling that takes place at the end of the play also contributed to the range of responses that the performance produced. The ending is ultimately ambiguous. Although both Serafina and Rosa are happy with where they're heading, *The Rose Tattoo*'s conclusion is fraught with uncertainty. The play suggests that both are headed towards matrimony and motherhood, but there is nothing to confirm either supposition. For Rosa, it could well be a purely symbolic wedding between her and Jack in the hotel (if she meets him there at all). Jack never commits to marriage, only that he wants to have sex – although it would seem he would prefer to share that with Rosa. She is the one who asks for his earring as a wedding band, not he. Further, it is unclear if Jack actually gave her the ring in the Pike's production. There is no such exchange in the script. This fact was obscured in the court hearing, where Simpson's lawyer led one Garda officer to think that Jack had proposed to her, a position that changed his mind about the play's indecency in that instance.⁶² What's more, Rosa seems to believe that it will be a one-night stand: "I think it could just happen once, and if it don't happen that time, it never can—later... One time, one time, only once, it could be—God!—to remember."⁶³ Rosa wants to have sex for the sake of the experience and the memory if nothing else, and she knows there could be nothing else. There is no indication, either, of whether or not they will use protection.

⁶² Whelan and Swift, 98–9.

⁶³ Williams, 111.

Similarly, with Serafina and Alvaro, any assumption of marital bliss to come can only be assumed. For her, the only sign of impending nuptials is her feeling that she's conceived coupled with her movement out of the house and toward Alvaro's disembodied voice. Her pregnancy is unconfirmed, and for all the audience knows he may have used the condom after all. Invested as Ireland was in natalism and what queer theorist Lee Edelman termed the politics of reproductive futurity – a mapping of the future predicated on heteronormative reproduction and the symbolic figure of the child as the guarantor of political futures – Serafina and Rosa's turn toward sex that infers reproduction and future marriages imbued the Pike's performance.⁶⁴

This reproductive futurity does not mean that the performance actually aligned with traditional sex and gender roles as Ireland's dominant ideological institutions articulated them. There are rather multiple ways to understand what the show performed. The inclusion of the condom (whether or not it was used), Serafina's night with Alvaro, and Rosa's intention to sleep with Jack could suggest the play advocates more modern sexual values, ones that could be seen as foreign to hegemonic expressions of Irish identity. However, since Serafina's hope is bound up with a future with more children and Rosa's with marriage (and, presumably, children), their sexuality could alternatively correspond to earlier forms of Irish courtship. In post-Famine Ireland, the Catholic Church in Éire underwent what historian Emmet Larkin calls a "devotional revolution" that reformed ideas of Irish sociality and religion through the consolidation of Catholic influence. This included the regulation of bodies and gender ideologies so that female sexuality would be totally contained to marriage. These formations of religious identity informed

⁶⁴ Lee Edelman, *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 1–31. On natalism in Ireland, see Ferriter, 185–201; Hug, 76–84; Tom Inglis, "Origins and Legacies of Irish Prudery: Sexuality and Social Control in Modern Ireland," *Éire-Ireland* 40, no. 3 & 4 (Winter 2005): 9–37; Seán Kennedy, "First Love: Abortion and Infanticide in Beckett and Yeats," *Samuel Beckett Today/Aujourd'hui* 22 (2010): 80–85.

Irish nationalist discourse that countered British caricatures of the Irish as wantonly and overly passionate and competed with imported Victorian moralism. By this logic, the Irish could out-prude the imperial master. Prior to the devotional revolution and the British importation of secular purity crusaders (which were a distinctly non-Irish phenomenon at their first appearance), sexual activity was a more socially-acceptable part of courtship in Ireland.⁶⁵ In this way, the Pike's *Rose Tattoo* might express an even-more traditional value system than what the hegemony borne of the nationalist movement proscribed.

Whether forward or backward-looking, though, both of these interpretations buck the contemporary normative systems that the Catholic Church and Irish Republic policed. In the Irish context, the play's critique focuses on the religious institution as a regulative regime of the normal and suggests contentment and even freedom await Irish women who can throw the burden of the Church's expectations from their shoulders. In this, the production was an intensely provocative choice for 1950s Ireland, to say nothing of the particular circumstances of An Tóstal, despite Swift and Simpson's protestations after his arrest. In their membership newsletter, Simpson wrote that they selected *The Rose Tattoo* for the DITF because they felt its religious themes would be of interest to Irish audiences.⁶⁶ Serafina's Catholicism guides her for most of the play and is a major element of the play's atmosphere. Williams calls for religious icons and pictures to litter the set as well as "a little statue of the Madonna," and Serafina ritualistically turns to it throughout the play.⁶⁷ In the Pike production, the "little" Madonna

⁶⁵ Leann Calvert, "'He came to her bed pretending courtship': Sex, Courtship, and the Making of Marriage in Ulster, 1750–1844," *Irish Historical Studies* 42, no. 162 (November 2018): 244–64; Cara Delay, "Gender, Sexuality, and the Devotional Revolution in Ireland," *New Hibernia Review* 24, no. 4 (Winter, 2020): 98–121; Inglis; Emmet Larkin, "The Devotional Revolution in Ireland, 1850–75," *American Historical Review* 77, no. 3 (June 1972): 625–52; Dymphna McLoughlin, "Women and Sexuality in Nineteenth Century Ireland," *Irish Journal of Psychology* 15, no. 2 & 3 (1994): 266–75.

⁶⁶ Pilkington, "Little Theatres," 296.

⁶⁷ Williams, 4–5.

looked large on the Pike's tiny stage.⁶⁸ Positioned upstage center and facing the audience, the Madonna looked down on the spectators in silent judgment as much as the characters, as if to model the very religious and social pressures the Pike production intended to critique. When Serafina understand the reality of her husband's infidelity, she blows out the candle before the Madonna shrine, crying, "I don't believe in you, Lady! You're just a poor little doll with the paint peeling off... and I [will] forget you the way you forget Serafina!"⁶⁹ She sleeps with Alvaro immediately after. As Pilkington argues, freeing herself from the confines of her faith liberate and liberalize her body. For Pilkington, this revolutionary feminism was what the state sought to extinguish above all else.⁷⁰ The play ends with Serafina and her daughter both happy, and they are restored to their contentment for the first time since the drama's start.

A third interpretation, though, is also possible, one in which reproductive futurity's primacy in Irish culture overlooks the violation of premarital sex because it ultimately serves the state's ultimate biopolitical ends. In this reading, the condom scene helps make the matrimonial assumptions at the end of the play foregone conclusions. The doubly-absent condom charges the play's politics. Serafina's rejection of the (banned) condom reinforces the play's insistence on the good of reproductive coupling. Compared with the unproductive, "purely lustful" counterpart represented in the condom, the performance created a space where premarital sexual encounters can be subsumed into the regular sexual and national order so long as the possibility of marriage remains, even if it is only assumed. Asserting its presence precisely through its physical absence, the abjected condom – symbol of desire and revulsion – could also offer a far

⁶⁸ See the sixth image in Whelan and Swift, located between pages 190 and 191.

⁶⁹ Williams, 106.

⁷⁰ Pilkington, "The Little Theatres," 296; Lionel Pilkington, "Theatre, Sexuality, and the State: Tennessee Williams's *The Rose Tattoo* at the Dublin Theatre Festival, 1957," in *Interactions: Dublin Theatre Festival, 1957–2007*, eds. Nicholas Grene and Patrick Lonergan with Lilian Chambers (Dublin: Carysfort Press, 2008), 21–33.

more negative version of Irish sexuality to those who condoned the state's biopolitics. Not quite unrepresentable but neither wholly absent, the banned condom asserted its two-fold negativity on the play. In the process, it paradoxically widened (however slightly) the terrain of permissible sexual, cultural expression for at least some who watched the play. Through the doubly-absent condom, the Pike's production thus also performed a sexuality adjacent to the state's ideology of reproductive futurity and biopolitical Irish nationalism.⁷¹ The Pike's production could therefore signify a radical modernity, an even older traditional paradigm, or an only-moderately liberalized contemporary sexuality. No matter which interpretation individuals registered, any of these might be taken in positive or negative terms, and all broke to varying degrees with An Tóstal's sanctioned form of Irish identity. The diverse array of responses attests to the multiplicity of meanings the performance's ambiguities induced. The jury, as it were, was out.

Abstracting the condom from the scene surely had an effect upon the intimate audience crammed into four short rows of seats at the Pike. In its absence it held the potential to move them. Drawing attention to itself in its absence, the absent condom illuminated the performance's place in Ireland within multiple historical discourses at the crossroads of international exchange and modern cultural expression. Censorship clearly failed to completely reinforce its intended definitions of Irish identity and keep the unmentionable out of the Irish imaginary for everyone that saw the show. It still remained ejected in the periphery, but its brief intrusion into the limelight of Irish cultural production nevertheless created the possibility for some change. Ironically, censorship helped to open a space for at least some measure of difference otherwise not permitted. By drawing the spectators' attention to the banned condom, the Pike Theatre's performance of *The Rose Tattoo* could move its audience to see, feel, and experience the effects

⁷¹ Pilkington, "The Little Theatres," 296.

of censorship differently and, in the process of interpretation, shift the discourse around Irish sexual expression, however minutely and haphazardly. Moving the audience meant moving culture, whether to the political right or left, hardening attitudes or adjusting them. With the rapid movement of information, the cultural consequences of that potential change rippled across Ireland and the world, projecting more narratives and symbols to be interpreted. Indeed, the memory of the Pike's *Rose Tattoo* and its banned condom would reappear to haunt the performance of *Bloomsday* when it made its Dublin bow in 1962, as I discuss in Chapter Four.

Censorship, a tool of power and control, was increasingly difficult to control under the conditions of modernity. Implanted within the Pike's performance, censorship could produce effects that audiences could feel, analyze, and use to (re)interpret Irish culture. As such, under the emerging, contested, and uneven modernity of mid-century Ireland, censorship could ultimately be counter-productive to the goals of those wielding it.

2.3 Censoring the 1958 DITF

Although he may have inadvertently set the wheels of the state's actions in motion, it is uncertain whether or not Archbishop John Charles McQuaid had anything directly to do with Simpson's arrest and the trouble over *The Rose Tattoo*. In fact, according to a friend of Swift whose father had been a close friend of the archbishop, the whole affair annoyed McQuaid. Swift's friend had seen McQuaid that day, and grieved that he would be blamed for the attempted censorship of the Pike, assuring his friend that he knew nothing about the play.⁷²

⁷² Whelan and Swift, 31–2.

Scholar Christopher Murray contends that McQuaid may have had more to do with the affair than Whelan and Swift will concede, arguing that McQuaid implicated himself in the promotion of obscene literature by giving his blessing for a mass to be delivered to open the 1957 Dublin Tóstal. For Murray, there is no other explanation for why Taoiseach de Valera himself “want[ed] action taken against” Simpson than to appease the bishop.⁷³ Regardless, the episode reoriented how Irish institutions navigated An Tóstal and the significance that its form of outward-looking Irish nationalism imbued theatrical performance.

Questions about the relationships between theatre, the nation, modernity, morality, the Church, and the state were clearly on McQuaid’s mind anew after *The Rose Tattoo*. In the winter of 1957 when he queried the Dublin Tóstal Council to find out if the DITF planned to include a new play by Seán O’Casey and an adaptation of James Joyce’s novel *Ulysses*, he revoked his permission for a low mass to celebrate the opening of that year’s Dublin Tóstal. The scandal of the Pike’s *Rose Tattoo* made clear to Dublin Catholicism’s central authority that he needed to carefully control the perception of what the Church permitted into its orbit and reject anything that troubled its values or influence.

Archbishop McQuaid’s protest led directly to the collapse of the 1958 DITF, but his protest alone did not bring it down. This section provides an account of the 1958 Festival that highlights how the Festival’s collapse cannot be pinned on McQuaid alone. Historians have previously covered the broad strokes of the 1958 DITF’s demise, and John Cooney and Murray have written more detailed narratives in their biographies of McQuaid and O’Casey, respectively, with each biographer giving special attention to their respective subjects’

⁷³ Christopher Murray, *Seán O’Casey: Writer at Work: A Biography* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2004), 393.

contribution to the DITF's fallout. There remain a number of incomplete pockets of information and even misconceptions in the broad literature on these events, though.⁷⁴ In addition to shedding new light on unrecognized aspects of the 1958 DITF scandal over this section and the next, I highlight the multiple agents and multiple sites of contestation they created. Here, I focus on the actions of the "major players" of the scandal like McQuaid, O'Casey, Beckett, Smith, and others. Each one of them worked to include or exclude the plays in order to build consensus about identity categories like "Irish" and "Catholic." Journalists reported many of their actions in the press, but not all. Nevertheless, all of them constituted sites of contestation that had the potential to move and thereby carry on their debates. Although the press and other people like McQuaid's followers also played a not insignificant role in the DITF's collapse in real time as the scandal unfolded, as I'll show in the final section, their actions followed those of these main figures. Here, I somewhat artificially separate those subsequent responses from those of the primary actors in order to show how they differently contributed to censorship's mobility.

The first of these agents was Brendan Smith. Even though the *Rose Tattoo* case remained unresolved in court and many questions surrounding it remained unanswered, Smith began planning a much more adventurous program for the 1958 DITF than what he had cobbled together for the first one. If the first DITF offered playgoers representative pieces from each Dublin company while performances from abroad encouraged the industry to modernize, for the second DITF in 1958, Smith looked to push the artistic and cultural envelope of its Irish plays. In this, Smith appears to have channeled the growing popular resentment towards and resistance to

⁷⁴ John Cooney, *John Charles McQuaid: Ruler of Catholic Ireland* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1999), 329–30; Dean, *Riot*, 160–5; James Knowlson, *Damned to Fame: The Life of Samuel Beckett* (New York: Grove Press, 1996), 401–2; Lonergan, *Irish Drama and Theatre Since 1950*, 51–3; James Moran, *The Theatre of Seán O'Casey* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 30–1, 133; Morash, *History of Irish Theatre*, 219–20; Christopher Murray, *Seán O'Casey*, 395–404; Pilkington, *Theatre and the State*, 157–8; Trotter, *Modern*, 134–5.

the dominant order and traditional structures of power in Ireland that Eleanor O’Leary argues manifested in youth and popular culture in the 1950s. Hardly revolutionary in its politics or unified in its vision, this dissent nevertheless expressed a discontent and frustration with Ireland’s lack of opportunities, rigid socio-economic hierarchies, and/or moral policing.⁷⁵

Smith’s dramatic selections held the potential to contribute to Ireland’s cultural modernization.

To be clear: this appears to have been Smith’s own initiative. There was no signal from the state that they wanted Smith to move the DITF in this direction. Rather, there were indications to the contrary. The state charges against *The Rose Tattoo* were one. Regardless of how Smith reacted to the state’s prosecution against the Pike, Simpson’s arrest and the ongoing legal battle were hardly invitations for more theatre that would challenge the maintenance of the status quo. Further, as early as June 1957, Lemass told the Dáil (the lower house of the Republic’s parliament) that he expected there to be another DITF for An Tóstal, one as commercially successful as the 1957 iteration.⁷⁶ Although the number of tourists visiting Ireland fell short of hopes, there had been a steady increase, and Lemass was generally pleased with An Tóstal’s direction. It did help build and sustain industry, community-building, and some restoration of national sentiment.⁷⁷ To Lemass, the balance of nationalism, tradition, and modernity that he (still under de Valera’s leadership) sought was still viable and An Tóstal was a channel for it. Smith simply had other aims for the second DITF than appeasing the cultural hegemony, and his proposed 1958 program was a poor match for neo-traditionalism.

⁷⁵ O’Leary, 12, 30–4.

⁷⁶ “Dáil Éireann debate - Tuesday, 4 Jun 1957,” Ceisteanna—Questions. Oral Answers. - International Theatre Festival, *Houses of the Oireachtas*, accessed September 10, 2020, <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/dail/1957-06-04/6/>; “Value of Tostal [*sic*] to Tourism,” *Irish Examiner* (Dublin), June 5, 1957, 4. In 1953, only 500 Americans visited Ireland compared to 4,500 in 1957. See “Archbishop Objects to Festival Plays,” unknown newspaper publication, unknown date, MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/54/21.

⁷⁷ Irene Furlong, “Tourism and the Irish State in the 1950s,” in *Ireland in the 1950s: The Lost Decade*, eds. Dermot Keogh, Finbarr O’Shea, Carmel Quinlan (Dublin: Mercier Press, 2004), 178–82.

O'Casey serves as a powerful example in this regard because his *The Drums of Father Ned* is set against the background of An Tóstal itself, depicting it as a progressive force. This is precisely one of the aspects of the play that appealed to Smith, as he explained to the author when he first contacted him in July 1957.⁷⁸ O'Casey was intrigued by the prospect of a Tóstal production but wanted to know more about production possibilities for casting, theatre selection, director, producer, and compensation. He was also dreadfully worried about stealing the spotlight from another, less-known playwright who needed the opportunity more than the thirty-year veteran.⁷⁹ This last point was part and parcel with O'Casey's political thinking at the time and is actually quite important to the play's modernism, too. As I explain more thoroughly in Chapter Two, the play depicts a stagnant contemporary Ireland held back by its parochialism and outdated nationalism. The play's argument is that An Tóstal's community-driven cultural projects can bring a renewed sense of purpose to the island, stem the flow of young emigrants, and build a more equitable, less divisive country. For the most part, in *The Drums of Father Ned*, the older generations that saw independence come to fruition are largely in the way of progress – except for those that help the younger characters, like the eponymous Father Ned. By the play's end, the characters embrace a more communal, progressive way of living, economic exchange with the USSR, and a much greater tolerance of sexual expression.

Although the playwright saw An Tóstal could drum Ireland out of its old ways, he loathed the capitalism at the heart of the endeavor. In a letter to Cyril Cusack, O'Casey lambasts

⁷⁸ Brendan Smith to Seán O'Casey, July 1, 1957, Seán O'Casey Papers (SOCP), NLI MS 38,081. Smith heard about the play and its Tóstal setting from J. J. O'Leary, one of 13 members of the Dublin Tóstal Council and O'Casey's friend. O'Casey wrote to O'Leary in the spring of 1957 for information about the Tóstal and other particulars as part of his research for writing the play that would become *The Drums of Father Ned*. Seán O'Casey, *The Letters of Sean O'Casey*, ed. David Krause, vol. 3, 1955–58 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1989), 412–3, 423–4; Murray, *Seán O'Casey*, 394.

⁷⁹ O'Casey, *Letters*, 3: 445–6.

what he sees as the un-Christian scheme of An Tóstal to pry money out of the hands of only-desirable visitors: “The spirit of An Tostal [sic] is materialism... the materialism that adds pound to pound in the till or the bank.”⁸⁰ O’Casey explores this critique in the play as well, but it is ultimately the cultural value of the nation’s cultural festival that prevails as the agent of change. O’Casey recognized, too, the value of intercultural exchange that An Tóstal could encourage by “bringing into Ireland many foreigners who are sure to have a good influence upon us Irish by scattering thoughts and ideas that would shock us if they came from our own minds.”⁸¹ To replace the old with the new, refashion a new Ireland from the old – that was O’Casey’s vision of An Tóstal: “this is the spirit of the play I have tried to write.”⁸² It is one of the great ironies of An Tóstal’s history that O’Casey’s play highlighting all that he thought was worthy in it should be shuttered by exactly the old vanguard and ideologies he critiqued. As Murray argues, the play harbors the modern impulse that was to compel Ireland towards change in the coming decade.⁸³

Similarly, Allan McClelland’s *Bloomsday* also offered a modern take on Irish identity, but did so by recourse to its past. As I’ll analyze in more detail in Chapter Four, *Bloomsday*’s Ireland is ethnically plural (if not completely religiously tolerant) and rides a line between conservative sexual expression and more liberated forms of sexuality. Leopold Bloom is employed in the modern newspaper business as an ad canvasser, as is thus embedded in an international mass consumer culture like the theatregoers of the 1950s. O’Casey represents the Irish present, but *Bloomsday* performs an alternative teleology of Irish identity and cultural

⁸⁰ O’Casey, *Letters*, 3: 266. It is highly likely that O’Casey’s feelings about An Tóstal shifted in part as a result of the swift death of his son Niall to leukemia at the age of only twenty-one in 1956. Afterwards, the festival grew in his estimation – perhaps in part because of a newfound sense of value and drive in his son’s generation.

⁸¹ O’Casey, *Letters*, 3: 414.

⁸² O’Casey, *Letters*, 3: 446.

⁸³ Christopher Murray, “O’Casey’s *The Drums of Father Ned* in Context,” in *A Century of Irish Drama: Widening the Stage*, ed. Stephen Watt, Eileen Morgan, and Shakir Mustafa (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 117–29, at 127–8.

history than what the dominant ideologues imagined. It is a modern vision of pre-independence Dublin, one that contemporary Irish audiences could compare to their own world to rethink anew their relationship with the past and notions of tradition.⁸⁴ *Bloomsday* also had the international cache of a growing Joyce industry as well as the memory of Joyce's obscene modernism and censorship behind it. Like *The Drums of Father Ned*, Smith likely saw in *Bloomsday* the same kind of cultural modernity. It was another provocation, one that ruptured historical knowledge.

Other performances Smith planned for the 1958 DITF supported his modernizing project, too. As he tried to coax O'Casey into giving him the rights to *Father Ned*, Smith disclosed some of the other pieces he was in talks to present – no doubt in an effort to show O'Casey that his new work would be in strong company: “a very clever adaptation of Joyce's ‘Ulysses’ by a young [Northern] Irish actor/writer working in London, Alan [*sic*] McClelland, a trio of mime plays by Samuel Beckett and a new play on the Roger Casement theme by Alfred Noyes, Professor Fearon, or Michael MacLiammoir [*sic*]. Now, if we could have a new O'Casey play, that would really make the cat purr!”⁸⁵ “I think, if you do all you hope to do,” O'Casey replied, “I can hear Pangur Ban [*sic*] doing more than giving a purr! The cat in a rage!”⁸⁶

O'Casey clearly had concerns about Smith's program, seeing in it the metaphoric timber for another Irish bonfire for the country's cultural gatekeepers to spark. He had “doubts” about a Casement play and warned that “If Noyes hears you are doing ULYSSES, he won't set a foot on Ireland's pleasant strand.”⁸⁷ The Casement play wasn't featured in any of the reporting or

⁸⁴ See also Joseph Brooker, *Joyce's Critics: Transitions in Reading and Culture* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), 205.

⁸⁵ Brendan Smith to Seán O'Casey, 10 August 1957, SOCP, NLI MS 38,081.

⁸⁶ O'Casey, *Letters*, 3: 458. Pangur Bán is the name of a cat who belongs to an Irish monk in a medieval Irish-language poem bearing his name.

⁸⁷ O'Casey, *Letters*, 3: 458. Alfred Noyes detested *Ulysses*. For more on this topic, see Alistair McCleery and David Finkelstein, “Alfred, Lord Noyes, and *Ulysses*,” *James Joyce Quarterly* 39, no. 3 (Spring 2002): 558–62. O'Casey was also very familiar with the Church's animosity toward Joyce. In his play *Cock-a-Doodle Dandy* (1949) a priest

advertisements for the 1958 DITF that I have come across, and Beckett is only occasionally mentioned. Beckett also didn't inspire the vitriol that Joyce and O'Casey would in this particular scandal. Nevertheless, O'Casey clearly sensed some danger in the program Smith was assembling, likely stemming from their outsider status (both culturally and geographically) and modernisms.⁸⁸ Despite the exclusion of the Casement play and the sidelining of Beckett in the 1958 Tóstal discourse, all of the plays and/or authors in Smith's program featured some aspect of modern culture that could have threatened the stability and future of the DITF as it then existed at the nexus between Church, state, and a neo-traditional tourist industry.

In the case of the Casement play, the danger was in the combination of the historical figure's nationalist politics with his contested sexuality. Sir Roger Casement worked with those who planned the 1916 Easter Rising, the failed rebellion against British rule that encouraged the movement for independence. Prior to his involvement in militant Irish nationalism, Casement was a diplomat in the British Foreign Office. He also worked on humanitarian efforts in Africa and South America and saw the horrors of colonialism. The Dublin-born Casement returned to Ireland and became interested in Irish anti-imperialism and the Gaelic League. During the First World War, Casement conspired with German officials to plan an Irish revolt. The British discovered the plot and captured and found him guilty of high treason. As he and his allies worked on an appeal, British officials circulated pages of a diary alleged to be Casement's that recounted homosexual affairs. His support evaporated, and Britain hanged him shortly thereafter.

called Father Domineer is all too gleeful at the prospect of getting to destroy a copy of *Ulysses*. Seán O'Casey, "Cock-a-Doodle Dandy," in *Plays 1* (London: Faber and Faber, 1998), 397.

⁸⁸ In a separate letter, O'Casey recognizes, that he, Joyce, and Beckett were all "exiles." O'Casey, *Letters*, 3: 503.

Because Britain possessed the pages and kept the story of their acquisition a top secret, the so-called “Black Diaries” remained controversial well past the 1950s.⁸⁹

With its uneasy mix of national heroism and queer history, any work on Casement for the DITF under the gaze of the Tóstal’s administration was a potential powder keg. This is almost undoubtedly what raised O’Casey’s eyebrow at the prospect, as he also consistently demonstrated prejudice against homosexuals throughout his life.⁹⁰ This is not to say that any Casement play necessarily depicted him as unambiguously queer. The version Smith was going to produce did perform in Dublin in March 1958 following the postponement of the DITF. Adapted for the stage by University College Dublin professor Roger McHugh and the English poet Alfred Noyes from the latter’s book *The Accusing Ghost, or Justice for Roger Casement* (1957), Cyril Cusack produced and starred as Casement in a production called *Roger Casement* (1958) at the Theatre Royal before transferring it to the Gaiety.⁹¹ The unpublished script tells Casement’s life from just before his knighthood in 1911 through his acceptance into the Catholic faith before his execution in 1916. The play vindicates Casement as a hero of Catholic Ireland.

⁸⁹ For a summary of the 1916 Easter Rising, see Mike Cronin, *A History of Ireland* (New York: Palgrave, 2001) 190–5. For a strong, recent biography of Casement, see Séamas Ó Síocháin, *Roger Casement: Imperialist, Rebel, Revolutionary* (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 2008). For more on the diaries and Casement’s queerness of see Alison Garden, *The Literary Afterlives of Roger Casement, 1899–2016* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2020), 51–80; Elizabeth Jaeger, “Roger Casement: How Effective was the British Government’s Smear Campaign Exposing the Homosexual ‘Black Diaries’?” *Éire-Ireland* 46, no. 3 & 4 (Fall/Winter 2011): 132–69.

⁹⁰ On O’Casey’s homophobia, see Moran, 23–5. Homosexuality remained scarce on the Irish stage through the 1950s and 1960s but was not absent. “The Other Fellow” in Behan’s *The Quare Fellow* (originally staged by the Pike) is imprisoned for sexual crimes and may be homosexual. Phyllis Ryan recalls Hugh Leonard’s *A Walk on the Water* (1960) as the first Irish play to feature an explicitly homosexual character (Phyllis Ryan, *The Company I Kept* [Dublin: Town House, 1996], 157). Thomas Kilroy’s *The Death and Resurrection of Mr. Roche* (1968) is another example. Probably the first openly and explicitly queer characters in Irish drama, though, are in Mary Manning’s *Youth’s the Season...?*, which premiered at the Dublin Gate in 1931.

⁹¹ Theatre program for Cyril Cusack Productions’ presentation of *Roger Casement* at the Gaiety Theatre, Irish Theatre Archive, Dublin City Library. Englishman Alfred Noyes read some of the Black Diaries before they appeared, as he was then working in the news bureau of the Foreign Office. W. B. Yeats wrote a poem on Casement’s defamation, calling out Noyes’s complicity. Noyes later explained why he believed the Diaries were genuine but that he could have been mistaken. His book further criticizes the British for their handling of the affair. See Alfred Noyes, *The Accusing Ghost, or Justice for Roger Casement* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1957).

Notably, however, it does not clear him of the allegations laden in the “Black Diaries.” Casement denounces them as slander, but the play goes no further.⁹² As in *The Rose Tattoo*, had an Irish company performed such ambiguities as a part of the Tóstal, it may well have prompted equally varied responses. The very conjuring of Casement’s ghost in a formal DITF announcement may have been enough to stir outrage, whereas Cusack’s production was independent.⁹³

Beckett’s place in Irish popular and elite culture likely explains why his name appears so rarely in contemporary conversations about the DITF. Prior to the Pike’s massively successful production of *Waiting for Godot* of 1955–6, Beckett was virtually unknown in Ireland except among those most invested in modern literature. Censorship was his first barrier to an Irish audience. The Censorship Board banned his short story collection, *More Pricks Than Kicks* (1934) the year it was published. His experimental novel *Murphy* (1938) failed to generate much interest. When the Pike staged *Godot*, on the other hand, demand was so great they had to turn people away at multiple locations. “Dubliners were studiously unscandalised by *Godot*,” writes Christopher Morash.⁹⁴ Simpson even believed that Beckett’s Irish nationality and the play’s prior renown abroad helped to make the show the smash that it was, and it was a point of pride that the Pike retained lines that the Lord Chamberlain demanded Beckett alter or remove for London – unlike the Pike’s *Rose Tattoo* where the Irish state considered using the British censor’s requirement that Williams’s play accept cuts before performing as evidence of its indecency.⁹⁵

⁹² Roger McHugh and Alfred Noyes, *Roger Casement*, Roger McHugh Papers, NLI MS 31,748.

⁹³ It is unclear to me at what point *Roger Casement* fell out of Smith’s plan. Smith was clearly willing to have it. And the production at the Theatre Royal opened on March 3, meaning that they would have likely been in rehearsal for some time prior. The DITF postponement came only in mid-February. So while it is possible that Cusack decided immediately after the postponement to stage it immediately, it does not seem likely because the DITF was scheduled to take place in May, not March. Regardless, *Roger Casement*’s performance in 1958 is fascinating and is another site that demands additional research.

⁹⁴ Morash, *A History of Irish Theatre*, 205.

⁹⁵ Whelan and Swift, 153; See also Seán Kennedy, “Samuel Beckett’s Reception in Ireland,” in *The International Reception of Samuel Beckett*, eds. Mark Nixon and Matthew Feldman (London: Continuum, 2009), 55–74.

Godot's reception history cannot be assumed to mean that Ireland unequivocally acclaimed Beckett or that his plays or reputation wouldn't have caused some controversy had they gone on at the DITF, especially in the aftermath of *The Rose Tattoo* and the archbishop's protest. Regardless, it is entirely possible that Beckett's aesthetic modernity could have incited more cultural clashes. Although I have been unable to find any evidence that McQuaid knew anything of or felt any which way about Beckett, the playwright's work not only contained language and situations that many in Ireland would have counted as indecent but also challenged the certitudes that the Roman Catholic Church had embodied for centuries. Additionally, there can be little doubt that McQuaid and his like would have thought of Beckett as an exile who had utterly forsaken the sureties of his Irish homeland for France's modern metropolitanism. Modernist experimentation was often seen as a foreign contaminant, especially when coupled with representations of the body. Considering that at least some of the plays were mimes, and not particularly obscene ones as far as can be told, it is difficult to judge how an Irish audience might have responded to Beckett's plays at the second DITF, especially one primed to reject or boycott the likes of Beckett's modernist mentor, Joyce.

It is especially difficult to speculate about how controversial Beckett's plays would have been had they appeared at the DITF because it is not entirely clear what pieces Smith was planning. Irish presses were inconsistent and inaccurate in their reporting on Beckett's contributions to the DITF.⁹⁶ This is partly because there were likely going to be two separate

⁹⁶ The *Irish Times*, for instance, reported that Beckett was to have "a mime" at the DITF, the *Irish Independent* noted three mime plays, and the *Irish Press* simply referred to them as "his new mime plays." *All That Fall* is rarely mentioned, but it did make it into a handful of reports. "Tostal [*sic*] Council to Proceed with Plays," *Irish Times*, January 10, 1958, 1; "Tostal [*sic*] Council's Decision," *Irish Independent* (Dublin), February 19, 1958, 10; "Theatre Festival Deferred," *Irish Press* (Dublin), February 12, 1958, 8; "Theatre Festival 'Postponed,'" *Irish Times*, February 19, 1958, 1.

productions featuring Beckett plays. From Beckett's correspondence, it is clear that Simpson hoped to restore the Pike's finances with new Beckett pieces. After some lobbying, Beckett consented to Simpson's proposal to produce his one-act radio play *All That Fall* (1957) in a double bill with Behan's radio play *The Big House* (1957).⁹⁷ Beckett also shared with Simpson that he had nearly come to an agreement with Smith for three of his mimes to perform at the coming DITF to be produced and performed by Deryk Mendel, a British-born dancer who had collaborated with Beckett on the creation of his first mime, *Acte sans paroles*, first performed as an afterpiece to *Fin de partie* (1957) (the French version of *Endgame* [1958]).⁹⁸

What exactly these "three mimes" are isn't clear, either, though, as there are only two published pieces that Beckett wrote during this period that fit the description of a "mime." These would be the aforementioned *Acte sans paroles I*, which translated to *Act Without Words I*, and *Acte sans paroles II/Act Without Words II*. What the third mime might have been remains a mystery. In his correspondence with Smith in August 1957, Beckett told him that he had finished the second mime and felt he could manage to write another by November.⁹⁹ The only other mime piece scholars have identified from the late 1950s is an incomplete sketch that Beckett labeled "Mime du Rêveur A," or "Dreamer's Mime A."¹⁰⁰ Written sometime between 1955 and 1958,

⁹⁷ Alan Simpson to Samuel Beckett, August 21, 1957; Alan Simpson to Samuel Beckett, January 8, 1958, Samuel Beckett and the Pike Theatre Papers, TCD/MSS/10731/54, 55; Samuel Beckett, *The Letters of Samuel Beckett*, eds. George Craig, Martha Dow Fehsenfeld, Dan Gunn, Lois More Overbeck, vol. 3, 1957–1965, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 102.

⁹⁸ Samuel Beckett to Alan Simpson, January 15, 1958, Samuel Beckett and the Pike Theatre Papers, TCD/MSS/10731/56.

⁹⁹ Beckett, *Letters*, 3: 76, 77n5. See also, 58.

¹⁰⁰ It was not until the 1960s that Beckett wrote another silent work for performance, and that was *Film* (1965), his only screenplay. The only other completed speechless piece he wrote for the theatre also didn't have any human bodies onstage: *Breath* (1969). *Quad* (1981), another work without spoken dialogue, wasn't written until over two decades after the 1958 DITF, and was a teleplay. Beckett did begin to write two other plays he called "mimes" sometime around 1963. These are the "J. M. Mime" and the "Mongrel Mime." In stark contrast to the ones he wrote for Mendel, these drafts both contain spoken language. The "J. M. Mime," written for the actor Jack MacGowran, features two actors moving along a maze of paths as they search to cover all possible routes. The "Mongrel Mime" is about a man who follows the instructions of a voice to move in identical fashion between three rooms of the same

scholars often chalk the piece up to an experiment that anticipates *Fin de partie* because they share similar features. It is also possible Beckett thought he might finish it for the DITF. A mime-within-a-mime, the piece is set in an interior space with two windows (like *Endgame*) with a rocking chair at center stage. A mime struggles to move and maintain his balance, sifts through various objects in the pockets of his robe, and three times injects himself with a serum that knocks him out. Beckett intended to write mimed dream sequences for each of the three times, but he doesn't appear to have ever done so.¹⁰¹ It is possible that Beckett imagined a completely different piece than these that he never wrote or has yet to be discovered. Again, it is difficult to say how a post-*Rose Tattoo* Dublin might have responded to any of the Beckett plays at the DITF in 1958. Still, a number of elements in Beckett's work and the nature of the performances themselves might have alarmed the archbishop had he learned more about them.¹⁰²

One way or another, each of Smith's choices for the 1958 DITF includes some aesthetic and/or other representational element that could have created complicated incongruities with the politics of the Irish brand the state wanted An Tóstal to cultivate and display. Smith's selection

height and length but gradually shrinking width. For scholarship on these, see Ruby Cohn, *A Beckett Canon* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001), 276–7; Anna McMullan, *Performing Embodiment in Samuel Beckett's Drama* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 63–4. For a holograph of the “J. M. Mime,” see S. E. Gontarski, *The Intent of Undoing in Samuel Beckett's Dramatic Texts* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), Appendix C. The “Mongrel Mime” remains unpublished. See Cohn, 277n.

¹⁰¹ Samuel Beckett, “Mime du Rêveur A,” Samuel Beckett Collection, University of Reading, BC MS/1227/7/16/1. For scholarship on this mime, see Cohn, 210–1; Gontarski, 25–31; McMullan, 61; Jonathan Tadashi Naito, “Writing Silence: Samuel Beckett's Early Mimes,” *Samuel Beckett Today/Aujourd'hui* 19 (2008): 393–402. A holograph of the mime is available in this Gontarski text, 195–8.

¹⁰² The mimes would have supplied far more modern “foreign” imports than anything in the DITF in 1957. Judging from the two extant mimes, they would have been fragmented plays open to wide interpretation whose focus was in many ways on the limits of the body as a site of resistance, knowledge, and being itself. *All That Fall*, on the other hand, is a grisly and harrowing story that critiques Irish culture and politics. Dead children, infertility, sexual puns, and innuendo litter the script. Set against a more-explicitly Irish world than most of Beckett's work, the Pike (already inclined to read Beckett through an Irish lens, as their [unapproved] Hibernicized amendments to the *Godot* script attests) would have represented Ireland on its stage as a deteriorating, “dirty-minded” country where children, the symbol of political futures, are murdered and unable to even be conceived – an unnatural place where encroachments like trains and modern medicine had spoiled the pastoral, idyllic Éire. On the Pike's *Godot*, see Morash, *A History of Irish Theatre*, 109–208. See also Samuel Beckett, “*All That Fall*,” in *The Collected Shorter Plays* (New York: Grove Press, 2010), 1–34.

of these plays was itself political. To be sure, Smith thought about the DITF through a nationalist framework directed at both Irish and international audiences. After securing O’Casey’s permission to produce the play, Smith told him that he would like to immediately begin advertising it internationally as one of if not the top-billing item of the entire Tóstal, not just the DITF.¹⁰³ O’Casey objected in particular to the wording “full-scale National Production,” but an advertising booklet for the 1958 Tóstal ultimately listed O’Casey’s play as the top attraction for the DITF, calling it the “highlight of Dublin’s Tóstal programme.” The brochure also names “a dramatisation of James Joyce’s ‘Ulysses’” as “another premiere of special interest” alongside “mime plays, ballet, symphony orchestras and plays and players from at home and abroad.”¹⁰⁴ Once again, the state sponsored and promoted what Ireland’s cultural gatekeepers would view as dangerous and unacceptable modern theatre as representative of Irish culture to the nation and the world. The need to attract international audiences gave Smith the rationale to include new work by Irish playwrights of international repute, even if they weren’t safe cultural choices at home. As Smith told O’Casey in one of their early exchanges, “What we want is a new O’Casey play in Dublin, so do theatre lovers, professional and otherwise, all over the world. What’s more we want to bring them to Dublin to see and hear it.”¹⁰⁵ Here, again, economic modernization became a means of effecting cultural change. Had Smith’s program actually come to fruition, the DITF would have been a decidedly modernizing force in Irish national culture. By coordinating the DITF around these plays, he invited debate and to a certain extent had to expect it.

¹⁰³ Brendan Smith to Seán O’Casey, October 10, 1957, SOCP, NLI MS 38,081. Smith tells O’Casey that the most immediate need for advertising is the upcoming International Travel Agency Association Convention in Madrid, and that he wants to send the Director-General of *Bord Fáilte Éireann* with the advertisements ready.

¹⁰⁴ O’Casey, *Letters*, 3: 475; “Tostal” [*sic*] booklet, published by *Bord Fáilte Éireann*, no date, NAI/DFA/415/267/9. The booklet contains a mailer that could be cut out to request additional information. By March 13, 1958, the flyer that would be sent in return noted that all of the events advertised in conjunction with the DITF had been postponed and would not be taking place during the Tóstal period.

¹⁰⁵ Brendan Smith to Seán O’Casey, 10 August 1957, SOCP, NLI MS 38,081.

This is because Smith's program had to gain the approval of both the DITF Committee and the Dublin Tóstal Council before he could actually produce the plays. Members of the Council were among the first to respond negatively to Smith's plans and were the next major agents of censorship. Sometime in late September or early October, the Council met and Smith gave them the DITF Committee's approval and recommendation of the new O'Casey play and the adaptation of Joyce. The Council voted to move forward with the O'Casey play but decided to hold off on *Bloomsday* and final approval until all members were present, including the Council's Chairman, the Lord Mayor of Dublin, James Carroll – then absent.¹⁰⁶ When Carroll learned about the DITF plans, he telephoned the Archbishop's Palace for advice. Carroll was particularly anxious that the plays might reflect poorly on Dublin's character, and explained that he had already prepared a letter to the Council outlining his concerns about Joyce if not O'Casey, too. Clearly, the prospective program unnerved Dublin's Mayor enough to seek out the advice of the man who was the city's ultimate moral arbiter. Carroll wasn't alone in his concerns. The Council's Deputy Chairman, the lawyer Charles Brennan, communicated to the Archbishop's Palace in Drumcondra that he would resign from the Council if the two plays went forward.¹⁰⁷

The program only continued at that point because Carroll became satisfied that he had the archbishop's inferred approval. A secretary to the archbishop, Father Liam Martin, told the Lord Mayor to consult Father Patrick Tuohy, chaplain at University College Dublin, about the matter. Carroll did so, and on October 11, Tuohy told him that he "found no difficulty with 'Ulysses'" but would need another day at least to take in O'Casey's play. They didn't have a day, however

¹⁰⁶ "Memorandum on the Circumstances Leading to the Postponement of the Dublin Theatre Festival, 1958," NAI/DFA/10/2/342.

¹⁰⁷ "Memorandum on the Circumstances Leading to the Postponement of the Dublin Theatre Festival, 1958," NAI/DFA/10/2/342; Memo by James A. MacMahon, November 11, 1957, MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/53/10.

(and it is unclear if they even had a copy for perusal), because the next meeting of the Council was to occur that same evening. That night, Carroll reported Tuohy's verdict to the Council, couching him as "an authority on the moral aspects of drama" and the recommendation of the Archbishop's Palace. The Council then voted unanimously to approve O'Casey's play and voted to approve *Bloomsday* as well by a vote of six to two with one abstention (Brennan).¹⁰⁸

Expanding the number of people involved in the debate put censorship on the move. The program had to go to the Council for approval where it faced its first real challenge. This alone expanded the number of people involved in the decision making. The act of questioning whether the plays should be included in the DITF established them as sites of contestation. The subsequent decision to delay their approval gave Carroll and Brennan a chance to deliberate whether or not to disapprove of and therefore censor the plays from the DITF. To help them make their decision, they roped more people into the conversation. This stage of the censorship process already sees the circulation of the plays and debates about their appropriateness expand.

The circle of censorship expanded after the Council approved the plays. On October 21, 1957, as in previous years, the secretary to the Council wrote the archbishop requesting permission for a solemn votive mass to kick off the 1958 Tóstal. The next day, McQuaid directed his secretary to respond that the Tóstal had his permission to arrange for a low mass.¹⁰⁹ At this point, the DITF had already announced that O'Casey and Joyce would be featured in the

¹⁰⁸ "Memorandum on the Circumstances Leading to the Postponement of the Dublin Theatre Festival, 1958," NAI/DFA/10/2/342; Memo by James A. MacMahon, November 11, 1957, MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/53/10.

¹⁰⁹ Press Release, MP, DDA/AB8XXV/53/8. A votive mass is a mass celebrated for a specific intention not otherwise named in the liturgical calendar of the Divine Office. A solemn mass is also known as a high mass. It includes multiple ministers (typically a priest, deacon, and subdeacon) and chanting or singing. The solemn mass is considered very ceremonial. A low mass is a mass without singing or chanting and does not require additional sacred ministers beyond the priest. In effect, then, McQuaid gave permission for a low votive mass – a special mass without the full pomp of a solemn votive mass. McQuaid had previously given permission for high votive masses in 1953 and 1954, at least. See the invitations to celebrate a high votive mass, MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/52/3–4.

programme, and the *Irish Examiner*, *Irish Independent*, and *Irish Times* began reporting on both plays on October 16, 1957.¹¹⁰ It's unclear how McQuaid first learned about the plays, but several weeks later, on November 7, 1957, McQuaid had his secretary, the Reverend Father James A. MacMahon, write to the secretary of the Council, asking "whether it is correct to believe that your Council has sanctioned the production in Dublin of a stage version of 'Ulysses' and of a play by Mr. Seán O'Casey, during the Tostal [*sic*] period 1958."¹¹¹

As McQuaid waited for a reply, he learned that the press already knew about the plays and that they were beginning to question the Church's role in their selection. On November 12, a journalist identified in the archive only as "Mr. Smith" (not Brendan Smith) rang the Archbishop's House to inform His Grace that reporters at his paper brought the "objectionable" Joyce/O'Casey program for An Tóstal to his attention. Further, Mr. Smith told them that Brendan Smith had informed him that "the matter had been raised at Drumcondra and he was told that as to Ulysses there was no objection to the project in general, but some parts were unsuitable for presentation."¹¹² McQuaid learned all of this on November 13, and an anonymous memo chronicling these events notes that "This matter is by no means finished." Someone at the Archbishop's House then called Mr. Smith back and told him that this Tóstal business was not "definitely arranged and that no authoritative decision had been given from the Archbishop's House at all."¹¹³ Prompted by his place as a journalist, a worker within the modern media whose function was precisely to identify stories to push into circulation, Mr. Smith helped put censorship into motion. It brought to McQuaid's attention that stories may soon be published that

¹¹⁰ "O'Casey Premiere?," *Irish Examiner*, October 16, 1957; "New O'Casey Play for Dublin," *Irish Independent*, October 16, 1957, 6; Quidnunc, "An Irishman's Diary," *Irish Times*, October 16, 1957, 8.

¹¹¹ James A. MacMahon to T. A. Boyle, November 7, 1957, MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/53/9.

¹¹² Qtd. in memo by anonymous, November 12, 1957, MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/53/11.

¹¹³ Memo by anonymous, November 12, 1957, MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/53/11.

say the DITF had approved problematic plays with his approval. To McQuaid, this could have profound implications for what it meant to be a Catholic in Ireland, especially in a post-*Rose Tattoo* environment. It threatened to widen the purview of acceptable expressions of Irishness that ran counter to McQuaid's understanding of the faith.

McQuaid did not have to read the scripts to come to these conclusions.¹¹⁴ O'Casey and Joyce's reputations were enough to bring the archbishop to sever any ties between the Catholic Church and their plays. McQuaid's own available writings don't explain what he found objectionable in the particular or in general. The archive of papers he kept from his five decades in the priesthood offers clues about how he thought of them. McQuaid considered both Joyce and O'Casey deeply irreligious and even hostile to the Catholic faith and believed they could undermine the faith and the Church's influence on Irish life. For many, including the archbishop, O'Casey's politics were incompatible with the Church because he was a communist. Many also believed O'Casey to be anticlerical thanks to plays like *The Bishop's Bonfire* and *Cock-a-Doodle-Andy*.¹¹⁵ The case of Joyce is somewhat simpler: the artist was a religious apostate whose texts mocked the faith and dripped with a grossly indecent sensuality. When the scandal eventually broke in the presses, commentators were readily familiar with these issues, noting O'Casey's communism and anticlericalism and Joyce's indecencies and blasphemies. McQuaid's

¹¹⁴ McQuaid probably didn't even have access to either script. O'Casey only sent one manuscript to Ireland. Copies could have been made, but that's only speculation. As to *Bloomsday*, the copy of the script submitted to the Lord Chamberlain for production in London a year later is stamped October 15, 1958, and is quite possibly the only one still in existence. It seems unlikely that McQuaid would have needed to read them even if copies of the play were floating about Dublin. If the play had been accessible, then those who were against the play could have pointed to specific passages to make their case, but this never happened. See Murray, *Seán O'Casey*, 396.

¹¹⁵ On O'Casey's communism, see Susan Cannon Harris, *Irish Drama and the Other Revolutions: Playwrights, Sexual Politics and the International Left, 1892–1964* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), 170–8, 184–96; Moran, 26–7, 59, 96–116, 127–8, 161–2; Murray, *Seán O'Casey*, 258, 268–9, 280, 284–5, 308–9, 332, 373, 375–7, 386, 446–7. Both *The Bishop's Bonfire* and *Cock-a-Doodle-Andy* feature censorious Irish priests. See Seán O'Casey, *The Bishop's Bonfire: A Sad Play Within the Tune of a Polka* (New York: Macmillan, 1955). On the scandal surrounding *The Bishop's Bonfire*, see Dean, *Riot*, 150–3. On *Cock-a-Doodle-Andy* see note 87.

archive contains a trove of newspaper clippings reflecting these sentiments, including some written by close associates of his from within the Church.¹¹⁶ The mysterious Mr. Smith gave McQuaid reason to pursue the matter further. The proximity of the abject to the Church and state prompted Mr. Smith to go to the archbishop, as it had Carroll and Brennan, too.

Immediately after learning about Mr. Smith's inquiry on November 13, McQuaid wrote to Father Tuohy. In an urgent note marked "PERSONAL," McQuaid wrote,

I fear that the opinion expressed by you in regard to the choice of 'Ulysses' by the Dublin Tostal [*sic*] is being regarded as an opinion of [the] Archbishop's House, because Father Martin recommended the Lord Mayor to consult you, without my knowledge.

I would like you to take means to remove any such misunderstanding, for I shall be obliged to take very definite action if either Ulysses or O'Casey's play be chosen for the Tostal [*sic*]. The 'Rose Tattoo' ought to have been a lesson to the Tostal [*sic*].¹¹⁷

Tuohy apologized to McQuaid the next day and added that what he told Carroll was simply his private and conditional opinion that "if the scripts contain nothing objectionable, there could be no objection to their presentation." He vowed to amend the situation at once.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ See for example, Colm Brogan, "Ulysses," unknown newspaper, date unknown, MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/54/25; "City Council to Debate Two Tostal [*sic*] Plays," unknown newspaper, date unknown, MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/54/22; "Not Fair," *Evening Mail* (Dublin), February 20, 1958, MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/54/13; Alfred O'Rahilly, "An Tostal [*sic*] and the Archbishop of Dublin," *Standard*, February 28, 1958, 1 and 7, MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/54/18; Alfred O'Rahilly, "The Archbishop of Dublin and An Tostal [*sic*]," unknown publisher, date unknown, MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/54/17; "Sean O'Casey Play Ban," unknown newspaper, date unknown, MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/54/26.

¹¹⁷ John Charles McQuaid to Patrick Tuohy, November 13, 1957, MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/53/12.

¹¹⁸ Patrick Touhy to John Charles McQuaid, November 14, 1957, MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/53/13. Murray claims that it was after McQuaid received Tuohy's letter that the archbishop asked Boyle and the Tóstal whether or not it was true that they sanctioned the production of Joyce and O'Casey. The archbishop sent that letter a full week earlier, on November 7. McQuaid didn't know about the incident with the Lord Mayor and Tuohy until November 13. McQuaid had to have learned about the productions elsewhere. Murray, *Seán O'Casey*, 397.

The next day, November 15, the Council secretary responded in the affirmative. The plays were included in the program. With his answer, McQuaid chose not to respond right away, and this is exactly because he thought that after *The Rose Tattoo* his inquiry would be enough of a warning.¹¹⁹ It wasn't, however, and McQuaid didn't take his next step until over a month later. On December 28, 1957, MacMahon replied on McQuaid's behalf and explained that "His Grace the Archbishop directs me to inform you that permission for a religious ceremony, more particularly for the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, in connection with the Dublin Tóstal [*sic*] 1958, is hereby withdrawn."¹²⁰

This series of events show that McQuaid needed to reassert the distance between the Church and the abject authors. He needed to re-abject them to maintain his conception of Irish-Catholic cultural boundaries. McQuaid and the Church had already been implicated in the endorsement of *The Rose Tattoo* the previous year, and he probably felt very lucky to have escaped any connotation between the Church and O'Casey in years past.¹²¹ McQuaid had to be

¹¹⁹ T. A. Boyle to James A. MacMahon, November 15, 1957, MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/53/14.

¹²⁰ James A. MacMahon to T.A. Boyle, December 28, 1957, MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/53/16.

¹²¹ Prior to *The Rose Tattoo*, McQuaid didn't seem to have any trepidation about supporting An Tóstal. The only other McQuaid-Tóstal controversy I've gleaned from the archives was a brief spat over whether or not non-Catholics could attend the Tóstal mass. McQuaid felt only Catholics should be permitted to attend. See the letters in MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/52/1, 2, and 5. I have been unable to find any instance of McQuaid objecting to any previous Tóstal, including previous years that included O'Casey plays. McQuaid inaugurated the first Tóstal with a solemn votive mass in 1953. That year featured a production of O'Casey's *The Plough and the Stars* (1926) by Wimpole Productions and the National Arts Theatre Company at the National Arts Theatre. It is unclear if that production received state funding or was simply offered as an independent presentation that coincided with An Tóstal. However, in the 1953 Tóstal program book, the production is listed just nine entries below McQuaid's own sermon – a copy of which can be found in McQuaid's papers. This O'Casey production at the very least, though, escaped the top-billing publicity and heightened scrutiny the DITF faced as a national festival for international consumption. McQuaid's writing suggests that after *The Rose Tattoo* any O'Casey play might have been unsuitable – or at least any new O'Casey. As James Moran notes, Irish critics and the public looked disapprovingly upon the Dubliner after his emigration to England. His first three plays (*The Shadow of the Gunman* [1923], *Juno and the Paycock*, and *The Plough and the Stars*) attained a canonical status, but his later work remained controversial. In at least one press article in McQuaid's archive, the author suggests other plays and authors for the DITF, but neither O'Casey or his early work is included. See *An Tóstal: Ireland at Home 1953: National Programme*, MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/52/6 (page 13 of the book); "Our View: No Festival," *Sunday Press*, April 27, 1958, MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/54/19; Moran, 148, 156.

careful not to give anything he or the Church objected to an implicit imprimatur. There can be no doubt, too, that McQuaid sought to keep the nation tethered to the Church's cultural politics, even if the state went on without him. All were connected, and so keeping the Church separated from un-Catholic (and therefore un-Irish) ideas, people, and activities was imperative. Further, once it was known to the public that the DITF was planning on staging Joyce and O'Casey, McQuaid needed his rejection of the authors to be known. He needed that narrative to circulate, to move, so as to effect his re-articulation of Irish-Catholic values to the widest possible audience. In doing so, though, he put the authors and their ideas in circulation, too, as sites of contestation.

Word that the archbishop was refusing the mass threw the Council into some measure of chaos. Their maneuvers for the next month showed that the Council was desperate to relax the situation and avoid the negative publicity of a censorship scandal, but also that they were not comfortable at all with defying the archbishop. Caught between a rock and a hard place, they kept censorship in motion by keeping the debate alive even if only amongst themselves. Prolonging the debate, changing their minds, and refusing to make a decision and stick to it likely had the effect of making it a bigger scandal than it might have been. Lord Mayor Carroll and Deputy Council Chairman Brennan called a special meeting for January 2 to rescind the plays, and the motion passed, but was not unanimous. They ultimately decided, though, to try to get clarity on the archbishop's position so that they might avoid any negative publicity whatsoever, and so suspended the decision. They sent Council Deputy Chairman Brennan to try and work it all out with the archbishop. All Brennan got out of the Archbishop's House was that

His Grace had “no further comment to make in answer to any queries on this question.”¹²² News of the archbishop’s displeasure broke on January 8.¹²³ After failing to gain clarity from the archbishop, the Council met the next day (January 9) and rescinded their previous decision to approve *Bloomsday*, although it is unclear if that vote also rejected it or simply left it in limbo.¹²⁴ The day after that (January 10), however, several newspapers covered new Council announcements, namely that there would be no changes to the previously-announced program, contradicting their meeting of the previous evening. The DITF Press Officer also explained that McQuaid had not given his reasons for declining permission for the mass.¹²⁵ This may have been a ploy to reassure the public and to buy themselves more time to assuage Archbishop McQuaid. For instance, the Council typed up a draft press release for him to sign off on, and McQuaid took great umbrage with their characterization, saying that it was “quite obvious” that the plays were the reason he had cancelled the mass. He denied their request to approve the presser.¹²⁶ The stress even reached the Council’s higher organizing body, with Bord Fáilte director Brendan O’Regan appealing to Joseph Rodgers, the Bishop of Killaloe to find a compromise with McQuaid. Rodgers suggested they establish an independent panel to screen the plays, but McQuaid told him in no uncertain terms that “the Holy Sacrifice must not be linked with Joyce

¹²² Memo by Liam Martin for John Charles McQuaid, January 6, 19[58] (misdated as 1957), MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/53/2; Memo by Liam Martin for John Charles McQuaid, January 6, 19[58] (misdated 1957), MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/53/3.

¹²³ Henry Fielding, “The Archbishop is So Annoyed,” unknown newspaper, January 8, 1958, MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/54/2; “Archbishop the Snag in Ulysses Drama,” *Northern Whig* (Belfast), January 9, 1958, MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/54/4; “O God! O Montreal!” *Daily Telegraph* (London), January 9, 1958, MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/54/5.

¹²⁴ “Memorandum on the Circumstances Leading to the Postponement of the Dublin Theatre Festival, 1958,” NAI/DFA/10/2/342.

¹²⁵ “Dublin Tostal [*sic*] Council Meets,” *Evening Herald* (Dublin), January 10, 1958; “No Change in Theatre Festival Plans,” *Irish Independent* (Dublin), January 10, 1958; “Tostal [*sic*] Council to Proceed with Plays,” *Irish Times*, January 10, 1958, 1.

¹²⁶ T. A. Boyle to John Charles McQuaid, January 21, 1958, MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/53/35; Draft Press Release, MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/53/36; James Ardlé MacMahon to T. A. Boyle, January 22, 1958, MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/53/39.

and O’Casey. The Tostal [*sic*] Council had weeks to consider the question and has decided to retain the plays: it takes the consequences of its own decision.”¹²⁷ Utterly at odds, the Council and even Bord Fáilte were at an impasse. So long as they deferred the decision, they risked keeping the debate afloat and making more of it than they already had. These multiple agents kept censorship in motion and in process.

O’Casey was also an agent of the DITF’s collapse, but this was because he ultimately decided to withdraw his play from consideration. It was his own intervention into the debate and actually gave him some power again, even as he ultimately lost out on an opportunity for his play to perform in his native Ireland, where it arguably had the most to say. He also went out of his way to help produce the narratives of censorship that followed, which, in turn, helped the discourse around the festival keep moving. Without attending to the details of what led O’Casey to withdraw his play, it could seem like the archbishop’s protest worked. However, O’Casey’s action is better understood as a kind of counter censorship that ultimately helped to make the DITF’s de-facto censorship much more mobile. O’Casey answered McQuaid’s protest with his own protest, pulled out of the DITF, and then re-narrated the events on his own terms.

Although McQuaid objected to his inclusion in the DITF, it was only one of the reasons why O’Casey withdrew his play. When O’Casey first replied to Smith about giving *Father Ned* to the DITF, one of his primary concerns related to the details of production, and Smith never resolved these concerns. After some back-and-forth about production companies, theatres, and directors, they settled on a production at the Gaiety Theatre to be directed by James Fitzgerald. O’Casey wasn’t familiar with Fitzgerald and presumed, therefore, a “lack of experience” that

¹²⁷ Joseph Rodgers to John Charles McQuaid, January 20, 1958; John Charles McQuaid to Joseph Rodgers, no date, MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/53/32.

troubled him. Smith told him, though, that Fitzgerald was one of only two strong directors currently working in Dublin (the other was the Gate's Hilton Edwards, who O'Casey had already shot down). After explaining Fitzgerald's strengths, O'Casey consented. Smith proposed the company Fitzgerald frequently worked with, the Globe Theatre, as producer in partnership with the Festival Committee. Not having been to Dublin for years, O'Casey had little choice but to take Smith's word for it. This added to O'Casey's frustrations. He wasn't happy to be given a director he didn't know, but nevertheless said he trusted Smith. O'Casey said nothing of the Globe as the co-producer.¹²⁸ Meeting the director worried O'Casey even further. Fitzgerald traveled to England to talk with O'Casey about the play in mid-January. O'Casey later said that Fitzgerald seemed "timid" about the play, but he tried to encourage him. Fitzgerald also brought with him the news of the archbishop's protest. O'Casey chalked McQuaid's anger up to O'Casey's anticlerical reputation and, judging from a letter to a friend O'Casey wrote shortly after their meeting, O'Casey was then still relatively content, noting that "the Committee say they will go on with the Productions; so we wait to see what may happen. It is all very tedious."¹²⁹ If this was really the first time O'Casey heard about the scandal, it doesn't appear to have been a deal-breaker for the much-maligned author.

¹²⁸ Brendan Smith to Seán O'Casey, August 10, 1957, October 10, 1957, December 9, 1957, SOCP, NLI MS 38,081; O'Casey, *Letters*, 3: 445–6, 457, 475, 507–8. Jim Fitzgerald was, indeed, an up-and-coming director, a regular at the small, fledgling Globe Theatre Company. Phyllis Ryan, the actress and producer, pronounced him "the only director I have ever encountered whom I could truly call a genius." The Globe Theatre Company presented new foreign and domestic plays, some of which certainly would have appealed to Smith's modernizing tastes. Somewhat like the Pike but without a permanent house, the Globe also courted some controversy. For example, audiences walked out of and complained to the Gardaí about the Fitzgerald-directed production of *I Am a Camera* (1951) in 1956 – the basis for the later musical *Cabaret* (1966) – because the main character, Sally Bowles, procures an abortion. Ryan also notes that Fitzgerald was one of Smith's students at his theatre school. See Ryan, 133–4; Whelan and Swift, 41; Lawrence William White, "Fitzgerald, James (Jim)," *Dictionary of Irish Biography*, eds. James McGuire and James Quinn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), *Cambridge Core*, accessed November 12, 2020, <http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a9305>.

¹²⁹ Brendan Smith to Seán O'Casey, January 10, 1958, SOCP, NLI MS 38,081; O'Casey, *Letters*, 3: 530, 525.

What broke the elder playwright was the sense that he was losing control over his work, and that led to him reclaiming it from the DITF. The producers of the Globe, the actors and co-founders Godfrey Quigley and Norman Rodway, sent O'Casey a somewhat impertinent letter on January 24, saying that they met with Fitzgerald after he met with O'Casey. While they were pleased to hear that progress in some vague sense had been made with regard to the play, the producers were "most eager and proud to have the opportunity to stage the play, [but] we are still not happy at all with its structural state, which does not, in our opinion, make it produceable." Smith apparently did not have their final approval when he suggested the Globe as the co-producer. Fitzgerald seems to have said that O'Casey was open to making some changes during rehearsal, but that he was reluctant to make changes any earlier. Quigley and Rodway couldn't go along with this plan because they felt the play needed "structural re-shaping." Instead, they asked O'Casey to "give Jim Fitzgerald the necessary authority to make such alterations as he requires before committing ourselves to any definite action with the Tostal [*sic*] authorities."¹³⁰

O'Casey reasserted his authority on January 29. He was profoundly confused about the communication from the Globe, having missed their name in Smith's earlier communication. In letters to Smith and the Globe producers he claimed that he had never given any play of his for the Globe's consideration. Rightly adamant in his position as playwright, O'Casey told Smith that he will "never agree" to the "unprecedented" demand to yield his play up to someone else. Thus, O'Casey withdrew the rights.¹³¹ Smith replied by telling O'Casey that the previous night (February 3) the Council decided it still wanted the play for the DITF "subject to a satisfactory outcome of negotiations on technical points already discussed. Accordingly... I have been

¹³⁰ Godfrey Quigley and Norman Rodway to Seán O'Casey, January 24, 1958, SOCP, NLI MS 38,047.

¹³¹ O'Casey, *Letters*, 3: 529–31

instructed to ask if you would change your attitude towards the question of negotiating such alterations.”¹³² O’Casey would have none of it, but did extend something of an olive branch to Smith, telling him that he didn’t blame him for the antics of theatrical producers – reminding him that they all have “the Bishop’s blast” to contend with (as if Smith needed any reminding).¹³³

O’Casey’s withdrawal of the play was a refusal to be a part of a system that might contort his own work (at best) in ways in which he generally did not approve or (at worst) in an attempt to please the whims of a belligerent priest. In the immediate moment, O’Casey’s withdrawal of the play appears to have been about keeping authorial control over his writing, but McQuaid’s pressure campaign to oust him from the Festival was not absent from his mind. Both likely played a role in O’Casey’s decision. By refusing to take part in any of it and excising his work from the DITF, O’Casey made his claim to the debate over the meaning of Irishness at the core of it all. O’Casey did not believe he had any place in the Ireland that McQuaid dreamed of. By censoring the play from Ireland, himself, he could make a point about the parochialism and anti-modernity of the hegemony, a primary point of *The Drums of Father Ned*. In doing so, O’Casey contributed to the debate, kept it in motion, and drew even more attention to it. As one of the most famous figures in the affair from an international perspective, it was a vital move to the production of the narratives and memories of censorship that emerged about the Festival.

O’Casey came to believe that the archbishop’s protest made the producers squeamish and brought them to make demands on the playwright’s work.¹³⁴ He may have been right. In early January, when the Council waffled about whether or not to retain or reject the plays, Brennan tried to meet with McQuaid. In his talks with His Grace’s secretary, Father Martin, Brennan said

¹³² Brendan Smith to Seán O’Casey, February 4, 1958, SOCP, NLI 38,081.

¹³³ O’Casey, *Letters*, 3: 531–2.

¹³⁴ O’Casey, *Letters*, 3: 533, 537, 538.

that Brendan Smith would supervise both the script and presentation of O’Casey’s play and that Smith “thought that O’Casey would refuse in that case to present it.” Brennan echoed this again in the subsequent phone call with Martin, saying “it was possible that the O’Casey play would finally be held up by O’Casey himself, especially if Mr [*sic*] Smith controlled strictly as he said he would, the text and presentation.”¹³⁵ This meeting took place several weeks before Quigley and Rodway’s letter to O’Casey, the author’s decision to withdraw, and even before Smith told O’Casey that Fitzgerald would be traveling to England for a pre-production meeting. It is entirely possible (but unproven) that Smith, Brennan, or someone else planned with or communicated this idea of O’Casey balking at the control of his texts to Fitzgerald and/or the Globe producers. If so, it is yet another instance of how the act of censorship was dispersed across multiple agents who acted in response to the politics of abjection. The more action, debate, and conflict that the DITF’s censorship produced, the more likely it was that it would get reported in the press and spread further in multiple forms and from multiple perspectives.

Smith’s reaction to O’Casey’s withdrawal resulted in him, too, drawing out the process and keeping the play in debate. O’Casey withdrew his play on January 29, but Smith seems to have kept that information to himself, perhaps in the hopes that his crumbling plans could be salvaged. In late January, those jockeying to keep the DITF afloat set up a group to screen the two plays so that the Council would have the input of representatives from theatre production and criticism, a priest, and a judge.¹³⁶ At a DITF Committee meeting on February 1, the votes of

¹³⁵ Memo by Liam Martin for John Charles McQuaid, January 6, 19[58] (misdated as 1957), MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/53/2; Memo by Liam Martin for John Charles McQuaid, January 6, 19[58] (misdated 1957), MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/53/3.

¹³⁶ The panel included actor and playwright Micheál Mac Liammóir, critics Gabriel Fallon and Seamus O’Kelly, Judge Cearbhall O Dalaigh, Father E. J. Coyne, and a producer called Fitzgerald (likely James Fitzgerald who was to direct O’Casey’s play). See also Murray, *Seán O’Casey*, 401.

the play-readers were shared: *Bloomsday* with a vote of three to one in favor, O’Casey’s *Father Ned* with vote of zero to four opposed with one vote unknown. On February 3, Smith conveyed the panel’s recommendations to the Tóstal Council – or, he told them something of their vote. According to a summary of the meeting in McQuaid’s archive, Smith misrepresented the panel’s choices, telling the Council they approved of both plays.¹³⁷ It is probably the case that Smith kept O’Casey’s withdrawal a secret in the hope that a vote of confidence would help win O’Casey back. Based on the falsified panel recommendation, the Council voted to retain both plays. However, when Smith contacted him again on the next day, February 4, the playwright still wouldn’t budge from his position.¹³⁸ It wasn’t until February 11 that O’Casey’s withdrawal became public knowledge. Perhaps weary of waiting for the DITF to announce it themselves, O’Casey had an agent explain his position. A spokesperson for the Council then tried to claim ownership of the situation by recasting the withdrawal, saying that they gave him the boot after he refused to alter the play.¹³⁹

Conflict like this likely only fueled media interest and propelled censorship’s circulation. On February 14, Bord Fáilte Éireann intervened and argued that the Dublin Tóstal Council and DITF had violated the terms of their financial agreement with the organizing body by provoking and mishandling a public controversy. Bord Fáilte would accord them the lowest priority for funding if *Bloomsday* – “because of its offensive associations” to Joyce and his novel – remained on the program. Upon receiving the letter, the Council decided that for the sake of future

¹³⁷ Summary of Dublin Tóstal Council Meeting, February 5, 1958, MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/53/41. It is not clear why there were five voters for *Father Ned* but only four for *Bloomsday*.

¹³⁸ Brendan Smith to Seán O’Casey, February 4, 1958, SOCP, NLI 38,081; O’Casey, *Letters*, 3: 531. See also Murray, *Seán O’Casey*, 402.

¹³⁹ “Play Withdrawn by Mr. Sean O’Casey,” *Times*, February 12, 1958.

Festivals to drop *Bloomsday* once and for all.¹⁴⁰ A deluge of publicity rained down, spreading the word and keeping the debate alive in the public sphere. With Bord Fáilte's act, public consensus and cultural attitudes increasingly entrenched themselves in McQuaid's camp.

The final decisive agent in the dispersed process that was the censorship of the 1958 DITF was Samuel Beckett. When he heard that McQuaid's opposition to Joyce and O'Casey had forced their expulsion/withdrawal from the DITF, he explained to both Smith and Simpson that he would be forced to pull his own works in solidarity. After confirming that this was the case, Beckett made good on his threat with a vengeance. He not only cancelled the DITF productions but also banned all of his plays from performing in the Republic. Carolyn Swift pleaded with Beckett to let the Pike go through with their productions, but Beckett argued, "If no protest is heard they will prevail for ever [*sic*]. This is the strongest I can make."¹⁴¹ Beckett's protest robbed the DITF of the last major headliner Smith had secured. It was something of a final straw, and the DITF announced that they would have to postpone that year's Festival. They would never find replacements as they had hoped. Responding to the censored site of contestation rent open by the conflicts between Smith, McQuaid, the Lord Mayor, reporters, and so many others, Beckett's own act of censorship was itself an attempt to help shape Ireland in a countervailing direction. It reasserted his belief that O'Casey and Joyce should be free to perform in Ireland without clerical or state interference. His protest and the following cancellation of the DITF once again recirculated the debates and kept narratives of censorship moving.¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ "Memorandum on the Circumstances Leading to the Postponement of the Dublin Theatre Festival, 1958;" Timothy J. O'Driscoll to the secretary of the Dublin Tóstal Council, February 14, 1958, NAI/DFA/10/2/342.

¹⁴¹ Beckett, *Letters*, 3: 99, 102–3, 106, 112–13.

¹⁴² For example, "No Beckett Plays for Tostal [*sic*]," *Irish Times*, February 17, 1958, 1.

The central conflict between the DITF and the archbishop over the inclusion or exclusion of the plays in that year's Tóstal set the stage for the repeated appearance of the plays in public discourse. Dragging out the process of deciding whether or not to include the plays resulted in a months-long debate that paradoxically made the would-be banned plays differently visible. Without formal state censorship, McQuaid found a way to regulate Irish culture, but it required his displeasure with them to be known in order to succeed. The figures in this section were the ones who ultimately made decisions to censor, but in the public domain other agents of censorship acted to pressure those who could make the decisions.

2.4 Circulating Censorship: The 1958 DITF Continued

One of the first articles to appear in the daily presses about the scandal was an article titled "The Archbishop is So Annoyed." It declared that McQuaid "dropped a bombshell from the pulpit on the city's theatre world" when the archbishop "said he was opposed to the two plays" and that "if the plays are put on he will not allow a votive mass to mark the opening of the Tostal [*sic*]." ¹⁴³ While the substance of the article is true, it creates the perception that the archbishop was more direct in action and language than he actually was and even imagines him sermonizing against the plays from the pulpit. He had not, in fact, "said" that he opposed the plays but simply cancelled his permission for a mass after the Council confirmed the plays. This ambiguity was part of why the Council responded the way that it did at the start of the new year.

¹⁴³ "The Archbishop is So Annoyed," unknown newspaper, January 8, 1958, MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/54/2.

However much the article exaggerates, though, it still helped to put censorship on the move by greatly expanding the number of people aware of the conflict, identifying the plays as sites of contestation, and alluding to the debate's cultural, economic, and political implications. Each article and conversation about the DITF was itself an interpretative act that expanded the discourse in terms of the intellectual and cultural scope of the arguments as well as its sheer volume or quantity. More discussion meant more mobility, a greater potential that the discourse around the protest would move beyond local confines, and the repeated confrontation and renegotiation of the abject as acts of collective and individual self-fashioning. The press themselves acted as agents of censorship, not only by opening up the debate for additional people to participate but the media attention also increased the pressure on those officials and artists highlighted in the previous section to act. The press ultimately helped to shape perceptions of consensus and had an accumulative but not inevitable effect on the scandal's outcome. They were also instrumental in creating a foundation for the memory of the DITF's censorship, one of the ways that this one censorious event continued to influence cultural production inside and beyond Ireland, and which the subsequent chapters of this dissertation analyze more thoroughly.

Bringing the scandal to light galvanized McQuaid's supporters and spawned more debate. Those on McQuaid's side made their voices heard in the papers, cultivating the discourse around the scandal as they interpreted the actions of the Council and McQuaid. Some hazard to guess McQuaid's reasoning, arguing that the anticlericalism in O'Casey's recent play *The Bishop's Bonfire* as well as the "Communist ideas" O'Casey advocated explained McQuaid's opposition. The article goes on to explain that *Ulysses* "has never gained approval from the Church."¹⁴⁴ In a letter to the editor of another paper, a man living in Essex, England (likely an Irish emigrant)

¹⁴⁴ "Sean O'Casey Play Ban," unknown newspaper, date unknown, MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/54/26.

explains that, while he had “no wish to defend the puritanical atmosphere in the Republic of Eire [sic] ... it is a fact that ‘Ulysses’ is a book of quite exceptional blasphemy. It is also a fact that the ordaining of a Votive Mass would necessarily be interpreted as an expression of positive approval for... the dramatised version.”¹⁴⁵ Another news report claimed that “The objections to the O’Casey play are on the grounds that he is a Communist and anti-clerical.”¹⁴⁶ The Dublin *Evening Mail*’s take on the situation characterized O’Casey as “a declared and implacable enemy of that Church of which the archbishop is the supreme head in this part of Ireland” and Joyce as “a man whom that same Church must number among its apostates.”¹⁴⁷ In a blistering screed first published in the *Standard*, a Catholic weekly, and subsequently as a standalone booklet, McQuaid ally Monsignor Alfred O’Rahilly made the case that McQuaid was perfectly right to preemptively disallow the “Holy Mass [to be] used as a curtain-raiser” for Joyce and O’Casey. Even without getting the church entangled in the affair, O’Rahilly took exception to *Bloomsday*’s inclusion at all, arguing that the production would have given “publicly financed publicity to a book written by an apostate, which is not only grossly obscene but quite exceptionally blasphemous (especially in regards the Mass).”¹⁴⁸ To O’Rahilly, O’Casey was a communist “obsessed with anti-Catholicism” who “utilise[s] the stage as a vehicle for mocking our faith.” Relating the authors’ abjection to their proposed relationship to the Church and state via An

¹⁴⁵ Colm Brogan, “Ulysses,” unknown newspaper, date unknown, MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/54/25.

¹⁴⁶ “City Council to Debate Two Tostal [sic] Plays,” unknown newspaper, date unknown, MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/54/22.

¹⁴⁷ “Not Fair,” *Evening Mail*, February 20, 1958, MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/54/13.

¹⁴⁸ O’Rahilly here references the opening scene of *Ulysses* in which Stephen Dedalus’s friend Buck Mulligan performs a mock mass using a razor and shaving basin. See James Joyce, *Ulysses*, eds. Hans Walter Gabler with Wolfhard Steppe and Claus Melchior (New York: Vintage, 1986), 3.

Tóstal, O’Rahilly suggests their incompatibility with both, connected and sanctioned as they are by the overwhelming majority of the Catholic public.¹⁴⁹

McQuaid’s supporters also criticized the DITF and Dublin Council in nationalist terms and pushed back against the international modernity of the playwrights that Smith prioritized. Since McQuaid kept these reports, they suggest his desire to shepherd his flock away from the foreignness of the proposed DITF and its effects upon Irish life, a concern consistent with his management of and control over Dublin’s health infrastructure, educational policies, and state censorship. The stunning view of the editors from the *Sunday Press* (the Fianna Fáil weekly) was that neither play “is outstanding in any Irish way.” Foreign tourists, they hold, come to Ireland to see and understand the country and its people. With Joyce and O’Casey, “they would have had no true picture of this land or its way of thinking or anything about it.” To the editors, the plays clashed with the traditional values An Tóstal was supposed to project, claiming that they were selected as a kind of virtue signaling to show the world how modern and advanced the country had become. They recommend the DITF turn to Ireland’s Gaelic past instead: “It was when we had our own language in use all over the island and our own culture and civilisation that we most attracted other nations and had a high international position.” The continued use of the English language, they argue, is why there are so few plays that express Irish national pride “which should be normal in a race which has played our tremendous part in history.” Such thinking not only aligns with longstanding Fianna Fáil ideologies but exhibits a deep concern with how the country presents itself to the world via the Tóstal. National difference was the aim, which would allow Ireland to stand toe-to-toe with its competitors. It’s not that they don’t want tourism, but

¹⁴⁹ Alfred O’Rahilly, “An Tostal [*sic*] and the Archbishop of Dublin,” *Standard*, February 28, 1958, 1 and 7, MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/54/18; Alfred O’Rahilly, “The Archbishop of Dublin and An Tostal [*sic*],” unknown publisher, date unknown, DDA/AB8/XXV/54/17. On O’Rahilly and McQuaid’s relationship, see Cooney, 296, 344.

that the cultural and aesthetic aims of the DITF under Smith were antithetical to their own. Undergirding the editors' commentary is the sense that voices that had left Ireland had been "contaminated" by foreign thought.¹⁵⁰ Monsignor O'Rahilly even added a sectarian xenophobia to the discourse, arguing that appeals to international audiences and modernity were squarely situated in Protestantism, which he coded as foreign and contrary to normative Irishness.¹⁵¹

The circulation of these debates occurred outside of the Republic, too. As a tourist-directed enterprise, what was said around the world mattered to the Council and Bord Fáilte Éireann. For instance, the UK *Daily Mail* stated that McQuaid put forward an ultimatum for the Council. It also framed the Council's initial decision to proceed as planned as "defy[ing] the Archbishop."¹⁵² The UK's *Daily Telegraph* explained to its readers that the archbishop put "what amounts to a church ban" on the plays, calling him "a great banner" who would censor "a volume of his own sermons" if they found their way before him. The article also painted Ireland itself in negative terms, noting that Ireland had the greatest percentage of cinemagoers in Europe, willing to "devour... with the Archbishop's blessing – the most inane rubbish which the moron-commercial experts of America can devise... But you touch the works of modern Irish genius, of Joyce and O'Casey, at your peril."¹⁵³ Each of these made censorship more visible and extended

¹⁵⁰ "Our View: No Festival," *Sunday Press*, April 27, 1958, MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/54/19. It's also worth noting that these editors also supply a list of plays that they feel do accurately "reflect the national mood." All of them are from the start of the century, including Lady Gregory's *The Rising of the Moon* (1907), Patrick Pearse's *The Singer* (1917), and Yeats and Gregory's *Cathleen ni Houlihan* (1902).

¹⁵¹ O'Rahilly, "An Tostal [sic] and the Archbishop of Dublin," *Standard*, February 28, 1958, 7, MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/54/18.

¹⁵² "Festival Council will Defy Archbishop," *Daily Mail* (London), January 10, 1958, MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/54/7. The others referenced here are "Dublin's Tostal [sic] Programme," *Irish Press*, January 10, 1958, MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/54/8; and "No Change in Theatre Festival Plans," *Irish Independent*, January 10, 1958, MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/54/6.

¹⁵³ "O God! O Montreal!" *Daily Telegraph*, January 9, 1958, MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/54/5.

the discussion to spaces outside of Dublin, coloring perceptions of Ireland in the foreign imagination, and added additional pressure to those making decisions in Dublin.

Censorship's circulation also inspired some to help the archbishop more directly by asserting their influence. After the news of the archbishop's protest broke, on January 14, Father Michael O'Grady, Jesuit Provincial, informed McQuaid that he directed the Rector of St. Francis Xavier Hall to refuse the DITF's application to produce Beckett's mimes there. McQuaid conveyed his gratitude, telling O'Grady, "It is significant that you are the first to uphold me in my resistance to the Dublin Tostal's [*sic*] production of Joyce and O'Casey."¹⁵⁴ The Jesuit's move against the DITF doesn't seem to have been reported – and Beckett doesn't seem to have ever learned about it, either. Nevertheless, the gesture took part in McQuaid's implicit call to abject what the DITF wanted to hustle into Ireland and associate with the Church. It was also just the start. A member of the Guild of St. Frances de Sales, a group for Catholic journalists, called on Catholics to stand in solidarity with the archbishop and boycott the whole Tóstal.¹⁵⁵ Involvement in the protest effort reached an international scale when the National Council of Catholic Men, USA, wrote to McQuaid about whether or not they should allow their film *Rome Eternal* (1958) to be screened at the Tóstal. The news about McQuaid's resistance (which they saw in a Catholic newsletter) ultimately led them to decline the invitation Smith had extended to the film. McQuaid responded with approval and appreciation, and also wrote to the archbishop of Cincinnati, thanking him for his part in apparently guiding the group to oppose An Tóstal.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴ Memo to John Charles McQuaid, January 14, 1958, MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/53/22.

¹⁵⁵ "Catholic Bodies Will Clamp Boycott On Dublin Tostal [*sic*] Events," *Sunday Review* (Dublin), January 12, 1958, MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/54/10.

¹⁵⁶ Martin H. Work to James [John] C. McQuaid, January 17, 1958; Martin H. Work to James [John] C. McQuaid, February 5, 1958; Martin H. Work to Brendan Smith, February 5, 1958; John Charles McQuaid to Martin H. Work, February 8, 1958; John Charles McQuaid to Karl J. Alter, February 8, 1958, MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/55/1, 5, 6–8. *Rome Eternal* is a documentary film about the history of the Catholic Church. See the two pamphlets on the film contained in MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/55/2 and 3.

Irish newspapers reported the first of these boycotts, and the Council surely knew about the film, too. In some instances, events like these were newsworthy in their own right. In this way, too, they kept censorship moving and the debates ongoing.

Support for McQuaid grew nationally and internationally and applied pressure to the economics behind An Tóstal. First, Cardinal Francis Spellman, archbishop of New York, cut to the heart of the Tóstal project by actively discouraging travel to Ireland and boycotting the national Irish airline.¹⁵⁷ Then, on February 11, a month of planning came to a head when one John Dunne of the Council of Irish Unions got Dublin's labor movement involved. Dunne had inquired to the Archbishop's Palace about whether the unions should continue to allocate funds to An Tóstal in light of their objectionable plays. At a meeting of his organization, Dunne read aloud the letter that the archbishop's officers had sent him detailing McQuaid's position. This led the Council of Unions to send the Dublin Tóstal Council a letter threatening their sponsorship and a boycott if they retained the plays. On February 12, multiple Irish newspapers reported their actions.¹⁵⁸ Both Spellman and the unions posed threats to An Tóstal's bottom line: the expansion of Ireland's economy through tourism and the infrastructural work that supported it. Both actions were also statements of support for the Ireland that McQuaid was dreaming into reality, rejections of the abject, and affirmation of traditional Irishness. They also re-enacted censorship's performative paradox, though, circulating the issues anew.

¹⁵⁷ "Memorandum on the Circumstances Leading to the Postponement of the Dublin Theatre Festival, 1958," NAI/DFA/10/2/342; Cooney, 330.

¹⁵⁸ "Archbishop's Objections to Plays," *Irish Examiner*, February 12, 1958; "Tostal [*sic*] Council Should Be More Discreet," *Standard*, February 12, 1958, MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/54/14; "Unions to Send Protest to Tostal [*sic*] Council," *Irish Times*, February 12, 1958. On Dunne's conversations with the Archbishop's House, see Summary of phone conversation, January 15, 1958, MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/53/29; John Dunne to the Reverend Secretary of the Archbishop, January 15, 1958, MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/53/30.

The news of O'Casey's withdrawal also broke on February 12, and it was just a few days later that the Council announced the DITF's postponement. The apparent end to the Festival was not the end of the debate, however, and the movement of the story among national and international presses insured that the discourse would continue and that people around the world would interpret Ireland and themselves through its history. It wasn't long before a wild flurry of opinions and additional reporting disseminated varying narratives, misrepresentations, and opinions into the discourse. For example, a group of letters to the editor of the *Irish Times* laid out a series of opinions that ranged from sarcastic diatribes to open hostility.¹⁵⁹ The confusing, multifaceted, and drawn-out debates also produced misinformation and impressions that continued to circulate, helping to form narratives and memories of censorship. The *Evening Mail* published a piece defending the archbishop by arguing that he has no legal authority to ban a play and so therefore cannot be considered a censor. The same author also says McQuaid never shut down a theatre before because he was not previously asked to do so.¹⁶⁰ Such arguments not only miss the point of his objection in the first place, but recirculate misinformation and incorrect impressions about the event, distorting the truer sequence of events that were, indeed, reported in some outlets. Such misinformation had the potential to move just as much as its more-accurate counterpart. The same is true, too, of the papers that continued to spread confusion, which simply lacked the facts and didn't follow what some of the others had already reported.¹⁶¹

Various versions and interpretations of what happened to the DITF circulated the globe, participating in the global construction of Irish identity, history, and culture as it moved. As the story moved, censorship functioned as a way to reinterpret a nation. An Australian press called

¹⁵⁹ "The Theatre Festival," *Irish Times*, February 19, 19[58] (misdated as 1957), MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/54/1.

¹⁶⁰ "Not Fair," *Evening Mail*, February 20, 1958, MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/54/13.

¹⁶¹ "Dublin Letter," *Irish Examiner*, February 20, 1958.

the DITF scandal “a sad little farce,” tracing the event from the archbishop’s objection, to the DITF “pushing out” O’Casey, to the dropping of Joyce, to Beckett’s honorable withdrawal. Australian readers were left with the impression that Dubliners expected some of the parties to go to court over the losses, where “the more jovial” look forward to a judge’s determination of whether “the intervention of the Archbishop of Dublin constitutes an act of God.”¹⁶² This down under press mocked Ireland and the Irish as backward. Couched among a series of other stories from Britain, the story of the DITF served a political purpose, too: to bolster British imperial nationalisms (including Australia as a member of the Commonwealth) through an implicit comparison with Ireland. This interpretation of Ireland approaches abjection in its revilement, a “not-I” to which those in the Commonwealth would nevertheless have also shared some degree of culture, history, and even heritage through the Irish diaspora. Ireland’s abjection to the periphery of Anglophone culture served to implicitly define Australia in contrast.

In France, the story was somewhat different. In an article in *Le Monde*, the author explained the Tóstal background and compared the potential of the DITF to the Edinburgh Festival. Taking into consideration the number of Irish writers with which the French were already familiar and Ireland’s reputation for strong acting, Scotland’s contributions to continental theatre, the French author suggests, are virtually unknown if there were any. The journalist goes on to describe the proposed program for 1958 as one of “unprecedented brilliance”: Joyce’s “famous novel,” a new play by the “patriarch of Ireland’s contemporary playwrights,” and new plays by Paris’s adopted son, Beckett. Explaining that Joyce is unpopular in Ireland for his “atheism” and immoral literature, and that O’Casey’s “militant anticlericalism” and “overt

¹⁶² Peter Gladwin, “Letter from London,” *Daily Telegraph* (Sydney, Australia), February 28, 1958, NAI/DFA/10/2/342.

collaboration with Communists” have earned them little love in Ireland, the French author disparages the “unworthy voices” who have protested against them. This article pins the blame on both the archbishop and the DITF organizers who caved and, according to their reporting, removed the two plays. Irish actors, it notes in conclusion, have taken to protesting the Tóstal (which they did), demanding the return of the jobs that were snatched from them.¹⁶³

This French take is more generous of Ireland’s culture and people. It criticizes only those who rejected the playwrights and characterizes them as un-Irish, a tremendous reversal of the hegemonic view that saw the playwrights in that light. To the French reporter, the Irish already embrace the modernity its leaders reject. The sympathetic view of the unemployed actors also suggests a degree of solidarity and further paints the Irish as a people suffering as a result of the decisions of out-of-touch cultural gatekeepers. It does so, in part, though, through a mangling of the case’s details, moving forward an inaccurate version of the story that nevertheless works to reconstruct Ireland’s meaning for French observers.

Reports similar to those in France and Australia also made their way across the Atlantic to Canada and the United States.¹⁶⁴ Of those I have found, they more closely resembled the Australian model in their telling of the story and their conclusions about Irish identity. The next chapter explores an in-depth analysis of the complex ways in which an act of censorship in Dublin came to be interpreted and used to bolster assumptions about American identity in contrast to Ireland. As I explain in more detail in the next chapter, O’Casey, himself was a great one for claiming he was the victim of a Church ban when McQuaid’s protest was but one part of

¹⁶³ “Y aura-t-il un Festival International de théâtre à Dublin en 1959?” *Le Monde*, May 27, 1958, NAI/DFA/10/2/342. English translations by the present author.

¹⁶⁴ “Dublin Festival Will Not Open,” *Ottawa Citizen*, February 26, 1958, 27; Henry Gogarty, “Ireland Plans Many Events for An Tostal [*sic*],” *Chicago Tribune*, January 25, 1958, 12; “O’Casey Cancels Play,” *New York Times*, February 12, 1958, 33.

a wider series of events that concluded with the playwright censoring himself from the DITF.¹⁶⁵ O’Casey kept the discourse in motion for years, leaving a transatlantic trail of writing that kept visible what censorship should have erased, and encouraging people – both Irish and those abroad who read about the events – to re-think the history of censorship O’Casey narrated and re-interpret themselves, Ireland, and Irish history in the process.¹⁶⁶

Several months following the postponement of the DITF, Smith and the others failed to find replacements, and a host of other troubles plagued them.¹⁶⁷ Irish Actors’ Equity Association put up a fight over the dozens of jobs that they were counting on, and Allan McClelland considered suing over the wasted effort.¹⁶⁸ The aftermath of the DITF’s collapse saw the Irish Civil Liberties Association try to host a debate between the various parties on the freedom of Irish theatre. McQuaid gathered congratulations and pestered de Valera about what he saw as the slackening of book censorship. A pair of Irish bishops even sought to encourage American bishops to pressure the Irish government into legislating a formal theatre censorship.¹⁶⁹ Then, in December of 1958, the cycle began again with inquiries from officials requesting the archbishop’s permission for a mass to inaugurate a Tóstal music festival.¹⁷⁰

The case of the DITF’s fall demonstrates how complicated and diffuse censorship can be and how that diffusion among different agents created competing and conflicting effects and

¹⁶⁵ Sean Ó Casey, “The Theatre Festival,” *Irish Times*, March 11, 1958, 5.

¹⁶⁶ Seán O’Casey to the editor of the *Irish Times*, February 17, 1958, SOCP, NLI MS 37,889/6; Seán O’Casey to the editor of the *Manchester Guardian*, March 15, 1958, SOCP, NLI MS 38,028; O’Casey, *Letters*, 3: 624; Murray, 403, 529n78; Robert Hogan, *The Experiments of Sean O’Casey* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1960), 130–5.

¹⁶⁷ “No Theatre Festival This Year,” *Evening Herald*, April 19, 1958; “Why We Called Off Theatre Festival,” *Sunday Press*, April 27, 1958, MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/54/20.

¹⁶⁸ “Dublin Actors Join Festival Squabble,” *Sunday Review*, February 23, 1958, MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/54/16.

¹⁶⁹ Edward Ferdinand Clancy to John Charles McQuaid, February 17, 1958, MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/53/44; File MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/56; John Charles McQuaid to Lauriston Arnott, February 21, 1958, Memo on meeting with Arnott, February, 24 1958, Mr. [illegible] Newman to John Charles McQuaid, February 28, 1958, John Charles McQuaid to Mr. A. Newman, March 3, 1958, DDA/AB8/XXV/53/45–6, 52, 54; Éamon de Valera to John Charles McQuaid, March 8, 1958, MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/10; Cooney, 330.

¹⁷⁰ See 1959 Tóstal File, MP, DDA/AB8/XXV/58.

narratives. Borne out of the political and cultural tensions and contradictions inherent in the context of An Tóstal's modernizing project and neo-traditional nationalism, the DITF became a site for the contestation of Irish identity in a moment when the modern press was capable of transmitting such struggles at rapid pace and far beyond the local and national spaces where they took place. If censorship enables acts of self-definition through the cultivation of identities by means of erasure and silence, then censorship entails interpretation. Censorship's mobility broadens the scope and audience for interpretation, bringing its debates into contact with many more people than national historiographies often acknowledge. It is only by attending to censorship's mobility through time and space that the full breadth of its cultural and political impact can be gleaned.

3.0 Chapter Two: The Memory of Censorship in the World Premiere of Seán O’Casey’s

The Drums of Father Ned

In May 1953, a controversy broiled inside the Indiana Statehouse over paintings hanging behind the senate rostrum. The three-paneled painting by New York artist Leon Kroll depicted the state’s founders signing the state constitution, Hoosier agricultural life, and Indiana’s industrial laborers. In the month since Kroll installed the paintings, Statehouse workers and visitors complained to officials about Kroll’s rumored connection to communist organizations as well as what they saw as the art’s subversive symbols and imagery: a hammer, a red-colored bird, the “‘Slavic’ features of one woman,” and the farmers’ “Bolshevik” appearance.¹ Lieutenant-Governor Harold W. Handley confirmed that the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) listed Kroll as a member of nearly two dozen communist-sympathetic groups. Handley took the matter to the state’s Legislative Advisory Commission, but a few days later they announced they had unanimously voted to retain the paintings.²

¹ “Painters’ Walkout Slows Statehouse ‘Mural Hanging,’” *Indianapolis Star*, April 3, 1953, 24; “Paintings in Legislature will Remain,” *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, May 11, 1953, 23; “Meeting Called to Decide Fate of Statehouse Murals,” *Indianapolis Star*, May 9, 1953, 9. Exactly who lodged the complaints is unclear. Several reports cite anonymous visitors, another claims Statehouse personnel, and the Statehouse’s current website suggests two unnamed legislators started the controversy. The paintings were removed in the 1970s for the remodeling of the Statehouse. Except for the agricultural panel, which is included in the Indiana Statehouse’s website, I have been unable to locate images of them. “The First One-Hundred Years,” *Indiana Department of Administration*, accessed April 5, 2020, <https://www.in.gov/idoa/2435.htm>. A hammer crossed with a sickle was a symbol of unity between the working and peasant classes in the 1917 Russian Revolution and became ubiquitous with communism. Communism was also associated with the color red because Russian revolutionaries used red flags. Revolutionaries imbued other red objects with revolutionary meaning, such as roses and stars. “Red” also became a way to name a communist in the Anglophone world. The redbird in Kroll’s painting, however, was a cardinal, Indiana’s state bird. For more on communist symbols, see Orlando Figes and Boris Kolonitskii, *Interpreting the Russian Revolution: The Language and Symbols of 1917* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 32, 41–3, 50, 61–2, 151; Greame Gill, *Symbols and Legitimacy in Soviet Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 30.

² “Legislative Commission Votes to Keep Murals in Capital,” *Star Press* (Muncie, IN), May 12, 1953, 11.

Handley justified the decision from several angles. First, because an independent group commissioned Kroll and then donated the triptych to the state, the artist didn't collect any taxpayer funds for his work. Next, Handley claimed that the paintings were "great art" that transcended politics altogether, arguing "Real art has no connection with political affiliation."³ In addition, he defended the vote in nationalist terms, explaining, "America is still America. ... [W]e're not going to burn great literature, music and art. That's the favorite trick of the Communists, and we're not going to fall for it."⁴ However, the Commission also took the position that the paintings were satisfactory "so long as they did not contain anti-American propaganda."⁵ In this self-fulfilling logic, what distinguished the US from communist countries was its refusal to censor "great art" – which was by definition non-political or pro-American and therefore already acceptable. Whatever Handley's evaluation of Kroll's work, though, the initial complaints show that others thought Kroll's art was very political. Even if the artist was a communist, and even if viewers thought that the art conveyed subversive imagery, American exceptionalism held these tensions together without resolving them.

The controversy surrounding Kroll's paintings illustrate broader political and aesthetic attitudes that were not unique in the US, but a feature of a negotiative culture that could shuffle or cement what it meant to be American according to particular needs. In the first decades of the Cold War, the global spread of communism and the US's foreign containment policy helped push anticommunist sentiment to paranoiac heights.⁶ If communism couldn't be contained

³ "Legislative Commission," *Star Press*. See also "Statehouse Murals Saved," *Indianapolis Star*, May 12, 1953, 21.

⁴ "Paintings in Legislature," *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*.

⁵ "Statehouse Murals Saved," *Indianapolis Star*.

⁶ Larry Ceplair, *Anti-Communism in Twentieth-Century America: A Critical History* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2011), 91–190; M. J. Heale, *American Anticommunism: Combating the Enemy Within, 1830–1970* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 122–90. The 1948 coup d'état in Czechoslovakia, Mao Zedong's 1949 revolutionary victory in China, the Soviet Union's ascension as a nuclear power with their detonation of an atomic bomb in 1949, and the 1950 outbreak of the Korean War evinced communism's global spread and the US's inability

abroad, it could penetrate and threaten the US from within. In this way, the foreign policy of containment came home, shaping the nation's domestic culture. Containment culture simultaneously constructed and policed American norms through discursive and cultural production.⁷ Containment culture constantly adjusted itself, illustrating the very idea of "America" was unstable, and leading to some conflicting perspectives. For example, the State Department deployed hundreds of American art exhibitions around the globe to promote American values and the state's interests. Although domestic commentators and politicians labeled abstract art subversive and potentially un-American, the diplomatic apparatus sent American abstract art abroad to promote American expressive freedom.⁸

Containment culture also sanctioned the expulsion of perceived communist/subversive expression, though, which very often manifested in overt acts of censorship. This was true at the state and local levels as much as the national, and places like Indiana practiced a fervent censorship meant to cultivate idealized Americans. For instance, in 1951 in the small city of Lafayette, Indiana, schools ejected a government and civics textbook that teachers and officials argued supported communism.⁹ The state followed suit one year later. Lafayette commentators

to stop it. The 1950 arrest of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg on espionage charges appeared to confirm the US's vulnerability to an invisible "enemy within."

⁷ Elaine Tyler May first identified the cultural significance of containment. Foreign policy informed her study of trends in American domesticity that bridged geopolitics and the private sphere, and the home stood in as a model "sphere of influence" where the "dangerous social forces of the new age might be tamed". Alan Nadel named this phenomenon "containment culture" and his project shows the ways seemingly non-political texts participated in a culture that sought to contain dissent and curb progressive action and imaginaries (even as the emergent postmodernism of the period also demonstrates the degree to which containment failed to erase dissent). See Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 2008), 16; Alan Nadel, *Containment Culture: American Narratives, Postmodernism, and the Atomic Age* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995). For an excellent survey and analysis of the extant literature and how scholars have wrestled with the cultural significance of containment since May's book, see Steven Belletto and Daniel Grausam, "Introduction: Culture and Cold Conflict," in *American Literature and Culture in an Age of Cold War: A Critical Reassessment*, eds. Steven Belletto and Daniel Grausam (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2012), 1–14.

⁸ Michael L. Krenn, *Fall-Out Shelters for the Human Spirit: American Art and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 1–6.

⁹ "Text Rejected As Socialistic," *Journal and Courier* (Lafayette, IN), December 14, 1951, 1.

argued that it wasn't that young people shouldn't know about communism but simply that they shouldn't be taught there is anything redeemable in it.¹⁰

Yet it was in this same city that Seán O'Casey's banned, communist-sympathetic play *The Drums of Father Ned* made its world premiere in a 1959 production by an amateur community company, the Lafayette Little Theatre (LLT). In the play, O'Casey critiques the woes of 1950s Ireland through the lens of what he saw as a stagnant and outdated nationalism burdened with a stifling religious conservatism that imbued everything from the economy to sex. The play stratifies its criticism in a fairly neat generational dichotomy, where the older characters who saw Irish Independence come to fruition in the 1920s calcify these attitudes while the younger characters in the play push for a different cultural and political vision more closely aligned with O'Casey's communism. Remarkably, the show aroused little controversy in the historically anticommunist town. This is because the company marketed the play as a banned play by a great artist in their publicity campaign leading up to the performance. By placing the production within a nationalist narrative of American exceptionalism, the LLT primed its audience to accept art they may have otherwise resisted.

The LLT's decision to highlight the play's history meant that the cultural memory of the play's own censorship "haunted" the performance. Marvin Carlson argues that when audiences attend a play, memories of past theatregoing, history, and other cultural associations haunt their present performance experience. These "ghosts" continuously shift and modify how audiences receive performances, shaping, too, the memory itself in turn.¹¹ By "cultural memory," I follow Jan Assmann's definition: "that body of reusable texts, images, and rituals specific to each

¹⁰ "Textbook Action Vindicated," *Journal and Courier*, December 13, 1952, 6.

¹¹ Marvin Carlson, *The Haunted Stage: The Theatre as Memory Machine* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001), 2-4.

society in each epoch, whose ‘cultivation’ serves to stabilize and convey that society’s self-image.”¹² When audiences watch a banned play or read a banned text, they respond reflexively by relating the play’s content and their knowledge of its censorship to their own locally-determined preoccupations and interests.¹³ For example, in 1960, when a suburban London theatre submitted *The Drums of Father Ned* to the Lord Chamberlain – the censor who screened all texts before theatres could publicly perform them in Greater London – the Assistant Examiner of Plays, Sir St Vincent Troubridge, wrote in his report on the play to the Lord Chamberlain, “I approached this play with circumspection, for I remembered that its banning by the Archbishop of Dublin caused the collapse of last year’s [*sic*] Dublin Festival of Drama. So... there was need to steer a course between accepting too readily the opinion of a possibly reactionary Irish cleric and giving offence to the Catholic community in this country.”¹⁴ Despite misgivings that the play may be blasphemous, Troubridge concludes that the play only criticizes Irish clergy for being out of touch with their flocks, deeming religious criticism quite permissible in Britain even if it isn’t in Ireland.¹⁵ Troubridge’s memory of the play’s censorship acted as a framework through which to interpret the play. It invited him to imagine the British response to the banned Irish play, and compare contemporary Britain and Ireland and what he saw as some of their distinguishing

¹² Jan Assmann, “Collective Memory and Cultural Identity,” trans. John Czaplicka, *New German Critique* 65 (1995): 132.

¹³ I here follow Patrick Lonergan’s thinking about reflexivity in theatrical performance. Patrick Lonergan, *Theatre and Globalization: Irish Drama in the Celtic Tiger Era* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 87.

¹⁴ Reader’s Report for *The Drums of Father Ned*, Lord Chamberlain’s Plays Correspondence (LCP CORR), Archives and Manuscripts, British Library (BL), LCP CORR 1960/1074/1. Formal theatre censorship in Greater London rested with the Lord Chamberlain from 1737 to 1968. For a thorough history of British theatre censorship, see Steve Nicholson, *The Censorship of British Drama: 1900–1968*, 4 vols. (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 2003–2015).

¹⁵ Reader’s Report for *The Drums of Father Ned*, BL, LCP CORR 1960/1074/1–5. Troubridge required O’Casey make only one change to his play by cutting the word “buggers,” which appears in the play’s prologue. O’Casey asked if the substitution “blighted bullyhoors” would suit them, and the Lord Chamberlain’s Office consented to the alteration. Seán O’Casey, *The Drums of Father Ned* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1960), 9.

national characteristics. Although Troubridge apparently recalled McQuaid's ban from his own memories, there was no memory of the play's censorship in Lafayette prior to its production.

Instead, the LLT built a cultural memory of Irish censorship for its audience. Alison Landsberg calls those "artificial" forms of cultural memory that people acquire by taking in various forms of media rather than from firsthand experiences or familial/national descent "prosthetic memory," and ascribes to it the power to create empathy that bridges identity differences towards progressive ends.¹⁶ Using production ephemera like program notes and marketing materials, the LLT built a cultural memory of a distinctly Irish censorship characterized by an intense history of repression that the audience could recall during the show.

In this chapter, I reconstruct the LLT's production of *The Drums of Father Ned* to track censorship's transnational movement via cultural memory to understand how Irish censorship worked to destabilize American Cold War cultural politics in performance. Interpreting the play through the lens of the cultural memory of censorship from their position as Cold War Hoosiers, the LLT's performance of *Father Ned*'s Irish and communist politics reflexively induced Lafayette's local and national memories of anticommunist intolerance on one hand and a tolerant American exceptionalism on the other. Local resonances and, indeed, prejudices attended to and convoluted the politics of the LLT performance. Rather than enable empathy, the LLT's prosthetic memory of Irish censorship created an interpretive framework through which the performance implicitly invited the Hoosier audience to compare their own identities and memories to the Irish ones, ultimately confusing and problematizing the nationalist American narrative the LLT built their production upon. Because the play accepts the communism that the

¹⁶ Alison Landsberg, *Prosthetic Memory: The Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 2–11.

Hoosiers performing and watching the play historically attempted to expel, the performance was unable to preserve or reject the notion of an exceptional Americanness in contrast with an Ireland they imagined as utterly censorious. Instead, the performance left these political meanings confused and ambiguous for the Indiana spectators, revealing the political limits of a prosthetic memory of censorship.

3.1 “A bad reason, you know, for wanting a play”: *Father Ned’s Journey to Indiana*

But how did an amateur community theatre in Indiana come to be the first to produce a world premiere by a world-renowned Irish playwright? The answer begins with Dr. Robert Goode Hogan, the author of – among other studies – *The Modern Irish Drama: A Documentary History* (1975–92), a foundational six-volume history of Irish drama and theatre rich with primary source material.¹⁷ While scholars like Christopher Morash remember Hogan as one of modern Irish theatre’s most “indefatigable annalists,” he also played a role in Irish theatre history itself.¹⁸ Hogan almost single-handedly orchestrated *Father Ned’s* journey from its premature demise in Dublin to Lafayette. Dr. Hogan was among O’Casey’s early academic champions,

¹⁷ Robert Hogan with James Kilroy, Richard Burnham, and Daniel Poteet, *The Modern Irish Drama: A Documentary History*, 6 vols. (Dublin: Dolmen Press, 1975–92). The title of volume five, *The Art of the Amateur: 1916–1920*, is worth mentioning. Co-authored with Richard Burnham, the book has nothing to do with amateur Irish theatre, and focuses instead on the activities of professional companies like the Abbey Theatre in the four years following the 1916 Easter Rising. Neither does the book ever reference or even allude to amateur theatrics of any kind. Although the authors never elaborate on the cryptic title, they may have meant it to highlight the Abbey’s practice of soliciting dramatic texts from the public – and, hence, amateur writers vying for professional status – for production. Hogan and Burnham may have wished to evoke the spirit of the amateur who works “for the love of it” rather than as a means of livelihood. The title may, too, be a reference to the Irish as political or national amateurs since for many the 1916 Rising marks the birth of the nation with the proclamation of the Republic. Regardless, the book does not demonstrate that Hogan had a scholarly interest in amateur theatre as such.

¹⁸ Christopher Morash, *A History of Irish Theatre, 1601–2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 309.

having completed a doctoral thesis on O’Casey at the University of Missouri’s English department in 1956.¹⁹ In that same year Hogan first communicated with O’Casey, writing to him with questions he apparently sought for the completion of his dissertation.²⁰ The pair exchanged friendly remarks, and O’Casey appreciated Hogan’s scholarly defense of his more recent plays against criticism from Irish literary critic Vivian Mercier.²¹ Hogan reached out to O’Casey again in March 1958 after learning about the debacle with Archbishop McQuaid, possibly from a brief article in *New York Times*.²² Specifically, Hogan asked O’Casey if he might lend the young scholar a copy of *The Drums of Father Ned* so that he could write on it for his book – an expansion and revision of his dissertation – and O’Casey complied.²³ In his response, Hogan calls *Drums* “a grand play, one of your best,” adding, “anyone who would refuse it is a damned bigoted fool.”²⁴ It was not until January of 1959, though, that Hogan broached the subject of producing *Father Ned* in Lafayette.

Now teaching English at Purdue University in West Lafayette – a smaller, distinct city separated from Lafayette only by the Wabash River, Hogan pitched O’Casey the idea that a

¹⁹ Seán O’Casey, *The Letters of Sean O’Casey*, ed. David Krause, vol. 3, 1955–1958 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1989), 306n1. For more on Hogan’s role in early O’Casey scholarship, see James Moran, *The Theatre of Seán O’Casey* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 166–9.

²⁰ O’Casey, *Letters*, 3: 254.

²¹ O’Casey, *Letters*, 3: 317. See also, Vivian Mercier, “The Riddle of Sean O’Casey: Decline of a Playwright,” *Commonweal*, July 13, 1956, 366–8; Robert Hogan, “Riddle of Sean O’Casey,” *Commonweal*, August 24, 1956, 517.

²² Robert Hogan to Seán O’Casey, March 8, 1958, Seán O’Casey Papers (SOCP), National Library of Ireland (NLI), MS 37,846/2. It is not completely clear when or how Hogan learned about the Festival Scandal or *Father Ned* in particular. Hogan’s first letter to O’Casey on the matter is dated in O’Casey’s hand as 4 March 1958, well after reporting on the incident circulated in US papers. In his letter dated March 8, 1958, Hogan mentions a *New York Times* article, but he may have looked it up after O’Casey wrote back to Hogan with his own account of the events. Given the play’s public history with the Theatre Festival, it is likely Hogan knew something of what transpired before writing to O’Casey for the manuscript. He may also have learned about *Father Ned* from an article in the *Chicago Tribune*. See also, “O’Casey Cancels Play,” *New York Times*, February 12, 1958, 33; Henry Gogarty, “Ireland Plans Many Events for An Tostal,” *Chicago Tribune*, January 25, 1958, 12.

²³ Robert Hogan to Seán O’Casey, Received March 4, 1958, SOCP, NLI, MS 37,846/2; O’Casey, *Letters*, 3: 551–2.

²⁴ Robert Hogan to Seán O’Casey, 8 March 1958, SOCP, NLI, MS 37,846/2.

group called the Chesterfield Players (not the LLT) could produce *Father Ned*.²⁵ Organized only recently with the help of Hogan's colleague in Purdue's English department, Professor Henry Solerno, the Chesterfield Players sought to create a repertory theatre that would tour the entire state.²⁶ O'Casey thought the proposal a good one and told Hogan he would consult Jane Rubin, his American licensing agent, about a contract.²⁷ O'Casey reported back to Hogan ten days later, confirming Rubin's support and sending on the dramatic text for the Chesterfield Players' perusal.²⁸ Strangely enough, Hogan seems to have moved forward with plans despite the struggles the Chesterfield Players faced getting off the ground. The group produced only two shows – Solerno's own original play called *Marco* and his adaptation of *Beauty and the Beast* – both in July 1958, before apparently folding.²⁹ Hogan could have taken the project to the theatre program at Purdue, but he claims in his dissertation-turned-monograph that he thought the school wasn't up to the task: "in a fashion typical of this country's desultory college theater, an experimental drama [to the Purdue Playshop] was something like [Ibsen's] *Ghosts* [1881], [Pirandello's] *Six Characters in Search of an Author* [1922], or, to be daringly modern, [Maxwell Anderson's 1935 verse drama] *Winterset*."³⁰ Hogan ultimately pitched the show to the LLT, who agreed to take on the production as an addition to their season already-in-progress.³¹

Given his significant stature in western dramatic literature, O'Casey's assent to an amateur theatre company in the American Midwest over 100 miles away from a major city like

²⁵ Sean O'Casey, *The Letters of Sean O'Casey*, ed. David Krause, vol. 4, 1959–1964 (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1992), 8. Hogan taught at a number of institutions and ultimately retired from the University of Delaware's department of English in 1994. He died in 1999 at his home in Bray, Co. Wicklow, Ireland. See Bonnie Kime Scott, "Robert Hogan, (1930–1999)," *Irish Literary Supplement* 18.2 (1999): 3.

²⁶ Corbin Patrick, "New Theater Group Will Stage Premiere," *Indianapolis Star*, July 4, 1958, 8.

²⁷ O'Casey, *Letters*, 4: 8.

²⁸ O'Casey, *Letters*, 4: 14.

²⁹ "New Theatre Group to Premiere Play," *Journal and Courier*, July 11, 1958, 8.

³⁰ Robert Hogan, *The Experiments of Sean O'Casey* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1960), 140.

³¹ Hogan, *Experiments*, 141.

Chicago is perhaps surprising. However, the LLT was not O'Casey's first choice and Hogan's proposition arrived quite later than others. In the fallout from the well-publicized collapse of the Dublin Theatre Festival, there was no lack of offers to produce *The Drums of Father Ned*. Perhaps the first of these was the Bristol Old Vic, whose Director, John Moody, wrote O'Casey in February 1958 to express the company's disgust with the situation and offered the play a place in their next season.³² Even before the Bristol Old Vic's offer, O'Casey sent the script to his go-to in the United States, Paul Shyre, an American producer, director, and playwright.³³ Shyre previously adapted and acted in O'Casey's autobiography *I Knock at the Door* (1939), which transferred to Broadway, and produced and acted in a production of O'Casey's *Purple Dust* (1940) that ran at the off-Broadway Cherry Lane Theatre for 480 performances.³⁴ The pair spoke by telephone about a potential New York run of *Father Ned* to follow Shyre's current preparations for *Cock-a-Doodle Dandy*.

Then, in early March, the Ulster Group Theatre in Belfast solicited the manuscript and rights for a performance at the Edinburgh International Festival (now the Edinburgh Fringe), and O'Casey gave them the script to read for consideration.³⁵ This flirtation was not to last, though, as O'Casey wrote to them again only some days later to refuse them *Father Ned* after an account in the *Irish Press* reported that Ulster Group Theatre associate James Boyce expressed his "whole-hearted sympathy" with the deputy to Dr. John Kyne, Bishop of Meathe, that theatre should express Catholic dogma.³⁶ Shortly thereafter, O'Casey asked Shyre for his opinion about

³² John Moody to Seán O'Casey, February 18, 1958, SOCP, NLI, MS 38,074.

³³ O'Casey, *Letters*, 3: 536

³⁴ Moran, 162–3.

³⁵ J. E. C. Lewis-Crosby to Seán O'Casey, March 10, 1958, SOCP, NLI, MS 38,051; O'Casey, *Letters*, 3: 575.

³⁶ O'Casey, *Letters*, 3: 568. "Playwrights Have a Duty," *Irish Press*, March 17, 1958, 7.

the situation with the Ulster Group, voicing his hesitation about giving them the play.³⁷ Shyre agreed with O'Casey, and pressed onward with preparations for a New York production on the condition that he could secure an air-conditioned theatre (which Shyre argued was vital to the success of any spring or summer production in the city).³⁸ With such assurances, O'Casey asked the Ulster Group for the return of his script.³⁹

Two other offers are worth cataloguing to demonstrate the full and varied interest in professionally producing O'Casey's new script. At the same time O'Casey was negotiating offers from Bristol, New York, and Belfast, Sergei Nolbandoc, a producer with the London-based G. W. Films asked O'Casey to read the play for cinematic treatment, writing that the press reports excited him. O'Casey declined the request.⁴⁰ Finally, it is also worth noting that George Devine, the Artistic Director of the English Stage Company at London's Royal Court Theatre asked to read *Father Ned* in the summer of 1957, long before the archbishop's protests.⁴¹ Even though O'Casey explained at the time that he thought the play wrong for the Court, if he had been so inclined he may well have reconsidered Devine's offer.⁴² With all of these proposals negotiated and handled, O'Casey mentioned to Hogan in a friendly letter that he felt a New York production of the play was on the horizon with Shyre at its helm.⁴³ There was, as yet, no reason

³⁷ O'Casey, *Letters*, 3: 575

³⁸ Paul Shyre to Seán O'Casey, March 29, 1958, SOCP, NLI, MS 38,079/3.

³⁹ O'Casey, *Letters*, 3: 580. Personnel at the Ulster Group Theatre did contest the *Irish Press*'s report, apparently claiming that Mr. Boyce had no formal association with the company. It's also worth noting that O'Casey asked the Ulster Group for the return of the script first after reading the story in the *Irish Press* but then asked them to return it a second time after Shyre confirmed O'Casey's thoughts about them. See O'Casey, *Letters*, 3: 568.

⁴⁰ Sergei Nolbandov to Seán O'Casey, March 20, 1958, SOCP, NLI, MS 38,086.

⁴¹ George Devine to Seán O'Casey, September 23, 1957, SOCP, NLI, MS 38,063.

⁴² Seán O'Casey to George Devine, September 25, 1957, SOCP, NLI, MS 38,063. O'Casey laments what he considers his poor place in the English theatrical landscape, but doesn't explain why he thinks *Drums* ill-matched with Devine's Royal Court. O'Casey would eventually give Devine *Cock-a-Doodle Dandy*, which Devine produced at the Royal Court in 1959, took to Edinburgh, and then transferred to the West End.

⁴³ O'Casey, *Letters*, 3: 590.

to suppose Hogan himself would oversee the play's premiere, far from Broadway's glaring incandescence.

However, plans change, and a week after O'Casey told Hogan about the New York premiere, Shyre disclosed catastrophe: he couldn't find a theatre large enough (and, presumably, with air-conditioning) to comfortably house *Father Ned*, and proposed putting it off.⁴⁴ Shyre brought the play up two more times in his correspondence with its author through the spring of '58, but as time wore on, it must have become clear to O'Casey that Shyre hadn't the time or resources for *The Drums of Father Ned* anytime soon.⁴⁵ After the possibility of a quick mounting under Shyre's supervision fell through the cracks, O'Casey was still determined to see it have a stage life. He understood that his plays had long benefitted from corrections and alterations made during rehearsals, as in the case of his early successes at the Abbey Theatre, and so he was anxious to get his work staged before sending it to the publisher (both production and publication were essential means of income for the author).⁴⁶

Come September 1958, though, the Ulster Group Theatre again inquired about *Father Ned* and, with the New York Production in limbo, O'Casey sent them a copy of the script once again. But O'Casey struggled to shake his earlier suspicions, and even suggested the group perform *The Bishop's Bonfire* instead, fearing that the company was more attracted to the controversy surrounding *Father Ned* than the play itself: "A bad reason, you know, for wanting a play."⁴⁷ The Ulster Group's manager, Harold Goldblatt, said he would leap at the chance to do

⁴⁴ Paul Shyre to Seán O'Casey, April 18, 1958, SOCP, NLI, MS 38,079/3.

⁴⁵ Paul Shyre to Seán O'Casey, May 19, 1958, SOCP, NLI, MS 38,079/3; Paul Shyre to Seán O'Casey, June 5, 1958, SOCP, NLI, MS 38,079/3.

⁴⁶ O'Casey, *Letters*, 3: 594–5. In fact, after agreeing to the Lafayette venture, O'Casey wrote to his friend and advocate *New York Times* critic Brooks Atkinson that he hoped Hogan would be able to point out any issues or errors in the text after the Lafayette production for publication purposes. O'Casey, *Letters*, 4: 12.

⁴⁷ O'Casey, *Letters*, 3: 627–8. There is some irony here as *The Bishop's Bonfire* also famously incensed Dublin's piety when Cyril Cusack played it at the Gaiety Theatre, and so might have caused just as much of a ruckus in

Bonfire as he had previously asked about it years earlier, but Cyril Cusack, who produced and directed its first production, then held the exclusive rights.⁴⁸ Without closing the door on the possibility of a Belfast *Father Ned*, O'Casey gave Goldblatt instructions on how to attain a copy of *Bonfire* and asked for the return of his manuscript, claiming that he was short on copies and more requests were arriving from the continent.⁴⁹

If there was interest in staging *Father Ned* in mainland Europe in 1958, I have been unable to locate evidence of it. O'Casey's claim may have been a pretense to get the script back from Northern Ireland. However, the following February, in 1959, a translator, Jaroslav Chuchvalec, did seek the text for a Czech production in Prague. O'Casey rejected the request but sent him the already-published *Bonfire* in place of the yet-incomplete (in O'Casey's mind) *Father Ned*.⁵⁰ With no other suitable English-language production option apparently in sight, Hogan's suggestion that the Chesterfield Players produce *The Drums of Father Ned* arrived.

Yet it is unclear at what point the planned Chesterfield Players production became the LLT production, nor the degree to which O'Casey (or his contractor Rubin for that matter) knew of the change in company or their status as amateurs. Hogan and O'Casey's communication survives only in part. The Chesterfield Players – with their goal of touring Indiana – probably aspired to be a professional company. That said, as far as the archive reveals, the Chesterfield

Belfast as *Father Ned*. For more on the events surrounding *The Bishop's Bonfire*, see Joan FitzPatrick Dean, *Riot and Great Anger: Stage Censorship in Twentieth-Century Ireland* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), 150–3.

⁴⁸ Harold Goldblatt to Seán O'Casey, October 7, 1958, SOCP, NLI, MS 38,051.

⁴⁹ Seán O'Casey to Harold Goldblatt, October 12, 1958, SOCP, NLI, MS 38,051.

⁵⁰ J[aroslav] Chuchvalec to Seán O'Casey, SOCP, NLI, MS 37,983. Unlike in the Anglophone world, beyond the Iron Curtain, O'Casey's later plays and one-acts proved to be popular in his own time and beyond. This was due in some part to O'Casey's avowed communism. For a summary of non-Anglophone O'Casey productions and adaptations, see Moran, 176–85. The only production of *Father Ned* I'm aware of on the European mainland was in 1963 at Le Cothurne in Lyon, France. See Joseph Greenwood, *'Hear My Song': Irish Theatre and Popular Song in the 1950s and 1960s* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2017), 134n6.

Players were amateurs made up of students from Purdue who performed with the Purdue Playshop in addition to LLT regulars (including Hogan's co-director on *Father Ned*, Jeanne Orr).⁵¹ On the other hand, the LLT was always an amateur endeavor, and it was not until after the production closed and Hogan sent him clippings and the production program that O'Casey names the LLT or their non-professional status in their surviving correspondence.⁵²

This does not mean that O'Casey didn't know he had given his play to amateurs, and it may even have been to their advantage in persuading O'Casey. As Hogan notes in his book, it was "remembering O'Casey's fondness for amateur theatricals in his youth" that dared Hogan to suggest an amateur production by the LLT.⁵³ Indeed, in his youth O'Casey and his brother watched, memorized, and acted out performances from Shakespeare and Boucicault's plays, and O'Casey even performed in Boucicault's *The Shaughraun* (1874) as a young man.⁵⁴

What's more, although Hogan didn't know it, several of the plays O'Casey wrote after he broke with the Abbey Theatre over their rejection of his 1928 drama *The Silver Tassie* took their first bows with amateur companies.⁵⁵ The first amateur premiere of an O'Casey play took place nearly two decades prior to *Father Ned* when the Unity Theatre in Liverpool staged the world

⁵¹ "New Theatre Group to Premiere Play," *Journal and Courier*, July 11, 1958, 8; "'Beauty, Beast,' Wins Acclaim," *Journal and Courier*, July 25, 1958, 7.

⁵² O'Casey, *Letters*, 4: 44. For a more detailed history of the LLT, see Jim Hanks, *Stage Memories and Curtains (On Stage/Back Stage)* (Lafayette: Copymat Services, 1998). This source is worth some explanation. It is a self-published history of the LLT (reorganized as the Civic Theatre of Greater Lafayette in 1965 which continues to operate today), written by one of its enthusiastic participants. Hanks places the history of the LLT within a broad narrative of US history where the theatre is generally reflective of the country as a whole in various economic, political, and cultural aspects.

⁵³ Hogan excludes the initial Chesterfield Players proposal from his narrative. Hogan, *Experiments*, 140–1.

⁵⁴ Moran, 50; Seán O'Casey, *Autobiographies*, vol. 1 (New York: Carroll and Graff, 1984), 299–309.

⁵⁵ Hogan went so far as to say that not only O'Casey but no other major dramatist has given their work over to an amateur theatre for a world premiere since the Provincetown Players took on Eugene O'Neill's dramas some 30 years earlier. "O'Casey Tryouts Scheduled," *Journal and Courier*, March 10, 1959, 12. For more on the affair surrounding *The Silver Tassie* and O'Casey's immigration to Britain, see Lauren Arrington, *W. B. Yeats, the Abbey Theatre, Censorship, and the Irish State: Adding the Half-Pence to the Pence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 120–3; Moran, 20–3, 66–80.

premiere of *The Star Turns Red* in 1940.⁵⁶ Three years later, in the English city of Newcastle, the amateur People's Theatre (which began as a branch of the British Socialist Party) produced the first production of *Purple Dust*. The People's Theatre subsequently performed the premiere of *Cock-a-Doodle Dandy* in 1949 as well.⁵⁷ After the LLT's *The Drums of Father Ned* in 1959, the Hofstra University Playhouse premiered the one-act *Figuro in the Night* (1961) and the University of Rochester undertook the first production of O'Casey's last full-length play, *Behind the Green Curtain* (1961) – each in 1962.⁵⁸

For both James Moran and Susan Cannon Harris, O'Casey's initial turn to amateur theatre was something of an economic necessity since *The Star Turns Red* – as probably O'Casey's most explicitly pro-communist drama – posed a real threat to box offices seeking both profit and to avoid protest in the midst of the Second World War.⁵⁹ Harris takes this supposition one step further, arguing that the amateur Unity Theatre was able to embody and enact *The Star Turns Red's* blend of politics and aesthetics. The Unity was a workers' theatre whose actors all held jobs outside of their theatrical pursuits. They produced art by and for the working class with the aim of revolutionary unity, a goal the company shared, Harris holds, with O'Casey's play.⁶⁰ Although the LLT was an amateur company, it hardly shared O'Casey's passion for communism. Still, there can be no doubt from O'Casey's previous experiences that he recognized amateur theatre could be differently effective – politically and aesthetically – than its professional counterpart.

⁵⁶ Moran, 27.

⁵⁷ Moran, 29–30; Michael Coveny, *Questors, Jesters, and Renegades: The Story of Britain's Amateur Theatre* (London: Bloomsbury, 2020), 53.

⁵⁸ Moran, 31, 248n100.

⁵⁹ Moran, 27; Susan Canon Harris, *Irish Drama and the Other Revolutions: Playwrights, Sexual Politics and the International Left, 1892–1964* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), 194.

⁶⁰ Harris, 192.

Father Ned also did not fit the LLT's aesthetic profile. For a company accustomed to mostly offering contemporary, popular, and conventional New York hits like Enid Bagnold's *The Chalk Garden* (1955), Frederick Knott's *Dial 'M' for Murder* (1952), and N. Richard Nash's *The Rainmaker* (1954), O'Casey's *The Drums of Father Ned* is an unusual choice, especially considering that Hogan felt that the Purdue Playhouse's *Six Characters in Search of an Author* and *Winterset* were not experimental enough (even though both are more radical in form, content, or language than what the LLT generally produced).⁶¹ Furthermore, of the 117 plays the LLT produced from their founding in 1931 to *Father Ned* in 1959, about 75% of them were written by American or English playwrights.⁶² The remainder included plays written by European playwrights, including four by Irishmen: George Bernard Shaw's *The Great Catherine*

⁶¹ The LLT often picked shows that were also popular films, and typically presented them within a few years of any given film's release. For example, the group produced *Dial 'M' for Murder* and *The Rainmaker* for their 1956-7 season. The film version of *Dial 'M'* came out in 1954 and *The Rainmaker's* film premiered in 1956. See Hanks, 66.

⁶² 65 of the 117 plays the LLT presented were authored by American-born authors. These include S. N. Behrman, Lillian Hellman, George S. Kaufman, Moss Hart, Elmer Rice, Maxwell Anderson, Ruth Gordon, Samuel A. Taylor, and William Inge. 24 were written by English playwrights, including Noël Coward, W. Somerset Maugham, A. A. Milne, Daphne Du Maurier, Terrence Rattigan, Arthur Wing Pinero, and Agatha Christie. There was a smattering of immigrant voices in the group's history, including Samuel and Bella Spewack whose productions included *Two Blind Mice* (1949) in 1952 and *My Three Angels* (1953) in 1956 (Samuel was from Ukraine and Bella from Romania, and both migrated to the US). Another immigrant to the US that the LLT presented was French-American Anna Cora Mowatt. They produced her 1845 comedy *Fashion* first in 1934 and then again in 1943. Beyond the company's Anglo-American preference, in 1936 the LLT produced Norwegian Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* (1879). They performed two plays by Hungarian playwright Ferenc Molnár, *The Swan* (1920) in 1933 and *Liliom* (1909) in 1938 (they additionally produced *The Play's the Thing* [1926], an English adaptation of Molnár's *The Play at the Castle* [1925], in 1942 and 1958). The theatre offered the Belgian playwright Maurice Maeterlinck's *The Bluebird* (1908) as their children's show in 1936. They produced four French plays for Lafayette: Jacques Duval's *Tovaritch* (1933 – in an English adaptation called *Tovarich* by Robert Sherwood [1935]) in 1945, Louis Verneuil's *Affairs of State* (1950) in 1953, an English version of Émile Zola's *Thérèse Raquin* (1873) in 1955, and Marcelle Maurette's *Anastasia* (1954) in 1958. Another French inspiration the LLT produced was an adaptation of Colette's novella *Gigi* (1944) by American author Anita Loos (1951) in 1955. The Welsh playwright Thomas Job wrote the Zola adaptation and also wrote *Uncle Harry* (1942), which the LLT presented in 1956. The company presented Scotsman J. M. Barrie's one-act *Half an Hour* (1913) in 1935 and *What Every Woman Knows* (1919) in 1948. Canadian Robin Millar's *Thunder in the Air* (1929) was produced in 1935. They also presented Rudolf Besier's *The Barretts of Wimpole Street* (1930) in 1947. Besier was Dutch-English and born in Dutch Java. The South-African Englishman (who later became an American citizen) Noel Langley collaborated with fellow Englishman Robert Morely on *Edward, My Son* (1947), which the LLT produced in 1951. I have been unable to confirm the authorship of one of the group's plays, an adaptation of the Italian tale *Pinocchio* (1883). I've also been unable to locate newspaper evidence of the LLT's 1946 production of a play called *The Visitor* – although this may be Kenneth White's 1944 play.

(1913) in 1935 and *Candida* (1898) in 1948, Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895) in 1937, and Lennox Robinson's *The Far Off Hills* (1928) in 1938. Belfast-born St. John Ervine wrote three more LLT offerings, including *The Ship* (1922) in their inaugural season, *The First Mrs. Fraser* (1929) in 1933, and *Friends and Relations* (1941) in 1949.⁶³ Still, there was a ten-year gap between O'Casey's *Father Ned* and the company's previous Irish play.

The size of the cast for *Father Ned* was also a change for the group accustomed to small-cast projects. With a cast of 29, *Father Ned* is significantly larger than the vast majority of the shows the LLT produced (compare, for instance, *The Chalk Garden*'s cast of six or *Dial 'M' for Murder*'s nine). While it was very likely a challenge to cast, the size also posed a financial opportunity. The LLT's budget depended upon two sources: membership subscriptions and program advertising. Only those who purchased a membership could see or participate in the shows. Productions were not open to the public, allowing the organization to tailor a season to a

⁶³ While it could be argued that Shaw and Wilde's Irishness imbues and animates much of their work (as, for example, David Clare does for Shaw and Joshua McCormack and the contributors to his collection do for Wilde), *Candida*, *Great Catherine*, and *The Importance of Being Earnest* do not explicitly feature Irish politics, history, settings, or characters. All three more or less adhere to the LLT's aesthetic and practical capabilities. And while Shaw was, indeed, a socialist, his political advocacy is much more muted in these two works than many of his others and certainly more than O'Casey's communism in *Father Ned*. See David Clare, *Bernard Shaw's Irish Outlook* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016); Joshua McCormack, ed., *Wilde the Irishman* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998). Ervine's *The First Mrs. Fraser* is a rather typical British drawing room comedy. *The Ship* is also set in a fictional town (likely in Britain) and is essentially a family drama about a young man who disavows his father's shipyard as a part of the mechanization of humanity. *Friends and Relations* is set in outside of Belfast. In it, a wealthy man dies and a family contends with the unorthodox directives of his will. None of these plays take up questions of Irish history, politics, or issues as their critical subject. None are so particularly Irish so as to render either of these as particularly strange choices for the LLT. Robinson's *The Far-Off Hills* is a light comedy about a middle-class Irish woman who wants to join a convent but feels compelled to take care of her family until her father is able to have his cataracts removed. Both the father and the woman end up pursuing romantic outlets and so everyone's plans change. Robinson's intensely conservative play suggest that normative matrimony is just as viable a route as the church to fulfill a life – and will make people happier. These plays do not, as *Father Ned* does, require or assume knowledge about contemporary Ireland and Irish history. As with *Friends and Relations*, Ireland rather serves as a setting and little more. Their themes and issues can easily map onto other locals, unlike *Father Ned*, whose main appeal abroad was its censorship. Further, from its inception the LLT very often produced plays that had performed on Broadway a year or two before their own productions, and *Mrs. Fraser* and *The Far-Off Hills* had Broadway productions in 1929 and 1937, respectively. A film of *The First Mrs. Fraser* appeared in 1932, and so it is likely that these plays came to the LLT's attention through Broadway and film.

largely guaranteed budget.⁶⁴ A large cast presented the opportunity to recruit new, paying members into the group. They also likely considered that producing a world premiere would attract both new spectating memberships as well – and in the days leading up to the performance, they made tickets for a single show available for the public to purchase without a membership.⁶⁵ The financial gains O’Casey’s play could provide the group were surely a major selling point when the company considered Hogan’s proposal, especially as, according to the group’s historian, Jim Hanks, by the late 1950s the LLT was losing memberships to the popularity and convenience of television.⁶⁶ It was not lost on the LLT what reinvigorating the organization could mean, particularly with the addition of more young people, as founding member George Wolever commented at the time.⁶⁷

But the LLT was limited in other ways than an Irish, British, or even maybe a New York production would have been: the LLT would not have a company or audience that would remember the Tóstal affair from their own experience. There can be no doubt that the audience was comprised almost entirely of local Hoosiers as there were only around 44–48 people of Irish birth living in the Tippecanoe County, where Lafayette is located, at the time of the performance.⁶⁸ This number only grows slightly when counting what the 1960 census called the total “foreign stock,” which included both the foreign-born population and their US-born offspring.⁶⁹ The 1960 census counted 269 people either from Ireland or of Irish descent in

⁶⁴ Hanks, 12. I am only speculating about program sponsorship based on the program, itself, which is packed with advertisements for local businesses.

⁶⁵ “World Premier of Play by Irish Author,” *Journal and Courier*, April 25, 1959, 22.

⁶⁶ Hanks, 16.

⁶⁷ Bill Brooks, “Growth of Little Theatre Recalled,” *Journal and Courier*, April 23, 1959, 18.

⁶⁸ William W. Griffin, “Irish,” in *Peopling Indiana: The Ethnic Experience*, eds. Robert M. Taylor, Jr. and Connie A. McBirney (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1996), 268.

⁶⁹ US Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *The Census of Population: 1960*, Vol. 1: Characteristics of the Population, Part 16 (Washington, D.C.: 1963), XXI.

Tippecanoe County.⁷⁰ Over 2,000 people attended the production's four-night run at the Sunnyside Junior High School Auditorium, and it is unclear how many people who claimed Irish descent traveled to see the performance.⁷¹

While O'Casey told the Ulster Group that controversy was "A bad reason for wanting a play," O'Casey nevertheless understood the publicity the Tóstal affair could bring a production.

⁷⁰ US Department of Commerce, *The Census of Population: 1960*, Vol. 1, 292. The Irish "foreign stock" in Lafayette, itself was 176, and neighboring West Lafayette also counted 33. Northern Irish heritage or birth is not specified in the 1960 census, but instead England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland are collapsed as the United Kingdom for the census's country of origin category. In 1960, the county counted 657 people of UK "stock." Lafayette counted 281, and West Lafayette 198. These are all relatively small numbers. The total population of the county in 1960 was 89,122. Lafayette's population was 42,330, and West Lafayette's was 12,680. The total population of all people who counted as "foreign stock" was 7,210 for the county, 3,090 for Lafayette, and 1,817 for West Lafayette. The largest single population by far were Germans at a "foreign stock" population of 1,904 for the county, 1,099 for Lafayette, and 198 for West Lafayette (see US Department of Commerce, *The Census of Population: 1960*, Vol. 1, 204, 206, 238, 253, 292). It's very much worth noting that the number of people of Irish heritage are significantly lower than in previous censuses. In 1950, there were 18,732 people in the state of Indiana of the Irish "stock." In 1960, statewide, there were only 12,795. Compare that to the 1940–50 decrease, where there was a decrease of fewer than 200 people of Irish heritage (see US Department of Commerce, *The Census of Population: 1960*, Vol. 1, 168). The numbers are even more dramatic compared to the 1930 census, which took place just before the LLT's founding in 1931. According to that report, there were 630 people of Irish "foreign or mixed parentage" in Lafayette, 798 in the county, and 26,890 across the state. The 1930 census also specified people of Northern Irish heritage, and counted 90 in Lafayette, 130 in the county, and 5,572 in the state. The 1930 census did not include data particular to West Lafayette. The Irish heritage population in Lafayette in 1930 was significantly larger than its English/Scottish counterparts, which numbered at 167 and 83, respectively. The town's total population in 1930 was 26,240, so those of Irish heritage also made up a greater percentage at that point than in 1960 (see Leon E. Truesdell, *Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930*, Vol. III, Part 1: Alabama–Missouri, [Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1932], 683, 708, 716, 720–1). I say all of this to suggest the possibility that the LLT productions of Shaw, Wilde, Ervine, and Lennox from 1931–49 may have had a larger Irish audience and even participation than by 1959. Much more research on those productions would be necessary, but I am here trying to account for the greater presence of Irish drama in the LLT's presentations prior to 1950. A larger Irish population would help to account for that discrepancy. Not that, again, the Irishness of the play is even what attracted the group to them in the first place. See above note 63.

⁷¹ "A Few Tickets Are Left for O'Casey Play," *Journal and Courier*, April 25, 1959, 7. Newspapers in the Indianapolis area, Gary suburbs, and other small towns did report on the production ahead of its performance, so it is possible that Irish immigrants (and other Hoosiers) traveled from other counties to see the performance. See Corbin Patrick, "Music, All Varieties, Ballet, Drama Listed On Week's Program," *Indianapolis Star*, April 19, 1959, 119; Corbin Patrick, "Purdue Names 'Fledermas' Cast," *Indianapolis Star*, March 4, 1959, 14; Frank G. Schmidt, "Press Club's Hoaxes Big Show of Week," *South Bend Tribune* (South Bend, IN), April 5, 1959, 45; United Press International (UPI), "Drama By Famous Irish Playwright To Have World Premiere At Purdue," *Franklin Evening Star* (Franklin, IN), April 22, 1959, 10; UPI, "Lafayette Amateurs to Premiere Sean O'Casey's Latest Play," *Evening Republican* (Columbus, IN), April 22, 1959, 13; UPI, "Lafayette Lands World Premiere Of Controversial Irish Drama," *Terre Haute Tribune* (Terre Haute, IN), April 23, 1959, 18; UPI, "O'Casey Play To Have Premiere in Lafayette," *Hammond Times* (Munster, IN), April 22, 1959, 3; UPI, "Premiere of Irish Author's Drama Slated for Lafayette," *Anderson Daily Bulletin* (Anderson, IN), April 22, 1959, 8; UPI, "Sean O'Casey Drama Will Have World Premiere In Lafayette," *Call-Leader* (Elwood, IN), April 22, 1959, 4; Walter Whitworth, "Lafayette to Premiere O'Casey's New Play," *Indianapolis News*, March 25, 1959, 17.

He even told Shyre that he thought it might be a good idea to stage the play while its censorship “was in the minds of all” so that its messages might reverberate more acutely (even if, again, strictly speaking, O’Casey pulled the play from performance himself).⁷² Shyre, too, understood that the play would have a different reception if the production could be framed around its censorship in Ireland, especially since, for Shyre, oppression and repression were among the play’s most important themes. In those first conversations he held with O’Casey after the Dublin fallout, Shyre proposed that he might round up all of the plays rejected from the Dublin Festival for a New York iteration.⁷³ Hogan also understood the profound ironies laden in Dublin’s ejection of this particular drama. Hogan told O’Casey after he read the manuscript, “I don’t know anything that could be more symbolically neat than the ABishop [*sic*] of Dublin expelling O’Casey, Joyce, and Beckett.”⁷⁴ Absent the memory of censorship O’Casey describes, audiences would understand the play differently. So, Hogan built a cultural memory of Irish censorship for the LLT’s Hoosier audience.⁷⁵

⁷² O’Casey, *Letters*, 3: 575.

⁷³ Paul Shyre to Seán O’Casey, Mar 14, 1958, SOCP, NLI, MS 38,051.

⁷⁴ Robert Hogan to Seán O’Casey, Mar 25, 1958, SOCP, NLI, MS 37,846/2

⁷⁵ There have been relatively few productions of *The Drums of Father Ned*: the LLT world premiere in 1959; the British premiere at the Queen’s Theatre in Hornchurch (a London suburb) in 1960; a 1961 production by the Lyric Theater in Washington, DC; a 1963 production at Le Cothurne in Lyon, France; a 1965 production by the Travistock Repertory Company at the Tower Theatre in London; the 1966 Irish premiere at Dublin’s Olympia Theatre; an Abbey Theatre production in 1985; and a staged reading of the play by the Irish Repertory Theatre in Manhattan in 2019. See Ronald Ayling and Michael J. Durkan, *Sean O’Casey: A Bibliography* (London: Macmillan, 1978), 121; Greenwood, 134n6; Program for the Abbey Theatre production of *The Drums of Father Ned*, SOCP, NLI 38,159/5; Program for the Lyric Theater production of *The Drums of Father Ned*, SOCP, NLI 38,160/10; “The Sean O’Casey Reading Series: *The Drums of Father Ned*,” Irish Repertory Theatre, accessed June 2, 2020, <https://irishrep.org/event/2018-2019-season/the-sean-ocasey-reading-series-the-drums-of-father-ned/>.

3.2 “Dublin’s loss is Lafayette’s gain”: Representing and Remembering Ireland in Indiana

The prosthetic memory of censorship emerged from articles and advertisements that Hogan and the LLT used to publicize the production. This memory included a narrative that not only permitted but encouraged the Hoosiers to produce O’Casey’s play and gave them a way to interpret the play and their relationship to it. *The Drums of Father Ned*’s primary dramatic function is to represent the movement from a repressed Ireland to a progressive Ireland. Nicholas Grene argues Irish drama that centrally concerns itself with representing Ireland is “outward-directed, created as much to be viewed from outside as from inside Ireland.”⁷⁶ For Grene, such Irish drama figures Ireland as an other so that its implied audience might reinterpret Ireland. And while the play performs Ireland as an othered subject, the comedy does little itself to explain the histories, memories, and issues it depicts. As Patrick Lonergan argues, when Irish plays that concern highly specific Irish subjects perform abroad, they “must be framed or mediated in a way that will provide an interpretive framework for a[n]... audience lacking specialized knowledge of Ireland.”⁷⁷ The cultural, prosthetic memory of Irish censorship served as that frame. Separate but adjacent to the dramatic text, the memory made the play legible and relevant for its otherwise largely Hoosier audience. Hogan and the LLT crafted that memory specifically to their advantage and for the particularities of their mostly Hoosier audience. In a letter he wrote to O’Casey after the production closed, Hogan even called the wad of paper clippings he produced for the show his “propaganda.”⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Nicholas Grene, *The Politics of Irish Drama: Plays in Context from Boucicault to Friel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 3.

⁷⁷ Lonergan, *Theatre and Globalization*, 92.

⁷⁸ Robert Hogan to Seán O’Casey, April 30, 1959, SOCP, NLI 37,846/3.

The Drums of Father Ned is a complicated ensemble piece that features a not-quite-realist form. It mixes satire with elements that are very obviously not of a slice-of-life dramaturgy. For example, an offstage echo of the dialogue periodically sounds to repeat and ironically comment upon certain lines, regardless of the physics necessary for an echo to actually occur and which the characters mostly don't hear or acknowledge. Subtitled "A Mickrocosm [*sic*] of Ireland" the play's plot and story are both thin, allowing O'Casey to explore ideas and issues in vignette-like sequences that, while linear, are centered more on themes than character and plot.⁷⁹ O'Casey compared his approach to a kaleidoscope:

This microcosm [of Ireland] is meant (successfully or not, I don't know) to portray the whole condition of Ireland as she is; for today, in confusion of politics, art, literature, and sex, Ireland is a colorless kaleidoscope, a kaleidoscope, twist it how you may, [that] never shows a settled or colorful pattern.⁸⁰

A kaleidoscope does, however, change what it contains as it moves, and Ireland, the play suggests, is in desperate need of some twisting and new, more colorful pieces to reinvigorate it.

This is why the play begins with a foundational moment in the characters' national memory: the Irish War for Independence (1919–21). Called the "Prerule," the Black and Tans – Royal police reserves recruited mostly from Britain to maintain the Union by any means necessary – capture two young men, Binnington and McGilligan. The pair hate each other for unknown reasons, and the Black and Tans eventually spare and release them saying, "Can't you see that these two rats will do more harm to Ireland living than they'll ever do to Ireland dead?"⁸¹

⁷⁹ This subtitled appears in the British edition published by Faber and Faber, but not the American one published by St. Martin's.

⁸⁰ O'Casey, *Letters*, 3: 551.

⁸¹ O'Casey, *Father Ned*, 10.

The pair's shared investment in Irish nationalism is crucial to the play's dramaturgy as sites of shared experience and enmity.

As the first act begins, time jumps ahead to contemporary 1950s Ireland. Binnington and McGilligan still hate each other, and even fought on opposite sides of the Irish Civil War (1922–3), the internal conflict that arose over the Anglo-Irish Treaty that separated Ireland from the UK but kept it within the dominion of the British Empire with the monarch as the Head of State, and gave counties in the northern Ulster province the option to rejoin the UK. Binnington and McGilligan are now mayor and deputy mayor, respectively, of a small (imaginary) town called Doonavale. They still hate each other but overlook their ancient hostility when it's in their economic interests. The rest of the play revolves around preparations for An Tóstal. Binnington and McGilligan's adult children, along with local laborers, rehearse a pageant play about the 1798 Irish Rebellion. Some of these characters parade about in eighteenth-century garb for the duration of the play. Binnington and McGilligan's wives follow their husbands about, often dancing as they discuss otherwise serious matters with their spouses – for they are practicing for the Tóstal Ball. The mayor and his deputy also await a shipment of lumber they plan to use for their construction project, but which turns out to be “red” lumber from Russia, resulting in a debate among the parish. Meanwhile, a man from Northern Ireland, Alec Skerighan, arrives on business to meet with McGilligan. Skerighan attempts to woo Binnington's servant girl, Bernadette, but ultimately assaults her. Mr. Murray, a local organist, rehearses another group to sing choral numbers for the Tóstal under the overly-controlling eye of the parish priest, Father Fillifogue, who O'Casey uses as a stand-in for the nation's parochialism and cultural conservatism. Fillifogue is the piece's chief antagonist and the butt-end of O'Casey's ridicule. The play is hardly anticlerical even if it does critique the Church's pieties, though, as the

eponymous Father Ned is Fillifogue's foil. Although he never makes an onstage appearance, Father Ned is often discussed and is something like the spirit of An Tóstal and all of the good that O'Casey thought that it could bring to Ireland. He is seemingly everywhere and is inspirational to the younger generation of characters for his passion, openness, and investment in the community's future.

At the end of the play, O'Casey suggests that the time has come for Ireland to pass the cultural and political baton. The revelation that Binnington and McGilligan's offspring are lovers shocks Binnington, McGilligan, and Fillifogue into submission. The play carries this logic to its political fruition. The younger Binnington and McGilligan sign up to run against their parents in the coming election, but the older characters can't physically move at the end of the play, implying that they will miss the deadline to register, allowing their children to make off with their legislative duties in an uncontested election. In the final moments, most of the characters abandon these fuddy-duddies and join Father Ned, who leads the community in a literal and metaphoric march onward to the beat of his drum, silencing out a divisive anti-Catholic march that Skerighan taps on the floor with his umbrella. While not particularly realistic, as Christopher Murray argues, utopian fantasy helps O'Casey to manifest and imagine cultural and political change that he nevertheless believes is possible.⁸² Again, the play is not just loaded with images, references, songs, and representations particular to Irish history, memory, and contemporary social, cultural, and political life but makes many of these its subject for interpretation. While reviews are limited, I argue that the tools of memory and performance studies can help register the cultural work the performance undertook. In Lafayette, the cultural memory of Irish

⁸² Christopher Murray, *Seán O'Casey: Writer at Work: A Biography* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004), 391.

ensorship framed the piece and helped the audience relate this curious piece to their own identities and histories.

Unlike Ireland, Lafayette was a fairly prosperous place in 1959. The greater Lafayette population was about 55,000 when the census was taken the next year.⁸³ Purdue University was a well-established institution which helped to provide financial stability to the community. In addition to the university, other employers at the time included major manufacturers, local services, chain and local retailers, several public schools, and government offices. The National Homes Corporation and Alcoa counted among the city's manufacturing industries.⁸⁴ Coca-Cola also bottled products in Lafayette, and bought ad space in the LLT's program for *Father Ned*.⁸⁵ In a 2016 interview I conducted with original cast member Richard "Dick" Jaeger, he claimed that jobs were plentiful and easy to come by in Lafayette: "If you managed to shake hands you got a job," he said.⁸⁶ Indiana was also among the lowest per capita consumers of state and federal welfare for supplemental income.⁸⁷

One sign of Lafayette's general affluence was the abundance of private and public recreational spaces and activities available in the small city. Perhaps most notable among these was the Columbian Park Zoo, which housed animals typically found in more metropolitan zoos

⁸³ This includes the population of both Lafayette and West Lafayette. For population data, see US Department of Commerce, 204, 206.

⁸⁴ The National Homes Corporation was an early manufacturer of modular houses. Alcoa, short for "Aluminum Company of America," manufactures and sells aluminum. National Homes Corporation, "Glass Use Adds Space to House," Advertisement, *Journal and Courier*, August 14, 1959; Alcoa, "Lafayette Families Live Better Because of Alcoa," Advertisement, *Journal and Courier*, July 23, 1959, 13.

⁸⁵ Program for the Lafayette Little Theatre Association production of *The Drums of Father Ned*, pages 4–5, 1959, NLI, SOCP, MS 38,161/4.

⁸⁶ Richard Jaeger, phone interview with the author, digitally recorded with permission, April 16, 2016. Dick was the last surviving cast member from the original production who was still living in Lafayette at the time of our interview. Dick passed away in April 2019, just shy of his 90th birthday. I am eternally grateful for the time he spent with me over the phone answering questions about this obscure event that took place some 50 years prior. He was generous with his time and memories, humorous – even jovial – and sharp as a tack. See Obituary for Richard "Dick" Jaeger, *Journal and Courier*, April 26, 2019, A5.

⁸⁷ James H. Madison, *Hoosiers: A New History of Indiana* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014), 310.

like elephants and chimpanzees.⁸⁸ A large public park that included a swimming pool and dance hall stretched out from the zoo.⁸⁹ The city had its own little league for youngsters to play baseball, with several ballparks across the town.⁹⁰ Basketball was also popular thanks especially to Purdue's status as a Big 10 school.⁹¹

While athletic recreation was well-established in Lafayette by the 1950s, the local art scene was still emerging. Local musicians established the Lafayette Symphony Orchestra in 1950 as a community group and is now professional.⁹² A group of singers also created what Jaeger called a "semi-professional" community choir in the 1960s (the Bach Chorale Singers – now the Lafayette Master Chorale).⁹³ Mr. Jaeger worked as the director of choirs and head of music at Jefferson High School, and so the public school system was an additional source of cultural production and training (this is also why he was cast as the choir master in the play – so that he could lead and rehearse the play's songs). In 1959, the Lafayette Art Association built their own space for permanent galleries and rotating exhibitions for local artists.⁹⁴ By comparison, the LLT was a well-established entity in the community by 1959.⁹⁵

⁸⁸ Columbian Park Zoo, "CPZ History," *Lafayette Government*, <http://www.lafayette.in.gov/1587/CPZ-History>.

⁸⁹ W. C. Madden and the Tippecanoe County Historical Association, *Lafayette* (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2015), 70, 74.

⁹⁰ W. C. Madden and the Tippecanoe County Historical Association, 73.

⁹¹ Jaeger Interview.

⁹² "History and Mission," *Lafayette Symphony*, accessed October 14, 2019, <https://lafayettesymphony.org/history-and-mission/>.

⁹³ Jaeger Interview; "About the Lafayette Master Chorale," accessed October 14, 2019, <https://lafayettemasterchorale.org/history-mission>.

⁹⁴ "History of the Art Museum of Greater Lafayette," *Art Museum of Greater Lafayette*, accessed October 14, 2019, <https://artlafayette.org/history>.

⁹⁵ The LLT's membership reorganized the company as the Civic Theatre of Greater Lafayette in 1965 when the private/membership model reached a breaking point. The Civic Theatre shifted to public performances and a non-profit organization. The Civic Theatre of Greater Lafayette continues to operate today with a professional staff. Hanks, 9, 14, 19, 61–6. See also "MainStage History," *Civic Theatre of Greater Lafayette*, accessed May 27, 2020, <https://www.lafayettecivic.org/mainstage>.

The LLT used a range of resources to promote their world premiere production including press releases and informational articles in the local newspaper, advertisements, and program notes. In addition to publicizing the event, these materials constituted a discursive field through which audiences could later recall the cultural memory of Irish censorship during the performance to help interpret the play and its meanings. For Landsberg, prosthetic memory forms not when people acquire historical information as a basic context for understanding, but through an embodied interaction with media that allows them to empathize with or experience histories that are not their own.⁹⁶ This interactive dynamic is evident in these performance-adjacent texts in which Hogan and the LLT made an effort to position the play's history, O'Casey's biography, and their production in relationship to Lafayette and Hoosier identity.

From the start, the LLT framed *Father Ned* in light of its de facto banning. The first press statement announcing the play stated “[T]he play has already become something of an international ‘cause-celebre’ because of its dramatic withdrawal from the Dublin International Theatre Festival last summer [*sic*] and the subsequent cancelling of the festival.”⁹⁷ This announcement, in fact, gives no description of the play's content whatsoever, emphasizing its scandalous history instead – a telling choice for an article that also served as an audition announcement. As if to validate the LLT's priorities, about a week later, a similar announcement appeared in the *Indianapolis Star* explaining, “The play was originally scheduled for a premiere at the Dublin International Theatre Festival last year, but O'Casey withdrew it after objections were raised because the dramatic adaptation of James Joyce's *Ulysses* was on the same bill.”⁹⁸

⁹⁶ Landsberg, 108.

⁹⁷ “Little Theatre May Do World Premiere,” *Journal and Courier*, February 26, 1959, 36.

⁹⁸ Patrick, “Purdue Names,” *Indianapolis Star*, March 4, 1959, 14.

Many of these materials address not only the play's censorship but rhetorically work to establish Lafayette's place in the play's history. As the opening approached, the mayors of Lafayette and West Lafayette issued a joint proclamation declaring "World Premiere Week" in honor of the LLT's historic achievement, and the Greater Lafayette Chamber of Commerce passed a resolution urging the community's support for this "event of world-wide theatrical importance."⁹⁹ The same day the *Star* article appeared, Lafayette's local daily, the *Journal and Courier*, published an editorial pitching the opportunity as an honor and an obvious vote of confidence on O'Casey's part as to "the stature of our local amateur players," adding that "it will be interesting and stimulating to be among the first in the world to hear what so famous an Irish literary figure who ranks with Shaw, Joyce and Yeats has to say."¹⁰⁰ Each of these implicitly understands the conditions that caused the author to withdraw the play. There is a sense that although O'Casey imagined the play before an Irish audience, they refused it, and so the play would have a home among a Hoosier audience, and Hoosiers are anxious for it. The production's advertisements always touted the fact that the production was a world premiere, simultaneously promoting the event, framing it for the community, and providing a kind of proxy-rehearsal for attending this play. The advertisement expects its target audience to have some familiarity with the history that brought the play to Lafayette and implicitly asks them to imagine themselves in that history – or at least, prior to the theatrical performance, to begin thinking that way.¹⁰¹

The marketing material Hogan wrote made this implicit call more explicit, calling on the LLT's audience to be historical participants in an unfolding narrative that will inevitably

⁹⁹ "Proclaim Week for Premiere," *Journal and Courier*, April 16, 1959, 44; Resolution of the Greater Lafayette Chamber of Commerce, SOCP, NLI 37,846/3.

¹⁰⁰ "World Premiere," *Journal and Courier*, March 4, 1959, 6.

¹⁰¹ Lafayette Little Theatre, Advertisement for *The Drums of Father Ned*, *Journal and Courier*, April 8, 1959, 17.

constitute an American repudiation of censorship. Hogan's explicit invitation to take part in the history of censorship is a key component of the LLT's *Father Ned* and its cultural significance for the community because it facilitated the interactive dynamic that makes prosthetic memory. Hogan embedded that invitation in a series of articles he wrote recounting O'Casey's life as one devoted to facing down injustice under the oppression of both British colonial rule and conservative nationalist culture in the Irish Free State and subsequent Republic. The first of these essays, unsurprisingly titled "O'Casey Play Already has Stormy History," detailed the history of *Father Ned*'s misadventures in Ireland with the Dublin International Theatre Festival, complete with O'Casey's own commentary and the claim that the archbishop of Dublin had not read the plays to which he objected.¹⁰² Hogan ends this article with a quote from the *Manchester Guardian*'s report on the Festival's cancelation: "One may contemplate [the Festival's] ruins as a monument to the subservient orthodoxy which so often passes for piety in Ireland."¹⁰³ Eliciting a comparison between oppressed Ireland and an exceptionally tolerant US, Hogan concludes "But in this case, Dublin's loss is Greater Lafayette's gain."¹⁰⁴ What isn't accepted elsewhere has a place here in Lafayette. Hogan's marketing work deftly crafts an ongoing history-in-progress. By penning publicity in the form of a history that interpolates its readers into itself, Hogan created a discursive field that encouraged and prepared a would-be theatrical audience to be participants in a story that had not yet reached what will seemingly be an inevitable conclusion.

In his publicity work Hogan depicted Ireland as particularly oppressive, clarifying the distinctive national character of the Irish memory of censorship he sought to stage the play against. Hogan continues his criticisms of Ireland in subsequent articles, writing a history of the

¹⁰² Robert Hogan, "O'Casey Play Already Has Stormy History," *Journal and Courier*, March 7, 1959, 14.

¹⁰³ Qtd. in Hogan, "O'Casey Play Already Has Stormy History," *Journal and Courier*.

¹⁰⁴ Hogan, "O'Casey Play Already Has Story History," *Journal and Courier*.

nation via O’Casey, casting the playwright in the romantic mode as an outcast genius. Hogan cribbed a great deal of this material from O’Casey’s *Autobiographies* (1939–54) and periodical writings, though, so O’Casey’s own perspectives animate Hogan’s interpretation of Ireland, circulating exactly the kind of stories O’Casey told Shyre he thought should accompany *Father Ned*’s world premiere. After his first article about the play’s censorship, Hogan’s next piece summarized O’Casey’s childhood, noting his lifelong struggle with his vision and his family’s penury.¹⁰⁵ Hogan followed that essay up with an article about O’Casey’s early adulthood, where he paints a picture of an O’Casey keenly aware of social injustice as he begins a life in the labor force, scrimping money to purchase reading material – all against a backdrop in which O’Casey witnesses the tumultuous and bloody years of the Irish revolutionary era.¹⁰⁶ Importantly, Hogan doesn’t include O’Casey’s militant socialist advocacy during this period – his activism with the labor movement, friendship with Jim Larkin, or involvement in the Irish Citizen Army. Their inclusion could have radically complicated the narrative Hogan was building for anticommunist Indiana.¹⁰⁷

The topic of Hogan’s next article is the reception of O’Casey’s plays in the 1920s, the riots over *The Plough and the Stars*, and his relationship with an Ireland that could not support one of its own “greats.” Hogan takes a quote from O’Casey’s autobiography *Inishfallen, Fare Thee Well* (1949) to describe the author’s exodus from the island: “It must have been a great relief one day when he stood on the deck of the mail-boat, feeling ‘the sleety hail and salty spray into his face, stinging it deeply – Ireland, spitting a last, contemptuous farewell.’”¹⁰⁸ Hogan then

¹⁰⁵ Robert Hogan, “O’Casey Started with Little, Learned Much,” *Journal and Courier*, March 21, 1959, 6.

¹⁰⁶ Robert Hogan, “O’Casey Saved Money for Reading Material,” *Journal and Courier*, April 4, 1959, 8.

¹⁰⁷ For more on these issues, see Moran, 12–16 and 34–63.

¹⁰⁸ Robert Hogan, “Like Most, O’Casey Left Native Land,” *Journal and Courier*, April 9, 1959, 34; Seán O’Casey, *Autobiographies*, vol. 2 (New York: Carroll and Graf, 1984), 247.

traces this experience to a passage from *Father Ned*, linking O’Casey’s embittered memory of Ireland as a place of rejection with the play: “Some just drop out of Ireland, some just step out of it, and some take a leap away, but they all go.”¹⁰⁹ Hogan’s final piece fleshed out the details of that exodus, conjuring up yet another image of O’Casey as an embattled figure, this time as a misunderstood, experimental artist whose own work – *The Silver Tassie*, in particular – pushed him away from the Abbey where he had found an artistic home.¹¹⁰ Ireland rejects O’Casey as an artist and Hogan links this to *Father Ned* – he is a dramatist continually in search for an outlet.¹¹¹ In each of these articles, Ireland is a place of oppression and censorship in one form or another.

While it is unlikely everyone in the LLT audience read all of Hogan’s articles, the production’s program reproduced much of their content and rhetoric for ease of access, crafting the viewing experience to ensure that as many people would watch the play in the way the company wanted as possible.¹¹² The note introduces O’Casey as “a stormy figure in the British Theatre” for the past 35 years. It goes on to portray O’Casey’s past as one that frequently

¹⁰⁹ Quoted in Hogan, “Like Most, O’Casey Left Native Land,” *Journal and Courier*; O’Casey, *Father Ned*, 78.

¹¹⁰ Robert Hogan, “Play Rejection Called Crucial O’Casey Event,” *Journal and Courier*, April 16, 1959, 37.

¹¹¹ Historians have shown that O’Casey’s *Autobiographies* and other writing about himself and the times in which he lived contain a great deal of embellishment and fabrication, further illustrating the constructed nature of cultural memory and the power it holds to shape meaning even beyond the facts of the past. Like Shaw before him, O’Casey diligently worked to create a public persona for himself that was very much based on myths Lady Gregory first spun about his impoverished origins. In reality, O’Casey was born into a lower-middle class family in a three-story Georgian house that his father probably owned and managed as landlord. It was hardly the slum Lady Gregory claimed it to be in her remarks about the authenticity of O’Casey’s early work at the Abbey. O’Casey also did attend school, passed his reading and writing exams, and the school even gifted him an illuminated scroll when he was only seven for his high proficiency in religious studies – half the age at which he supposedly first learned to read. In fact, O’Casey only lived in a tenement for a brief period in the early ‘20s. Granted, when he was six his father died, radically altering the family’s fortunes, and he did suffer from an infectious eye disease that undoubtedly impacted his school attendance and educational progress. That said, the incidents surrounding the riots over *The Plough and the Stars* and the Abbey’s rejection of *The Silver Tassie* were both more complicated than the author often described, as well. As Moran summarizes: “O’Casey viewed himself as being exiled and despised just like Joyce, and derived comfort from the idea that Dublin’s literary clique had put them both beyond the pale.” For more on the myths and facts of O’Casey’s life, see Moran 8–26, 86.

¹¹² It is also worth noting that Hogan apparently made appearances on local television and radio stations to promote the play, and it is likely that he repeated his “propaganda” in these outlets. Bill Brooks, “Around Here,” *Journal and Courier*, April 18, 1959, 18.

offended religious and political sentiments, that he grew up poor and still has trouble with his eyes due to childhood malnutrition, and who taught himself to read at 14. It catalogues the various jobs the author held before achieving stability as a writer, and recounts both the riotous first run of *The Plough and the Stars* and the rejection of *The Silver Tassie* as actions resulting from O'Casey's criticism of political or religious sensitivities. The note traces those earlier controversies to the Dublin International Theatre Festival scandal, although it tells the story in a confused manner, skipping the archbishop's objections but still quoting O'Casey's letter that claimed McQuaid's protest was against the authors, not the specific dramatic texts. "Well," the program note proclaims, "Dublin's loss is Lafayette's gain," echoing the earlier article.¹¹³ Again, the production positioned the Hoosier community as the direct inheritor and counter of Irish censorship. Hogan and the LLT's efforts to bring the controversial play to Indiana brought the

¹¹³ Richard Cordell, "About the Play," in the program for the Lafayette Little Theatre Association Production of *The Drums of Father Ned*, pages 1–2, 7, SOCP, NLI, 38,161/4. The program also contained a glossary of terms on the back cover to help the audience prepare for this intensely Irish comedy since, again, O'Casey's play assumes the audience's familiarity with such terms, figures, and events as "Tóstal," "Black and Tans," "Paudrig Pearse," "Sinn Féin" [sic], "Dublin Castle," "*Dail*" [sic], "Tara Hill," "Beating of the drums," "Ulsterman," "Lullibullero," and a collection of mythical Irish gods and heroes. In addition to those I've already explained, here is a brief explanation of each of these terms. Pádraig/Pádraic/Patrick Pearse was one of the leaders of the 1916 Easter Rising, and was one of the principal authors of the Proclamation of the Irish Republic from outside Dublin's captured General Post Office, which the rebels used as a headquarters for their uprising. Sinn Féin is a nationalist political party in Ireland and Northern Ireland that the British greatly associated with the 1916 Rising. Dublin Castle was the seat of British colonial rule prior to Irish independence, and the location of the British surrender to Michael Collins, head of the Provisional Government, in 1922. The Dáil is lower house of the Irish Oireachtas, or Parliament. The Hill of Tara is a hill in central Ireland (Co. Meath) where, according to tradition the medieval High Kings of Ireland were crowned and seated before Anglo-Norman invasions in 1169. "Beating of the drums" refers to an Irish-Protestant ritual tradition particular to those who belong to the Orange Order, unionist activists whose traditions date back to the Irish supporters of the Protestant King William of Orange, who defeated the Catholic-backed, deposed King James II at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690. After the battle, James II fled to France and William consolidated Protestant dominance of the Catholic-majority island for centuries to come. The beating of the drums has caused riots and is still considered a controversial and divisive act. Ulstermen are people from the province of Ulster, which consists of nine northern counties Ireland (three in the Republic, six in British Northern Ireland). Many in Ulster, particularly in the Protestant population, have long considered themselves more culturally British than Irish, although these distinctions can be difficult to maintain and have waxed and waned over time. Lullibullero is an anti-Catholic marching and fighting tune that supposedly came into popularity around the time William of Orange took the crown of England in the Glorious Revolution of 1688. William's soldiers brought the song with them to Ireland in their clash against James II's Catholic forces. The lyrics satirize the Irish-Catholic Jacobite sentiments. The legendary figures listed in the program include Angus the Young, "Conn of th' Hundred Fights," Brian Boru, Columbkille, and "Dunbo of Cuchualin."

cultural memory of Irish censorship across the Atlantic through the accoutrement attendant to their mounting of the ostensibly banned Irish text, establishing a framework through which audiences could interpret the performance.

3.3 Performing Here and There: Othering Ireland on the Hoosier Stage

Onstage, the LLT emphasized Ireland's difference from Lafayette – both at the beginning of the play where O'Casey engulfs Ireland in the flames of colonial conflict and at the end where the villagers turn towards communism for political and cultural inspiration. Neither vision of Ireland maps neatly over the concerns of the (very likely) white, middle-class, mostly American audience who saw the performance. The prosthetic memory of Irish censorship distanced the audience from identifying with the Ireland onstage by allowing the spectators to position themselves as always already different: the narrative went that it was by virtue of their unique place in the world, their good fortune to live in the land of the free, that the play could appear before them at all. Further, O'Casey had to provide contrast to the progressive politics that conclude the play, and so in the text itself he paints a particularly harsh picture of Ireland that the performance-adjacent prosthetic memory of Irish censorship only heightened.

The “Prerumple” at the start of the play drew a sharp contrast between Lafayette and Ireland in the LLT's production. The production began with the vague silhouette of a town in flames with a church spire topped with a cross especially visible against a plain scrim. Before the scrim stood a flat, white Celtic cross. A group of Hoosiers dressed in black sweaters, khaki pants, berets, and cowboy holsters on their hips played O'Casey's Black and Tans. Revolvers in hand,

they drag Binnington and McGilligan onstage.¹¹⁴ The British officers make the hateful pair face one another, talk to each other, and run side-by-side while the officers shoot their guns just to the left and right of each Irishman, forcing them to stay close together and mixing social and martial torture to comedic effect.¹¹⁵ A commander calls the Black and Tans for backup against a Sinn Féin ambush, leaving Binnington and McGilligan to crawl away in opposite directions as the audience hears a war chant accompanied by a drum roll.¹¹⁶ As a glossary in the production program notes, the drums signify a Protestant Orange Lodge ritual and the political and religious sectarianism at the root of the violent history the prologue depicts.¹¹⁷

This staging of the Irish War for Independence, with its hellish backdrop and excessive violence, exceeds the narrative Hogan and company created of Ireland. After the Black and Tans march away, gunshots are heard, and Binnington exclaims, “Aha, our boys are givin’ it to them! God direct their aim!”¹¹⁸ In a similar manner to the Irish-Protestant tenants in O’Casey’s *The Shadow of the Gunman* to whom the British military show just as little mercy as the Catholics, for O’Casey, violence is indiscriminate irrespective of God’s supposed allegiances. O’Casey focuses attention in both plays on the inequities of the colonial relationship and its dehumanizing proficiency against all parties. If Ireland’s religious difference to Britain historically helped to justify Britain’s imperial rule and violence, O’Casey subsumes religious difference under the rubric of violence. The cultural meaning of the drum roll, dictated in the program note, further marshals sectarianism for the future, as the lights go out. O’Casey leaves the nature of the

¹¹⁴ Photograph from the LLT production of *The Drums of Father Ned*, photographer unknown, Eileen O’Casey Papers, NLI MS 44,728/6.

¹¹⁵ O’Casey, *Father Ned*, 7.

¹¹⁶ O’Casey, *Father Ned*, 12.

¹¹⁷ See note 113 in this chapter.

¹¹⁸ O’Casey, *Father Ned*, 12.

church's role ambiguous in the Prerumple, and the rest of the play dramatizes the directions the church can take the country, embodied in the cantankerous and conservative Father Fillifogue and the accepting and progressive Father Ned.

The LLT sought to stamp their version of Ireland as authentic and thereby lend authority to their representation of Irish difference.¹¹⁹ The cast included two Irish immigrants as actors in the production alongside the Hoosiers: Geraldine Gray and Nicholas Bielenberg. Gray played the role of Nora, McGilligan's daughter, while Bielenberg played the Man of the Pike, one of the actors in the 1798 pageant play.¹²⁰ They both noted their Irish origins in the program. There, Gray's actor bio explains that she has been in the United States since the previous November.¹²¹ Bielenberg was a graduate student at Purdue studying agricultural economy.¹²² In a 2020

¹¹⁹ This is not to say that the performance was authentically Irish. Such claims can perpetuate dangerous ideologies.

¹²⁰ It is worth noting how the US perceived Irish-Americans at the time. By the 1950s, the US generally thought better of the Irish-American population than previously. While the history of prejudice against the Irish and especially against Irish Catholics in the US is long, films like the immensely popular *Going My Way* (1944) that depicted Irish-American Catholics as "All-American heroes" reflected and participated in a changing sentiment. In fact, by the Cold War era, some US history textbooks even cited the Irish as the nation's exemplary migrant population. While such assessments were not uniform – particularly where anti-Catholic prejudice remained – increased affluence, participation in WWII, condemnation of Ireland's neutrality in that war, and the frequent and vocal Catholic expression of anticommunism were among some of the issues that helped to buoy what was once a reviled immigrant group. For more, see Lawrence J. McCaffrey, "Going My Way and Irish-American Catholicism: Myth and Reality," in *Screening Irish-America: Representing Irish-America in Film and Television*, ed. Ruth Barton (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2009), 180–90; Matthew J. O'Brien, "'Hibernians on the March': Irish-American Ethnicity and the Cold War," in *After the Flood: Irish America 1945–1960*, eds. James Silas Rogers and Matthew J. O'Brien (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2009), 57–70; Anthony Burke Smith, "America's Favorite Priest: *Going My Way* (1944)," in *Catholics in the Movies*, ed. Colleen McDannell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 107–26.

¹²¹ LLT *Father Ned* Program, 6. Gray immigrated to the US with her parents. Gray had already graduated from the equivalent of high school in Ireland, having attended the Ursuline Convent School in Sligo. She appears to have remained in Lafayette until her marriage to a Frank Erion in 1969 whereupon she moved to the suburbs of Chicago. She was alive as of her father's passing in 1998. I have been unable to determine what became of her after that. See "Frank Erion, Bride to Live in Illinois," *Journal and Courier*, October 14, 1969, 10; Obituary for Mrs. Peter Gray, *Journal and Courier*, October 18, 1971, 4; Obituary for Peter Gray, *Journal and Courier*, January 23, 1998, 22.

¹²² LLT *Father Ned* Program, 8. Nicholas Bielenberg is the son of Christabel and Peter Bielenberg. Christabel is known for her biographies describing their family's experiences in Nazi Germany, *The Past is Myself* (1968) and *The Road Ahead* (1992). Following Germany's defeat, the family moved their children to Ireland. After he completed his studies at Purdue, Nicholas returned to Ireland where he completed a doctorate in agricultural economics from Trinity College, Dublin. He continues his involvement in a number of agricultural and agri-legal projects to this day. "Dr. Nicholas Bielenberg," *LinkedIn*, accessed November 22, 2019, <https://ie.linkedin.com/in/dr-nicholas-bielenberg-4a805564>; Dan Van Der Vat, "Peter Bielenberg," *The Guardian*, March 18, 2001, accessed November 22, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2001/mar/19/guardianobituaries>;

interview I conducted with Dr. Bielenberg, he told me that he believes they recruited him because of his heritage and dialect. He doesn't have an Irish dialect (today he speaks with something closer to English Received Pronunciation), "But they still said they wanted me," he told me with a laugh.¹²³ As opposed to Bielenberg, the group advertised Gray's Irish birth in Indiana newspaper articles and noted that she "hasn't lost her Irish brogue yet."¹²⁴ The Lafayette papers also took note of Gray's Irish background with one article explaining that "this last Sunday's try-outs for 'Drums' brought out a wealth of talent, including a young actress, Irish-born.... Looks like co-directors Jeanne Orr and Hogan have a hot one on their hands."¹²⁵ Production publicity did not mention Bielenberg's background, although his bio does mention previous dramatic experience at St. Columba's College, Ireland, and Dublin University.¹²⁶ This is perhaps because he played a supporting role instead of a lead, but also probably because he didn't sport an authenticating dialect that could be a draw to potential theatregoers unto itself. Still, Gray and Bielenberg's roles in the LLT's *Father Ned* reached beyond their characters' duties. Their participation lent credibility to the amateurs' performance of Ireland – their presence confirmed the legitimacy of the production's metanarratives about Ireland and supported the performance of difference that marked Ireland as other.¹²⁷

Dan Van Der Vat, "Christabel Bielenberg," *The Guardian*, November 3, 2003, accessed November 22, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2003/nov/03/guardianobituaries.booksobituaries>.

¹²³ Nicholas Bielenberg, phone interview with the author, recorded with permission, July 3, 2020. I am extremely grateful to Dr. Bielenberg for his time and willingness to speak with me about his experiences and memories from his brief time in Lafayette.

¹²⁴ UPI, "Premiere of Irish Author's Drama Slated for Lafayette," *Anderson Daily Bulletin*, April 22, 1959, 8.

¹²⁵ Bill Brooks, "Around Here," *Journal and Courier*, March 7, 1959, 21. The "dramatic prize" was, rather, speech competitions the young Gray participated in in Ireland. LLT *Father Ned* Program, 6.

¹²⁶ LLT *Father Ned* Program, 8.

¹²⁷ Drawing on the small but present immigrant population to authenticate cultural performance was not unique to the LLT in the Lafayette of the 1950s, either. For example, in 1958, the Lafayette Opera Guild and Hoosier Symphonette produced the operetta *Song of Norway* (1944) about the life of Norwegian composer Edvard Grieg and so brought a local Norwegian migrant into the company in part to teach the singers "the proper accents," as the *Journal and Courier* put it. Like the LLT production, here, the Lafayette Opera Guild emphasized their production's "real Norwegian flavor." "'Song of Norway' Rehearsal," photograph caption, *Journal and Courier*, July 25, 1958, 7.

The rest of the cast had to perform as Irish. For Hogan and Orr this meant, in part, performing with an Irish dialect, even though O’Casey expressly told Hogan not to bother, telling him, “For God’s sake, let them let [*sic*] an ‘Irish’ accent alone! They needn’t keep always to the letter of description.”¹²⁸ A few weeks after this first letter, O’Casey reiterated the point, explaining that he wrote several of the characters with specific regional dialects in mind (specifically Limerick and Ulster), and that he would prefer the actors’ natural speaking voices over contrivance.¹²⁹ Hogan explains in his monograph, though, that he both agreed and disagreed with O’Casey, holding that attempting “a realistic brogue” could be “almost disastrous for an American cast,” but he thought it “both possible and appropriate for American actors to attempt... the shadow of a brogue.”¹³⁰ Jaeger distinctly recalled asking Hogan and Orr whether they wanted the company to speak in dialect, and that they told everyone to speak with “a broad theatre accent.”¹³¹ According to Jaeger, Hogan taught the cast the dialect to varying degrees of success. Bielenberg confirmed that the cast used an Irish dialect, adding that he and Gray helped the others; but, he doesn’t believe that it was exaggerated, describing it as “soft.”¹³² The LLT was nevertheless clearly invested in presenting what they saw as the Irishness of this play that they spent so much effort to publicize as an Irish one.

¹²⁸ O’Casey, *Letters*, 4: 14.

¹²⁹ O’Casey, *Letters*, 4: 20. O’Casey would say the same to another American scholar-turned-amateur-theatremaker interested in producing his work and, in fact, cited the LLT production as one that pulled it off – suggesting that O’Casey didn’t know (and may never have known) that they did, in fact, use dialects. O’Casey, *Letters*, 4: 72. In at least one other instance of O’Casey’s dealings with amateur performers, he denied them the use of Irish dialects. This was for the Unity Theatre’s *The Star Turns Red*. In the contract for the play’s rights, O’Casey made explicit that if English actors were performing the play they were to make no attempt to speak in a brogue or accent. See Seán O’Casey, *The Letters of Sean O’Casey*, ed. David Krause, vol. 1, 1910–41 (New York: Macmillan, 1975), 826.

¹³⁰ Hogan, *Experiments*, 141.

¹³¹ Jaeger interview.

¹³² Bielenberg interview.

Further, to perform without an Irish brogue would risk limiting the production's capacity to present the othered Ireland necessary to complete the LLT's imaginative vision. As Helene Nicholson, Nadine Wadsworth, and Jane Milling argue, amateur theatre is an especially "situated practice, sited in places or communities, and rooted in its local environment."¹³³ Just as the cultural memory of censorship can haunt a banned play, the local and the amateur haunted the minimal set, historically- and culturally-inaccurate costumes, Sunnyside Junior High School auditorium, and the performers – constant reminders of the local circumstances of production. Take, for instance, Robert Corbin, who played the domineering Father Fillifogue. According to Jaeger, the LLT frequently cast Corbin as older characters because he was a person with albinism, and directors felt his light skin and hair aged his appearance while his relative youth supported a degree of physical dexterity and endurance unavailable to many seniors.¹³⁴ The LLT's regular audiences would have known this and remembered Corbin's past performances as older men, which would have haunted Corbin's Father Fillifogue. Performing with Irish dialects helped to artificially distinguish the Irish characters as different from the Hoosier actors who played them even as many in the audience inevitably recognized and delighted in seeing friends, family, colleagues, and neighbors onstage. Ireland and Indiana were never wholly separable.

While Joseph Greenwood argues that through memorial acts in the play – the Prerumble's depiction of the War for Independence and the 1798 Rebellion Pageant – "O'Casey transports his audience back in time," theatre occludes such complete transportation.¹³⁵ Rather,

¹³³ Helene Nicholson, Nadine Holdsworth, and Jane Milling, *The Ecologies of Amateur Theatre* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 12.

¹³⁴ Jaeger interview. Production photos and publicity photos appear to confirm this. See LLT *Father Ned* Program, 5; and the photo of Corbin in the article, "'World Premiere Of Play By Irish Author,'" *Journal and Courier*, April 25, 1959, 22.

¹³⁵ Greenwood, 151.

the LLT's performance inspired in the audience an endearing thankfulness to not have to be there – twisting Emilie Pine's theorization of anti-nostalgic memory. For Pine, cultural memories that forgo romantic idealization of the past and remember it instead as traumatic and unstable encourage audiences to chart a utopian future in response to the common origins such memories illumine.¹³⁶ For the Hoosier audience, however, the Prerumble likely rather evoked a far-off place – not their own. Indeed, the scene was intense enough, apparently, to frighten one of Hogan's children.¹³⁷ The sardonic violence, performed Irish dialects, war-torn setting, and dark humor worked towards solidifying Ireland as an other for the Hoosier's inspection. The prosthetic memory of Irish censorship worked to reinforce this critical distance by providing a narrative framework about the play that positioned Lafayette both as Ireland's tolerant other and the US as the play's natural home. This is to say that rather than offer pathways to empathy and progressive politics, prosthetic memory denied them by further cementing and implicitly vilifying cultural difference through the comparison of Hoosiers and Irish, Indiana and Ireland.

3.4 “The dream of a madman”: Communism and Anticommunism in the 1798 Pageant

The drama's movement from oppression to utopia complicates the politics of these neat divisions and, by extension, the performance's politics. For O'Casey's (arguably) intended Irish audience, his play shows how their country could look and feel in the near future – an enactment

¹³⁶ Emilie Pine, *The Politics of Irish Memory: Performing Remembrance in Contemporary Irish Culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 8.

¹³⁷ Robert Hogan to Seán O'Casey, April 30, 1959, SOCP, NLI 37,846/3.

of what performance theorist Jill Dolan calls a utopian performative.¹³⁸ In O’Casey’s mind, Ireland’s stagnancy was due to its steadfast clinging to political conservatism and cultural parochialism. According to *The Drums of Father Ned*, a new politics is necessary to move Erin’s isle forward, one grounded in more communal forms of sociality based in care over competition. The prosthetic memory of Irish censorship made it difficult for the play to have the same resonance in Lafayette because it positioned Lafayette in a relation of progressive superiority to Ireland – Lafayette was inherently more progressive by dint of the banned play’s mere presence there.¹³⁹ The references and especially the positive representations of communism would have set off alarm bells for the Hoosier audience. How did the company approach the play’s taboo politics? What did the play mean for an American audience in the midst of the Cold War? And what interpretations of history and identity did the prosthetic memory of Irish censorship negotiate through the production?

O’Casey routes his politics through a reassessment of Irish history and nationalism, and so before addressing the particular resonances of the LLT’s performance in Lafayette, it is necessary to understand O’Casey’s political critique and methodology in the play’s text, beginning with the Preramble. O’Casey depicts the Irish War of Independence specifically and the Irish revolutionary period generally as traumatic and divisive – as an anti-nostalgic memory – rather than valorous and sentimental. The play draws a historical trajectory from the Irish nationalist, anticolonial conflict to the waning years of Éamon de Valera’s Republic and its

¹³⁸ Jill Dolan, *Utopia in Performance: Finding Hope at the Theatre* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 2–8.

¹³⁹ This is not to say that Irish audiences would have accepted O’Casey’s politics had the play premiered in the Dublin of 1958. Ireland bubbled with its own anticommunist consensus during the Cold War thanks especially to the Catholic Church’s opposition and influence. Rather, I propose that in the American context the play’s contents themselves together with the cultural memory of Irish censorship compounded their effects, heightening the “impact” of O’Casey’s politics precisely because of Lafayette’s extreme historical stance.

conservatism. In doing so, O’Casey argues that the Ireland of the late 1950s is the direct heir of the revolution’s political and cultural legacies. Both are repressed and mired in unequal hierarchies along sectarian and economic lines. For Seamus Deane, the Irish nationalism that emerged victorious from the revolutionary period was merely “a continuation of imperialism by other means:”

[nationalism] reproduces the very discourses by which it [Ireland] had been subjected [under colonialism]. It asserts its presence and identity through precisely those categories that had denied them – through race, essence, destiny, language, history – merely adapting these categories to its own purposes.... In brief, in the name of emancipation for itself, [nationalism] joins with the global system of late capitalism and the multinational companies, becoming economically subservient while endlessly asserting cultural independence.”¹⁴⁰

In *The Drums of Father Ned*, O’Casey proposes that Ireland can overcome its economic failures and socio-cultural malaise through a renewed form of Irish nationalism – one based not in the politics of 1916 and the revolutionary period but the much earlier 1798 Rebellion.

The 1798 Irish Rebellion was a failed uprising against British imperial rule. Decades of sectarianism, colonial land-grabbing, and political disenfranchisement incited Catholic peasants and Protestant dissenters to action. Encouraged by the American and especially French Revolutions, radical reformers and revolutionaries organized the Society of United Irishmen, an island-wide, interfaith group who hoped their call for equality would transcend ethnic, religious, and regional divisions. The United Irishmen and especially one of its principal leaders, Theobald

¹⁴⁰ Seamus Deane, “Imperialism/Nationalism,” in *Critical Terms for Literary Study*, eds. Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 360.

“Wolfe” Tone, saw in Britain’s war with Revolutionary France an opening to fight for greater autonomy if not political independence. With Britain’s military might divided and occupied throughout its global empire, Tone convinced the French to invade Ireland and join the Irish in expelling the British. The loss of Ireland would be a blow to British resources and could serve as a staging ground for a French invasion of Britain. Despite some victories in both the north and south, the rebellion was poorly coordinated, and the British managed to quell insurgencies as they rose in individual cities and towns across the island. British terror tactics, far from ensuring a return to order, often spurred more violence, which dragged on for months. Tone did finally bring an expedition of French soldiers to the island, but few managed to even land. The British captured Tone in the process of invading and convicted him of treason – but Tone took his own life before the British could hang him.¹⁴¹

O’Casey long saw the 1798 Rebellion as an alternative option for the formation of a shared national identity or connected it as a necessary predecessor to the 1916 Rising.¹⁴² While historians continue to debate the causes, effects, goals, and divisions among the Irish population of the 1798 Rebellion, O’Casey saw in Wolfe Tone and the United Irishmen a proto-Marxism that anticipated his own thinking.¹⁴³ O’Casey advocated for a society without hierarchy – classed, religious, or otherwise. In Tone’s writing and speeches where he looked toward a radically democratic Ireland (for the eighteenth century) complete with Catholic emancipation and universal acceptance on the French model, O’Casey saw an Irish hero willing to take on the

¹⁴¹ For a more detailed but succinct history of these events, see Mike Cronin, *A History of Ireland* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), 104–17.

¹⁴² For an example of the latter, see O’Casey’s 1918 poem “England’s Conscription Appeal to Ireland’s Dead” (published under the name Seán O Cathasaigh in *More Wren Songs* [Dublin: Fergus O’Connor, 1918?], 5). See also Moran, 36.

¹⁴³ For a historiographic overview of these issues, see H. T. Dickinson, “The Irish Rebellion of 1798: History and Memory,” in *Reactions to Revolutions: The 1790s and Their Aftermath*, eds. Ulrich Broich, H. T. Dickinson, Eckhart Hellmuth, and Martin Schmidt (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2007), 31–47.

structural inequities necessary for national transformation in Ireland that simply removing the British, Protestants, and Unionists wouldn't achieve on its own. In a letter, O'Casey cites socialist George Bernard Shaw's *John Bull's Other Island* (1907) to help articulate his views. In that play, the defrocked priest Father Keegan explains,

In my dreams [Ireland] is a country where the State is the Church and the Church the people: three in one and one in three. It is a commonwealth in which work is play and play is life: three in one and one in three. It is a temple in which the priest is the worshipper and the worshipper the worshipped: three in one and one in three. It is a godhead in which all life is human and all humanity divine: three in one and one in three. It is, in short, the dream of a madman.¹⁴⁴

For O'Casey, this madman's dream is a revolutionary unifying of politics and humanism, writing, "once it is born, [it] can never die, and slowly, here a little, there a little, will grow in strength and wisdom till the dream becomes a fact within the life of man.... Darwin [had the dreams of madmen]; so had Karl Marx; so had Lenin; so had Wolfe Tone."¹⁴⁵ To O'Casey, Tone and the United Irishmen represented a kind of communism.

O'Casey embeds the 1798 Rebellion into *The Drums of Father Ned* as a pageant for performance at the Tóstal. The 1798 Rebellion pageant is heroic and nostalgic, with all the formal trappings of a patriotic melodrama. In fact, Cheryl Herr argues theatrical representations served as the primary way that Dublin, at least, learned about and felt kinship with the figures of 1798.¹⁴⁶ In addition to Boucicault and Shakespeare, O'Casey saw productions of patriotic

¹⁴⁴ George Bernard Shaw, *John Bull's Other Island*, ed. Dan H. Lawrence (London: Penguin, 1984), 163.

¹⁴⁵ O'Casey, *Letters*, 3: 464.

¹⁴⁶ Cheryl Herr, "Irish Political Melodrama: Form and Functions," in *For the Land They Loved: Irish Political Melodramas, 1890–1925*, ed. Cheryl Herr (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1991), 19. Various groups claimed to be the true inheritors of the United Irishmen's legacy, especially around the time of the rebellion's centenary in

melodramas like J. W. Whitbread's *Wolfe Tone* (1898) at the Queen's Royal Theatre in Dublin, and they had a lasting impression on the writer, as Stephen Watt's work demonstrates.¹⁴⁷ For Herr and Watt, such dramas cultivated a heroic patriotism that focused on the challenges and opportunities the Irish plight presented the nation, rather than simply harangue the oppressors.¹⁴⁸

In O'Casey's play, the younger characters' rehearsal for their pageant begins with a debate between a loyalist captain played by Tom Killsallighan, one of Binnington and McGilligan's workers, and a rebel leader portrayed by Binnington's son Michael. As the leader, Michael extols the values of a United Ireland where Catholics, Protestants, and Presbyterians stand on equal footing under a democracy by and for all Irish:

We deny and repudiate, sir Captain, the right or the rule that would put any government over our people other than he or them selected by the people's choice; the united Irish people; we avow the right and rule only that we, Catholic, Protestant, and Presbyterian, have to choose... It is high time for a change, for the Republican principle that all men are equal, that they should have the right to declare who shall govern them, and that the law should be beneficial, not to the few, but to the many. Your peace, Captain, within the life we live, is but quiet decay.¹⁴⁹

For the younger characters, as for O'Casey, there is hope of Ireland's rejuvenation in the enactment of an alternative nationalism that forgoes the historic divisions of the revolutionary

1898 – exactly when O'Casey was himself coming into adulthood. For more on how the Irish remembered 1798, see Guy Beiner, *Remembering the Year of the French: Irish Folk History and Social Memory* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2007); Dickinson; Roy Foster, "Remembering 1798," in *History and Memory in Modern Ireland*, ed. Ian McBride (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 67–94.

¹⁴⁷ Stephen Watt, *Joyce, O'Casey, and the Irish Popular Theatre* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1991), 31, 51, 143–87.

¹⁴⁸ Herr, 37; Watt, 59.

¹⁴⁹ O'Casey, *Father Ned*, 35–6.

period. Unity and equality are key to O’Casey’s politics and the good he believed an alternative Irish nationalism could do. As opposed to the Preramble where O’Casey depicts his characters living through historical events, he shows 1798 through an act of theatre, and only in rehearsal at that. That rehearsal contains a different kind of potency, though, offering the characters a chance to work towards a different Ireland and for the audience to glean a contrasting image of Ireland. O’Casey magnifies their radicalism through the ridiculously conservative Father Fillifogue, who acts as a foil: “So your play babbles about the rights of man. [*He chuckles mockingly.*] What with your rights of women, rights of children, rights of trades unions, rights of th’ laity, an’ civil rights— [*shouting angrily*] youse are paralyzin’ life!”¹⁵⁰ As Greenwood argues, the whole 1798 sequence is a critique of Taoiseach Éamon de Valera’s conservative state and cultural regime, and who was, himself, also a holdover from the revolution.¹⁵¹ The peaceful “quiet decay” Michael’s character in the pageant speaks of is Fillifogue’s ideal, which a more radical, caring, and equal democracy can undo.¹⁵²

The players are quite earnest in their efforts, too, and O’Casey brings the ideologies and politics of 1798 to bear on 1950s Ireland. The younger characters express genuine connection with the pageant’s themes and virtues. Before they begin rehearsal, the young man playing the Man of the Pike (a weapon commonly associated with 1798) expresses, without irony, the importance of their work:

Man of the Pike. We have to get on with th’ work of resuscitatin’ Ireland.

¹⁵⁰ O’Casey, *Father Ned*, 40.

¹⁵¹ Greenwood, 151.

¹⁵² Because my discussion here moves into O’Casey’s egalitarianism, it is worth noting that O’Casey was a life-long advocate for equal rights, but there is substantial documented evidence of prejudice against queer people and especially gay men. This is not to say that he advocated against the queer community necessarily, but he was homophobic and it seems questionable as to whether or not he even considered them in his political thinking. See Moran, 23–5.

Binnington. Resuscitatin' Ireland! It's a waste of time!

McGilligan. An' a waste of money. You won't resuscitate us be bringin' back shaddas o' men who done an' said things in a tormented time of long ago that have no bearin' on th' life we live today.

Nora. The things said be Ireland's old leaders are livin' still, and are needed as much today as when they were first spoken.¹⁵³

O'Casey disdained the capitalism at the heart of An Tóstal, but felt its activities, influx of foreigners and foreign thought, and opportunities for young people could help stir Ireland toward progressive renewal.¹⁵⁴ For the younger characters, as for O'Casey, An Tóstal's value was primarily cultural. Whereas O'Casey saw that work could be play and that play could be life, Binnington and McGilligan work to get ahead – even if only ahead of each other.

Their fractious nationalism, O'Casey says, inspires capitalistic competition and the inequality that plagues the nation but supports the status quo. For them, the more a project focuses on productivity in the capitalist sense, the better:

McGilligan. Fittther for yous to be doin' useful work, such as a hammer knockin' a nail into timber to help fix a house together, or send a sickle swishin' down corn to give th' people bread.

Michael. To you the hammer knockin' nails into timber and th' sickle swishin' down corn are noble because they bring you money to widen the walls of a bank.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ O'Casey, *Father Ned*, 32.

¹⁵⁴ O'Casey, *Letters*, 3: 266, 414, 416, 423–4, 433.

¹⁵⁵ O'Casey, *Father Ned*, 32.

O'Casey pulls not-so-subtle communist imagery into the debate in order to advocate not exactly for a dictatorship of the proletariat (although this is probably the logical conclusion of O'Casey's thinking) but the cultural and humanist value of work for the good of the whole rather than the good of the few.

These are sentiments that Michael repeats in the pageant itself, which the pageant players see as cultural production that fulfills and reinforces this unifying ideology in a kind of cycle, a necessary turn of the kaleidoscope, as it were:

Tom. If a song doesn't encircle the hammer and sickle, or a song silence them, at times, when a man's longing goes gay, then they become not the tools of men, but the tools of a slave.

Binnington. Our Blessed Lord never joined in a dance, never halted in His work to sing a song.

Man of the Musket. How d'ye know He didn't?

Nora. If He didn't dance Himself, He must have watched the people at it, and, maybe, clapped His hands when they did it well.¹⁵⁶

While Binnington tries to paint Jesus Christ as the tireless fisher of men, young Nora McGilligan and the others see in Christ the enthusiasm for life unfettered from constant turmoil: cultural participation and even spiritualism, like work, support the good of the community. The state is the church is the people; work is play is life; three in one and one in three. O'Casey's communistic politics become both more explicit and less abstracted over the course of the play – reaching their apotheosis by the final curtain.

¹⁵⁶ O'Casey, *Father Ned*, 33.

How did Cold War Hoosiers play out and receive O’Casey’s political fantasy, and how did the performance track with the memory of Irish censorship and narrative of American exceptionalism that buoyed the production? The HUAC hearings, Wisconsin Senator Joseph McCarthy’s speech announcing that he possessed a list of known communists in the State Department, the Hollywood Ten and the blacklist, and the purging of homosexuals from government jobs (among many other events) are well-known national cases in the history of US anticommunism. Even regional episodes like the mock communist invasion in Mosinee, Wisconsin are increasingly studied.¹⁵⁷ But to approach a reconstruction of the LLT’s production it is necessary to detail Indiana and Lafayette’s anticommunism and containment culture.

By and large, Indiana was then (and remains today) a conservative state. James H. Madison writes in his history of Indiana that the postwar years saw a major rise in support for conservative economic policies and many Indiana politicians were “determined to repeal much of the New Deal and to fight communism at home and abroad” – seeing in the left-wing legislation the seeds of socialist policy.¹⁵⁸ That said, although particularly fervent in the Republican party, anticommunism was largely bipartisan, and this was true in Indiana as well.¹⁵⁹ Indiana was one of only four states to pass legislation banning the Communist Party from

¹⁵⁷ For more on these and other events, see Thomas Doherty, *Cold War, Cool Medium: Television, McCarthyism, and American Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003); Richard M. Fried, *The Russians are Coming! The Russians are Coming!: Pageantry and Patriotism in Cold-War America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); David K. Johnson, *The Lavender Scare: The Cold War Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2004); Elizabeth A. Osborne, “‘An Object Lesson in Americanism’: Performing Cultural Amnesia in Mosinee’s Communist Invasion,” *Theatre Survey* 60, no. 3 (September 2019): 434–60; Stephen Vaughn, “Political Censorship During the Cold War: The Hollywood Ten,” in *Movie Censorship and American Culture*, ed. Francis G. Couvares (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006), 237–57.

¹⁵⁸ James H. Madison, *The Indiana Way: A State History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 303. For the national history on this issue, see Landon R. Y. Storrs, *The Second Red Scare and the Unmaking of the New Deal Left* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 1–12.

¹⁵⁹ For more on left anticommunist thought see Ceplair, 153–69; Jennifer A. Delton, *Rethinking the 1950s: How Anticommunism and the Cold War Made America Liberal* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

appearing on the ballot.¹⁶⁰ Indiana required people of certain professions to take loyalty oaths to the US in order to qualify for employment.¹⁶¹ In 1951, Indianapolis public employees had to take a loyalty oath or face dismissal.¹⁶² In 1957, the state of Indiana established a counter-subversive committee, a state-level version of HUAC, motivated by concerns about communism in Indiana University's professoriate and the Communist Party's relocation of their national headquarters from New York to Chicago – which state legislators worried could assert greater influence on the state due to its new proximity.¹⁶³ Higher education was a particular target of HUAC, and Indiana University required its employees to take loyalty oaths beginning in 1949.¹⁶⁴

Again, these practices and many others reflected and participated in a domestic containment culture – the political, social, and cultural policing of American norms that supposedly kept up American character in the fight against communism. Censorship played a major role by – again, only supposedly – keeping subversive ideas, expressions, and practices out of the body politic. Shortly after the spat over Kroll's paintings in the statehouse, for instance, a 1953 editorial in the small city of South Bend, Indiana advocated for the censorship of all books written by communists and communist sympathizers, especially their removal from tax-funded libraries and the State Department's dispersal of literature in post-war occupation zones. The editor goes on to echo the familiar sentiment that the government has an obligation “to present the best profile possible of American life” at home and abroad.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁰ Ceplair, 238n24. The other states were Delaware, Tennessee, and Arkansas.

¹⁶¹ Heale, 29.

¹⁶² Dale R. Sorenson, “The Anticommunist Consensus in Indiana” (PhD diss., Indiana University, 1980), 127.

¹⁶³ Sorenson, 194-7.

¹⁶⁴ Sorenson, 94. For a thorough account of academic institutions during the red scare, see Ellen W. Schrickler, *No Ivory Tower: McCarthyism and the Universities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

¹⁶⁵ “Library ‘Termites,’” *South Bend Tribune*, June 23, 1953, 6.

Containment culture put education under a microscope in Lafayette, too. In addition to the textbook banning I discussed near this chapter's start, in 1949, Purdue employees underwent the process of taking loyalty oaths.¹⁶⁶ It seems likely, though, that the community thought the university generally patriotic due to their involvement in the development of the atomic bomb during the war and the fact that the Eisenhower administration picked a Purdue professor to serve as Chief Economic Advisor to the Secretary of Agriculture, Ezra T. Benson.¹⁶⁷

Contemporary editorial comments in the *Journal and Courier*, whether purchased from national or corporate sources or penned by local editors, provide a window, however limited, into the local views of the day. Lafayette's daily newspaper itself was a Republican paper until the owners sold it in 1954.¹⁶⁸ The paper's editorials continued to feature right-wing columns by writers whose works circulated nationally like Roscoe Drummond, Fulton Lewis, Jr., and George Sokolsky. Even at the end of the 1950s, long after McCarthy's censure in 1954 and the supposed relaxation of red hunting, the *Journal and Courier* continued to print articles by these authors on topics like McCarthy's vindication, religion as the cure for communism, and defenses of McCarthy's legacy and personal reputation.¹⁶⁹ These commentaries were contemporary to the enactment of new anticommunist measures. Purdue University, for instance, decided to comply

¹⁶⁶ "Loyalty at Purdue Covered by Oath," *Journal and Courier*, June 4, 1949, 2.

¹⁶⁷ Solomon Gartenhaus, Arnold Tubis, David Cassidy, and Ralph Bray, "A History of Physics at Purdue," *Purdue University Department of Physics and Astronomy*, accessed June 8, 2020, http://www.physics.purdue.edu/about/history/war_period.html; "Don Paarlberg Aide to Benson," *Journal and Courier*, January 10, 1953, 1; "Purdue Helped in Developing Bomb," *Journal and Courier*, August 7, 1945, 1.

¹⁶⁸ "Journal and Courier is Sold," *Journal and Courier*, July 15, 1954, 1.

¹⁶⁹ Roscoe Drummond, "Invitation to Americans," *Journal and Courier*, January 26, 1959, 6; Fulton Lewis, Jr., "The Answer to Communism," *Journal and Courier*, August 28, 1958, 6; George Sokolsky, "Joe McCarthy's Ghost," *Journal and Courier*, July 25, 1958, 6.

with a new federal mandate that required loyalty oaths from students seeking federal loans in 1959, the same year as the LLT production.¹⁷⁰ Commentators approved this decision, too.¹⁷¹

In fact, Lafayette beat the drums for anticommunist sentiment, leading the state and even the nation in adopting some of the most extreme laws. Just after President Truman ordered US troops to defend anticommunist South Korea (with the bipartisan support of most Hoosiers), and doubtful of the efficacy of loyalty oaths, Lafayette moved to outlaw communism outright in a city ordinance.¹⁷² According to Dale R. Sorenson, “The local Democratic newspaper, the Lafayette *Friday Leader*, boasted that Lafayette was among the vanguard of cities passing anticommunist ordinances.”¹⁷³ Under Indiana’s constitutional authority, the city forbade communism – defined as “enforced rule by one party of state socialism with its attendant practices of state dictatorship, suppression of the human personality, and support of atheism” – on the grounds that it is “opposed, hostile and repugnant to, and destructive of, our expressed basic foundations.”¹⁷⁴ Specifically, the ordinance declared:

Hereafter, it shall be unlawful for any person, group of persons or corporation, either singly or collectively to promote, advocate, support, encourage, advertise, disseminate or otherwise advance either by words, signs, gestures, writings, pictures or other forms of communication the political ideology known as communism.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁰ Mary Schlott, “Loan Loyalty Oath OK with Purdue,” *Journal and Courier*, November 19, 1959, 1.

¹⁷¹ George E. Sokolsky, “Loyalty Oaths and Such,” *Journal and Courier*, February 22, 1960, 6; “Loyalty Oaths and Defense,” *Journal and Courier*, December 2, 1959, 6.

¹⁷² Sorenson, 121, 125–6.

¹⁷³ Sorenson, 125.

¹⁷⁴ Qtd. in “Council Will Act On City Communism Ban,” *Journal and Courier*, September 29, 1950, 1. The paper first reported the act in August 1950. It wasn’t passed until October. See “City Acts to Prohibit Communist Activities,” *Journal and Courier*, August 5, 1950, 1.

¹⁷⁵ Qtd. in “Council Will Act On City Communism Ban,” *Journal and Courier*.

Those found guilty of violation were subject to a fine of up to \$500 and 180 days in prison.¹⁷⁶ Lafayette was the third of fewer than thirty cities and only three counties to take such measures.¹⁷⁷ *Journal and Courier* editors praised the then-proposed action, claiming that communism “is as dangerous as a rattlesnake and like it, needs to be stamped out wherever it shows its head, whether it be here or elsewhere.”¹⁷⁸ While it is unclear if the city charged or convicted anyone for violating the communism ban, at the very least the law helped to project a unified front in the “total cold war,” as Eisenhower put it, to secure hearts and minds against communism.¹⁷⁹

Of the two co-directors who interpreted and guided *The Drums of Father Ned* through this political atmosphere, Hogan, at least, apparently participated in that war. Hogan’s criticism at the time exposes his anticommunism, even when it came to O’Casey and his work. In his first monograph, he scathingly describes *The Star Turns Red* as

the closest to straight propaganda that O’Casey has written, and it is his poorest play.... There is no real dramatic clash here because there are no characters. There is only disembodied opinion.... A fault of proletarian literature is that it takes itself too seriously. With a firm belief in its rightness and nobility, it is unable to laugh at its foibles.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁶ “City Acts to Prohibit,” *Journal and Courier*.

¹⁷⁷ Sorenson, 125.

¹⁷⁸ “Ban on Communism,” *Journal and Courier*, September 29, 1950, 6. According to Sorenson, other cities within and beyond Indiana replicated Lafayette’s ordinance and in some cases tried to take it further. In Evansville, Indiana, the city council approved a proposal to make it illegal for communists to enter, reside, or work in the town. The city’s mayor vetoed it, though, saying the proposal was unconstitutional. See Sorenson, 126–7.

¹⁷⁹ See Kenneth Osgood, *Total Cold War: Eisenhower’s Secret Propaganda Battle at Home and Abroad* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2006), 11.

¹⁸⁰ Hogan, *Experiments*, 85–6.

Hogan goes on to describe O’Casey’s next play, *Red Roses for Me* (1943), a drama about the 1913 Dublin Lockout, as “about thirty-seven times better drama than *The Star Turns Red*.”¹⁸¹ Hogan concludes this chapter in agreement with American drama critic George Jean Nathan: “The two worst influences on present-day playwrights are, very often, Strindberg and Communism.”¹⁸² The critic’s correspondence with the playwright through 1960 also treats politics *qua* politics peripherally.

To Hogan, O’Casey was rather an aesthete whose primary contribution to world literature was his formal experimentation. O’Casey intends, Hogan argues, “the destruction of dramatic realism” through “the ironic juxtaposition of the comic and the pathetic or the grotesque and the sublime.”¹⁸³ As with a great many other mid-century literary studies grounded in new criticism, Hogan’s work up to this point is largely divorced from historical context and political significance. As a typical example, Hogan reads *Father Ned* as a parable of a universal cycle of death and renewal, represented in its generational transition.¹⁸⁴

It is harder to suggest what Jeanne Orr, the LLT veteran who co-directed with Hogan, thought or knew of O’Casey’s communism or its animating presence in *Father Ned*. In a statement to the *Journal and Courier* published on the day of the play’s opening, Orr said that “[T]he playwright, Sean [sic] O’Casey, is attacking intolerance, narrow-mindedness, and confining attitudes.”¹⁸⁵ Jessica Jeanne Orr Ulery, Orr’s granddaughter, told me in a 2020 interview that her grandmother Jeanne was a progressive.¹⁸⁶ Holding an undergraduate degree in

¹⁸¹ Hogan, *Experiments*, 88.

¹⁸² Qtd. in Hogan, *Experiments*, 98.

¹⁸³ Hogan, *Experiments*, 9–10.

¹⁸⁴ Hogan, *Experiments*, 139.

¹⁸⁵ “World Premiere Of Play By Irish Author,” *Journal and Courier*, April 25, 1959, 22.

¹⁸⁶ Jessica Jeanne Orr Ulery, phone interview with the author, recorded with permission, March 22, 2020. My sincere thanks to Jessica for responding to an out-of-the-blue Facebook message and agreeing to this interview. Originally from Massachusetts, Orr came to Lafayette with her husband, a professor of German in Purdue’s modern

speech from Ohio State University where she specialized in radio and theatre as well as a master's degree from Purdue, Orr was highly educated and practiced in theatrical performance. In a *Journal and Courier* article highlighting her life, Orr listed amateur theatre actor and director, puppeteer, radio and theatre dramatist, and seamstress among her work – in addition, the article makes a point to mention, “[t]he wife and mother does all of her own housework.”¹⁸⁷ Later in life, she won an award for a children's book she authored and illustrated that celebrates individualism and difference.¹⁸⁸ None of this, however, necessarily equates with a procommunist politics.

It is unlikely that the LLT jettisoned O'Casey's politics altogether – but neither does it seem likely that they fully embraced O'Casey's communistic utopianism. Like Orr, Hogan also recognized the play's movement from its grim portrait of Ireland to a celebration of life.¹⁸⁹ Although Hogan registered O'Casey's complaint about Ireland's worn-out puritanism and the need for youthful energy, again, he also consistently ignored or disparaged the playwright's leftist politics. It is probable that the directors' varying perspectives and especially Hogan's anticommunism informed staging choices – whether consciously or not – and obfuscated the play's politics.

The 1798 pageant is just one such moment. In a post-show report Hogan wrote to O'Casey, he explained that he and Orr tried to keep to the letter of the script to the best of their

languages department. She cared deeply for her family and passed her passion for theatre on to her children and grandchildren, including Jessica and her father. Jeanne Orr died on June 9, 1994.

¹⁸⁷ Mary Kemmer, “Seven Plays, Two Sons A Degree in Six Years,” *Journal and Courier*, August 29, 1959, 22–3, at 23. My thanks, again, to Jessica Ulery who first informed me of this article and provided me with a copy.

¹⁸⁸ Ulery interview.

¹⁸⁹ Hogan, *Experiments*, 135–42.

abilities, but that they may have missed the mark with the 1798 pageant in regard to tone and style:

Anyway, the dueling scene between Tom and Michael we played in a purposely awkward grand manner with broad stage gestures and amateurish bumbling. I think it was one of the best scenes, though one woman stalked out during it, saying, ‘My God, I’m leaving if the acting is this bad.’¹⁹⁰

O’Casey’s stage directions for the swordfight do indicate that it “is rather slow, and show[s] that they need a lot of practice;” however, together with Nora calling out the strokes, the scene should show a lack of preparation, not inability. It’s likely that Hogan refers here to the entire pageant and not just the swordfight itself since the pageant’s dialogue and the swordfight are of the same play-within-the-play world.

To stage the pageant in such a broad manner that it turns audiences out of the theatre is to potentially hold it up to ridicule. The 1798 pageant establishes the protagonists’ objective. From that point onward, the play is a tug-o-war between the older characters’ conservatism and the younger characters’ progressivism. Showing their hope and inspiration as an absurd or naïve game of poorly-acted make-believe instead of an enactment of earnestly-held beliefs that rehearses the utopia they hope to achieve undercuts both the play’s dramaturgy and O’Casey’s politics. After all, it’s the young leftists who ultimately win out by the end of the play. This choice supports Binnington and McGilligan’s arguments rather than O’Casey’s and the protagonists’. Ridicule robs them of the heroism that O’Casey called upon for the scene through his pastiche of historical melodrama, which informed O’Casey’s early understanding of 1798.¹⁹¹

¹⁹⁰ Robert Hogan to Seán O’Casey, April 30, 1959, SOCP, NLI 37,846/3.

¹⁹¹ O’Casey was careful – even curt – in his response to Hogan’s description, focusing on the duel itself. He agrees that since Michael and Tom are inexperienced it makes sense for them to be clumsy. The playwright’s exactitude is

While it's unclear who staged what in the play or how they collaborated, it is fair to say that both Orr and Hogan at times felt over-their-heads with O'Casey's material. Hogan admits in his book that "there were elements in the play that we knew we could not do justice to," including the play's lyricism.¹⁹² Orr expressed to O'Casey in a letter following the production her "deep gratitude to you [O'Casey] for giving me the opportunity to work with 'Drums'... for what became my most interesting, challenging, and thoroughly rewarding experience in the theatre."¹⁹³ When in doubt, the pair's strategy was to go for the yucks and play the experimental piece for all the broad comedy they could squeeze from it: to at least make it entertaining, as Hogan put it.¹⁹⁴ Regardless of Hogan or Orr's political intentions, though, the purposely awkward and broad acting style of the 1798 pageant clearly had a negative impact on at least some in the audience and this would have also charged the performance's politics.

For an audience already generally inclined towards anticommunism, deprecating the play's procommunism – however accidentally or unintentionally – could have reinforced preconceived prejudices. If Ireland was an other against which to compare Hoosierness and the US, rather than help to propel Ireland towards a utopian progressivism, the LLT's staging of the pageant kept Ireland in a place of ill-informed naivety at best and just a different variation of repression at worst – a radical civil and cultural practice that tracks with Fillifogue's sense that pretensions to a more equal world do in fact paralyze life. To be sure, even if the production staged the scene in closer congruence to O'Casey's political dramaturgy, the performance still would have othered Ireland –

telling. He does not address the audience member's response nor ask if it was only the duel or the whole scene that was treated with an over-the-top, fumbling zeal that potentially skews the entire scene's dramaturgy. When O'Casey told Hogan very shortly after *Father Ned* closed that he had finished a new play about Ireland's sexual politics, *Figuro in the Night*, Hogan told him he'd be interested in mounting it at the LLT. This time, O'Casey politely declined. O'Casey, *Letters*, 4: 45, 50–1; Robert Hogan to Seán O'Casey, May 27, 1959, SOCP, NLI 37,846/3.

¹⁹² Hogan, *Experiments*, 142.

¹⁹³ Jeanne Orr to Seán O'Casey, June 8, 1959, SOCP, NLI 37,846/3. Ellipses in original.

¹⁹⁴ Hogan, *Experiments*, 142.

but it would have been an other that exceeded the imagined tolerance and exceptionalism that the prosthetic memory of Irish censorship set up for the audience. Again, the memory of censorship positions the audience in a comparative relationship with the banned art that allows the audience to work through their own subjectivity and understanding of history. Audiences make meaning from perceived contrasts between the histories laden in the memory of censorship, the banned art itself, and their own time and place. Instead of imagining Ireland as more progressive than the US or entirely repressed, it's quite probable that the production's staging of 1798 left the audience with multiple Irelands of varying and even ambiguous character. At least at this point in the production, read through the cultural memory of Irish censorship, the performance maintained US exceptionalism by limiting the challenge O'Casey's dramaturgy posed to that constructed, artificial memory and the American identities and histories the memory safeguarded. Rather than encourage audiences to embrace difference and understand themselves anew through empathy, the prosthetic memory of censorship permitted audiences to reinscribe their exceptional status vis-à-vis the politically muddled staging of O'Casey's 1798 pageant.

3.5 The Specter of Anticommunism and American Intolerance

As the play went on, however, O'Casey's politics would have been still more difficult yet to obscure because they are central to the comedy's resolution in addition to its theme. Further, again, both Hogan and Orr recognized that the play was about replacing parochialism with modern perspectives and if either or both directors felt uncomfortable with O'Casey's communism they nevertheless tried to see this theme to its fulfillment – even if Orr and/or Hogan (but especially Hogan) tried to look over O'Casey's communism or make it silly. There's no

evidence to suggest that the co-directors satirized the play's conclusion. Rather, they leaned into the play's humanism, which meant they necessarily also leaned into its communism. For example, early in the third act – which was both Orr's and Hogan's favorite – the play lampoons anticommunist paranoia.¹⁹⁵ The Man of the Pike asks Tom what he thinks about the rumor that Binnington and McGilligan's latest shipment of timber for their housing project is "Red wood":

Tom. When I work timber, avic, I don't ask th' wood if it's Christian or Communist.

Man of the Pike. I dunno; you have to be on th' alert, Tom. There's ne'er a one I know here would sleep easy, knowin' th' roof over them came from a Communist counthry.¹⁹⁶

Tom's point echoes the one the pageant players made earlier about the human value of work to support the community. O'Casey connects this humanist ethics of labor to a communistic politics, and it is unlikely that they used comedy to undercut the politics of O'Casey's dramaturgy in their approach to the play's conclusion.

Each instance in the play that addresses communism is a moment of transnational negotiation, when *The Drums of Father Ned* summons the Hoosier history of anticommunism and asks the audience to contend with their assumptions about their own subjectivity. Hogan and the LLT did not create their prosthetic memory of Irish censorship to reckon with any interpolative dynamic other than the tolerant here/oppressive there dichotomy. Yet the

¹⁹⁵ Hogan calls the final act "a delightful revelation of inanity" and "one of the most potently effective curtains I know of" in his book and told O'Casey that it is "as flamboyantly theatrical as any play I've ever seen or been in" – "the end of the act... is pretty explosive stuff." Orr told O'Casey that one of her greatest pleasures working on the show was "seeing that fine third act come so wonderfully alive and theatrically effective onstage." See Hogan, *Experiments*, 142; Robert Hogan to Seán O'Casey, April 30, 1959, SOCP, NLI 37,846/3; Jeanne Orr to Seán O'Casey, June 8, 1959, SOCP, NLI 37,846/3.

¹⁹⁶ O'Casey, *Father Ned*, 79.

performance ultimately asked its audience to not only consider O'Casey's communistic politics – politics that Lafayette had been unwilling to accept – but accept them as a practical way to better the world. The cultural memory of Irish censorship conflicted with the communistic Ireland in *The Drums of Father Ned* because the memory functioned to allow the Hoosier audience to place themselves in a dominant hierarchical position to the Irish on the basis of their supposed tolerance. The performance conjured the specter of Hoosier anticommunist intolerance and censorship and it haunted the cultural memory of Irish censorship. Irish censorship moved to highlight and critique (at least implicitly) other national histories of censorship that Lafayette took for granted in the formation of their identities. Read through an interpretive framework that privileged American identities and histories as exceptional, O'Casey's fantasy "progressive Ireland" pointed out Lafayette's own virulent history of political intolerance, challenging what it meant to be a Hoosier in the process of scrambling the production's pre-determined relationship to Ireland and the politics of Cold War containment culture.

The play's references to communism are never only about communism, but converse with other forms of socio-cultural expression like religion, sexuality, and gender. The LLT production interrogates their function as regulators of the US's domestic communist containment project, questioning the supposedly binary nature of communist/US culture. For instance, late in the final act Skerighan the Ulsterman debates religion with the southern Catholics. He asks Michael whether God is a Catholic or a Protestant and he replies,

He's neither; but He is all... He may be but a shout of th' people in th' street.... It might be a shout for freedom, like th' shout of men on Bunker Hill; shout of th'

people for bread in th' streets, as in th' French Revolution; or for th' world's ownership by th' people, as in the Soviet Union.¹⁹⁷

Adapting a line from Joyce's *Ulysses* that critics decried for its blasphemy, Michael thinks of God in revolutionary democratic terms so that He doesn't belong to any one group – Protestant, Catholic, atheist, or anyone else – but to all.¹⁹⁸ For Michael, God is in the equal distribution of justice and communal, humanitarian care. These terms concur with how O'Casey thought of the United Irishmen movement, which Michael represented in the 1798 Pageant. Here, it reaches that place where the ideology practiced in rehearsal might make a difference in real interpersonal debate. O'Casey's advocacy of communism comes out of a very Christian place, but it nevertheless still is an advocacy of communism and, as such, would have resonated against Lafayette's history and jarred with the cultural memory of Irish censorship – perhaps even to the point of offending some religious Hoosiers.

As I discussed in the introduction and first chapter, because communist states officially advanced atheism, Christians across the capitalist world stood in opposition to them – especially the Catholic Church.¹⁹⁹ Lafayette saw its share of anticommunism based in religious conviction. Lafayette enacted the ban on communism in part, according to the language in the ordinance, because communism “denies God and the God given rights which our government is designed to respect.”²⁰⁰ The national conservative columnist Fulton Lewis, Jr. argued in an article that

¹⁹⁷ O'Casey, *Father Ned*, 92.

¹⁹⁸ Stephen Dedalus tells Mr. Deasy, “That is God.... A shout in the street.” James Joyce, See James Joyce, *Ulysses*, eds. Hans Walter Gabler with Wolfhard Steppe and Claus Melchior (New York: Vintage, 1986), 28.

¹⁹⁹ Every pontiff from Pius IX (r. 1846–78) in his 1864 *Syllabus of Errors* to Pius XII (r. 1939–58) in his 1949 “Decree Against Communism” (which excommunicated all communist Catholics) denounced socialism and/or communism. Patrick McNamara, *A Catholic Cold War: Edmund A. Walsh, S.J., and the Politics of American Anticommunism* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), xviii.

²⁰⁰ Qtd. in “Council Will Act,” *Journal and Courier*.

appeared in the *Journal and Courier* in 1958 that the US's "superior heritage of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man" would be key to defeating communism.²⁰¹

As Moran argues, "O'Casey co-opts such theological language in order to justify the communist cause."²⁰² For O'Casey, the brotherhood of man is precisely where God is located and communism is its logical political expression. When Father Fillifogue later discovers Binnington and McGilligan's plot to import lumber from Soviet Russia to save some money, he furiously exclaims, "You rascals, how can I let my people live under roofs of athiestical timber?"²⁰³ Fillifogue demands that the mayor and his deputy burn the lumber "as a reparation to God for landing atheistical timber on th' holy wharf of Doonavale."²⁰⁴ The young people, including several dressed in their eighteenth-century pageant costumes and wielding the pike and musket props, refuse, decrying Fillifogue's proposed burning of the timber as the burning of people's houses, their shelter and homes.²⁰⁵ O'Casey makes the priest's anticommunist fervor immoral as well as impractical. More implicitly, accepting the Siberian wood comports with An Tóstal's modern, internationalized economy predicated upon cooperation rather than competition. It is the demands of the market that drive Binnington and McGilligan's decisions rather than the good of the communities they serve as elected officials. This is a small revolution, but one that O'Casey emphasizes, too, with the 1798 pageanteers, whose alternative, communal nationalism they earlier rehearsed they now enact in the present.

²⁰¹ Lewis, Jr., *Journal and Courier*.

²⁰² Moran, 127. O'Casey explicitly based the character of Father Ned off of real-life priests. See Moran, 129–31; O'Casey, *Father Ned*, v; O'Casey, *Letters*, 3: 550–1.

²⁰³ O'Casey, *Father Ned*, 95

²⁰⁴ O'Casey, *Father Ned*, 96.

²⁰⁵ O'Casey, *Father Ned*, 96.

O’Casey turns Christianity’s supposed opposition to communism on its head and the LLT production destabilized the religion’s association with American conservatism and Cold War political culture. In Lafayette’s estimation, Christianity expelled communism and worked to guarantee Americanism – but in O’Casey’s logic, in a total reversal of containment principles, Christianity that manages to get over its own piety can very easily promulgate communism. Again, O’Casey’s Ireland is the more tolerant imaginary and, arguably, the more Christian state than the US, a representation that upsets the cultural memory of Irish censorship.

On this point, the play may have upset some of the Hoosier religious, too. In my interview with him, Bielenberg said that some Catholics in the audience “frowned upon” the play because they thought it antireligious. Bielenberg insisted that these objections were not based on O’Casey’s communism, arguing that they weren’t aware of that.²⁰⁶ Bielenberg’s memory conflicts somewhat with what Hogan told O’Casey about the Catholic response in his letter following the production’s run: “Indeed, there were a couple priests chortling in the audience one night. About 20percent [*sic*] of the people in the town or [*sic*] Catholics, but there have been no rumbles.”²⁰⁷ It is entirely possible, of course, that Hogan simply did not hear the rumbles that Bielenberg heard. The difference between Hogan’s report and Bielenberg’s recollection could also suggest an uneven response among Catholics or Christians more broadly. As already discussed above, though, the play doesn’t disavow religion, and even propagates a certain interpretation of Christian theology. The church has a place here, too, as Father Ned’s version of the faith wins out over Father Fillifogue’s. In this case, then, it is entirely possible that some in

²⁰⁶ Bielenberg interview.

²⁰⁷ Hogan does say, though, that Geraldine Gray, the Irish immigrant who played Nora, “gave us a bit of trouble about the crucifix in Act I, and a couple of actors took the play to a priest who sai[d] nothing wrong in it.” Clearly, there was some trepidation in the cast as well. Robert Hogan to Seán O’Casey, April 30, 1959, SOCP, NLI 37,846/3.

the audience thought the play was antireligious by dint of the connections O'Casey makes between communism, Christ, and Christianity. To challenge the cultural politics of conservative religiosity was to stand against the religion. Rejecting O'Casey's religious message also meant rejecting his communism and thus to maintain the aims of US containment culture. This logic nevertheless also clashes with the cultural memory of Irish censorship by suggesting that perhaps the archbishop of Dublin was right to protest the play: intolerant Ireland and the US are more closely aligned than the memory's narrative suggests because both refuse communistic/antireligious expression – and according to this logic, that's in the best interests of both nations.

Like Christianity, containment culture also policed sexuality and gender roles as signs of healthy American values, but these categories were significantly more fraught with contradictions. In some respects, normative standards ruled the day as the ideal: heterosexuality, monogamous sex contained to marriage, the wife-as-homemaker and husband-as-breadwinner. At the same time, the early Cold War period witnessed a rising discourse around a “crisis of masculinity” that agonized over the perceived threats to dominant and normative masculinity. More women were in the workforce from WWII onward which sometimes led to blurred gender roles and more egalitarian domesticity. The war gave men greater purchase to carry out their supposedly “natural” aggression and assertiveness, yet men were also expected to be gentle providers and role models for their families. Many believed that women's evolving social roles also impacted sexual mores, at least somewhat decentering male sexual pleasure. Further, husbands were expected to be knowledgeable enough to pleasure their wives but not so

experienced as to detract from their sacred relationship. Monogamy and abstinence before marriage could thus trap and hinder masculinity even as it was also an ideal.²⁰⁸

The changes and contradictions inherent in the crisis of masculinity also expressed political anxieties – sexual and gender “deviance” equaled political subversion that threatened national stability.²⁰⁹ The publication of Indiana University professor Alfred C. Kinsey’s infamous 1948 and 1953 studies on sexuality created a firestorm when they revealed the great extent to which the Americans Kinsey studied did, in fact, participate in all kinds of “deviance.”²¹⁰ An Indianapolis Presbyterian minister, Dr. Jean S. Milner, sermonized

there is a fundamental kinship between this thing [Kinsey’s report on female sexuality] and Communism and that the influence of this report, though it may seem to be a thousand miles from Communism, will contribute invariably towards Communism, for both are based on the same naturalistic philosophy.²¹¹

Further, many believed that the communist subversion of democratic capitalism meant the reversal of gender and sex roles as well, and so communist culture was inherently oriented around femininity. Given the communist enemy’s supposed proclivity for “abnormal” sexuality and gender expression, recentering masculinity could both end the masculinity crisis and secure the nation, but that generally meant accepting that men would need to “practice” aggression, sexual prowess, and dominance to gain the experience necessary to manage the home and satisfy his wife.²¹²

²⁰⁸ K. A. Cuordileone, *Manhood and American Political Culture in the Cold War* (New York: Routledge, 2005), xxi–ii, 9–17, 124–5; Miriam G. Reumann, *American Sexual Character: Sex, Gender, and National Identity in the Kinsey Reports* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 55, 59, 68, 76–85.

²⁰⁹ Reumann, 9.

²¹⁰ See Reumann for a thorough analysis of the Kinsey Reports.

²¹¹ Qtd. in Wardell B. Pomeroy, *Dr. Kinsey and the Institute for Sex Research* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), 366.

²¹² Cuordileone, 78, 84; Reumann, 76, 83.

Two different scenes in *The Drums of Father Ned* bring American assumptions about communism, US exceptionalism, and sex and gender into dialogue, and do so to contrasting effect. With the revelation of the red timber, chaos descends on Doonavale, and Father Fillifogue blames Michael and Nora: “We have had peace here till youse came back from Dublin [where they attend university] with your design to use the Tosthal [*sic*] for your own ends; but I won’t allow your idle impudence to molest our pure peace.”²¹³ That peace is subjective, and his language is, unbeknown to him, terribly ironic – for their “peace” is also one of intense patriarchy and abuse. For Fillifogue, intolerance and inequality maintains the power dynamic that benefits him as a male in the Catholic clergy – recall the push to civil rights that threatens to “paralyze” life as he knows it. But in the climactic moments of the second act, the Ulsterman Skerighan assaults Bernadette, Binnington and McGilligan’s maid, on the pretense that she enticed him by “twutterin’ [her] luddle bum” at him.²¹⁴ Skerighan forces himself onto her and kisses her against her will. While she “coyly” tries to dissuade his advances, she finally screams and pushes him off of her.²¹⁵ Panicked about what has transpired, Skerighan tries to bribe Bernadette into silence and while she first refuses she ultimately takes his money – a symbolic gesture of her powerlessness. Bernadette represents the condition many Irish women found themselves in and which led many to emigrate in search of some respite from Irish patriarchal oppression that kept them silent.²¹⁶ Immediately thereafter Fillifogue tells Skerighan that he saw

²¹³ O’Casey, *Father Ned*, 97.

²¹⁴ O’Casey, *Father Ned*, 59.

²¹⁵ O’Casey, *Father Ned*, 58.

²¹⁶ O’Casey, *Father Ned*, 60–1. In the 1950s, Ireland experienced extremely high emigration rates, with nearly one-sixth of the population leaving to seek out better economic opportunities and different social conditions. Women made up a disproportionate share of those leaving. See Enda Delaney, “The Vanishing Irish? The Exodus from Ireland in the 1950s,” in *The Lost Decade: Ireland in the 1950s*, ed. Dermot Keogh, Finbarr O’Shea, and Carmel Quinlan (Cork: Mercier Press, 2004), 81; Eleanor O’Leary, *Youth and Popular Culture in 1950s Ireland* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), 17–18, 34–5.

Bernadette “gallopin’ like a goat” away from the house, much to Skerighan’s surprise.²¹⁷

Fillifogue interprets Bernadette’s retreat as a mischievous sign of her sinfulness, but it’s more likely that she is still catching her breath and struggling after the assault. The sequence exposes a dark side to contemporary Irish culture. Fillifogue’s culture of peace comes at the expense of the women’s gross mistreatment.

Like the pageant sequence, the LLT production apparently played Bernadette’s assault primarily for laughs. While Moran is exactly right that O’Casey points out one of the reasons why so many women emigrated in the 1950s, Hogan calls the scene “delightful” in his monograph and fails to contend with the sequence’s violence in any way.²¹⁸ In fact, Hogan contrasts the scene with the grim overtones of another, and argues that Bernadette’s assault demonstrates that “O’Casey has lost none of his comic power” that he exhibited in his earlier plays.²¹⁹ Rather, the sequence is one of several critical depictions of misogyny in contemporary Ireland that O’Casey included in his later plays, as Moran demonstrates.²²⁰ An archival photograph of the scene from the production shows Bernadette splayed across a sofa, as if a whirlwind has knocked her down. Her skirt bunched up above her knees, her petticoat wildly exposed, her upstage leg rests on the arm of the couch. Her foot is elevated higher than her head, which doesn’t quite lie at the other end of the couch. Her downstage leg juts away from her upstage leg. Bernadette’s downstage arm falls to the floor. Looking upward toward Skerighan (who tauntingly stands above her), her mouth agape and eyebrows raised, she looks far more

²¹⁷ O’Casey, *Father Ned*, 61.

²¹⁸ Moran, 142; Hogan, *Experiments*, 137.

²¹⁹ Hogan, *Experiments*, 137.

²²⁰ Moran, 142.

surprised than afraid.²²¹ Together with Hogan's comment that they pushed the play's comedy, the evidence suggests they likely staged the piece in a slapstick style.

The LLT's staging reflects the American Cold War-era "crisis of masculinity." Skerighan's sexual aggression is acceptable and even desirable in its display of male virility. In this interpretation of the script, Bernadette still resists his aggression, but then feigns distress in an overly dramatic fashion in order to get money out of Skerighan. This staging makes light of the assault to comedic effect, complete with dramatic irony that cues the audience into Bernadette's ruse instead of grappling with the trauma she experiences. All of this is to the primary benefit of Skerighan's masculinity, which decenters Bernadette's experience and safety. Read through the prism of the cultural memory of Irish censorship, instead of cultural difference, here the LLT production perversely performed the gendered oppression O'Casey meant to critique as normal, closely aligning the conservative Irish patriarchy with American masculinity. Again, the movement of censorship as memory likely had the effect of hardening already-entrenched attitudes rather than hold either Ireland or the US up for critical scrutiny.

The Drums of Father Ned climaxes with a different kind of sexual politics that positively links communism with a degree of perceived sexual immorality that constitutes a radical politics. As Binnington and McGilligan try to support Fillifogue at the end of the play in his suppression of the young people's enthusiasm, Nora strikes with an attack on their capitalist, patriarchal society. Fillifogue's ridiculous response is to blame this thinking on "th' College lettin' th' students wear jeans. I warned th' Chancellor that allowing the students to dress like manual labourers would have a communistic tendency and influence."²²² Binnington and McGilligan

²²¹ Photograph from the LLT production of *The Drums of Father Ned*, photographer unknown, Eileen O'Casey Papers, NLI MS 44,728/6.)

²²² O'Casey, *Father Ned*, 98–9.

characteristically lash out at their children, demanding that they will see no more of each other after the Tóstal. Michael then reveals that they have been living together while at College in Dublin,

Nora. An' slept in th' same bed o' Sundays.

[Binnington, McGilligan, and their wives sink down into chair or sofa so amazed that they are silent, wearing woebegone faces.]

Father F. *[with his despairing gesture]* Youse see, youse hear! The jeans, jeans, jeans!²²³

In this satire of red-scare hysteria, Fillifogue connects their sexual behavior with communism via jeans. Nora and Michael's openness about their sexual relationship is finally what topples their parents and their cultural regime. The couple are apparently (possibly?) monogamous, but living and sleeping together without any mention of marriage, violating the normative expectations of both Ireland and the US. Once revealed, this revolutionary sexuality shatters Irish conservatism and ushers in the dawn of O'Casey's Irish utopia. "Communitic" sexual values, in other words, are what finally bring the end of oppressive Ireland – the oppressive "there" that contrasts with the free "here" of Lafayette in the prosthetic memory of Irish censorship's interpolative narrative. Finally a culture that accepts communism, Christian principles, sexual liberty, and social equality without contradiction, the Ireland that concludes the play far exceeds the limits of what counted as Hoosier progressivism and the US's supposedly exceptional tolerance.

The end of the play stages a complete reversal of the its established hierarchy. Nora and Michael intend to contest their parents' elected positions. The young leave the old, deciding to follow Father Ned's march towards the future. As Binnington and McGilligan struggle to rise

²²³ O'Casey, *Father Ned*, 99.

from their stupefaction, they beckon their wives to bring them their mayoral regalia, “*but the robes seem to have become too big for them, the chains dangle down too far, and the cocked hats fall down to their eyes.*”²²⁴ In this bit of fantasy, their uniforms become literally too big for them to fill – they are inadequate for the new needs of governance and leadership. Unlike their husbands, the wives are more capable of moving on, and they infantilize their husbands before joining Father Ned’s march as well. Fillifogue similarly collapses as his parish abandons him for Father Ned, and Fillifogue, Binnington, and McGilligan sit, slumped over, and admit defeat: “Ireland has gone to the fair!” – meaning both the young as well as the Tóstal fair, both of which, to O’Casey, would help revive Ireland.²²⁵ The three try to follow but are unable to rise, stuck in a Beckettian bodily malfunction. Skerighan, whose business also depends upon his dealings with Binnington and McGilligan, tries to rouse the three Catholics to chase after and stop Father Ned – who has encouraged all of the play’s progressive politics – by singing the mocking Orangeman march “Lullibullero,” tapping the rhythm out with Fillifogue’s umbrella (“I’ll thry a rousin’ spell of a Protestant hommer song tae wauk th’ bigots, on’ put a butt o’ Northern iron intil thom”).²²⁶ Father Ned’s march interrupts and drowns out Skerighan’s divisive tune, and Murray urges him to join: “Come on out, man an’ let th’ orange sash join dee green ones!”²²⁷ Another archival photograph suggests that Skerighan turned upstage to face the music as Murray gestured off. Binnington, McGilligan, and Fillifogue remained seated at and hunched over the table in stasis.

²²⁴ O’Casey, *Father Ned*, 101.

²²⁵ O’Casey, *Father Ned*, 104.

²²⁶ O’Casey, *Father Ned*, 104–5.

²²⁷ O’Casey, *Father Ned*, 105.

Father Ned's drums rolled one last time, and the play ended.²²⁸ Faith in competition and sectarianism loses out to faith in humanity and community.

The play asks its audience where it stands. Will they march to Father Ned's tune, or will they stay behind? Will they heed the madmen's dream? The performance opened a space for the Hoosiers to take on what it means to live under censorship; to affectively feel and think through the contradictions in their thinking, history, and ideology; and to maybe even entertain an aesthetic communist politics that may never have had a place in the community had it not been for their willingness to indulge in the fantasy of American exceptionalism. But the performance also skirted the drama's progressive potential on multiple fronts. The play's procommunism outlook, at turns muted or ridiculed but inevitably accepted, cannot be so wholly subsumed as in Leon Kroll's murals. The contradictions abounded and audiences voiced their confusion. As Hogan told O'Casey and recounts in his book, "But even tho they were entertained and chortled and guffawed through more than two hours, I've got to ruefully admit that a lot went away wondering what the play was about;" "[T]here were a lot of people who left shrugging, 'Yes, it was funny, but what was it about?'"²²⁹ Henry Hewes, drama critic for *Saturday Review*, traveled from New York to see the production, and in his review, he, too, comments on a sense of bewilderment, but (perhaps politely) chalks it up to O'Casey's experimental form and Irish colloquialisms.²³⁰

In its movement from Ireland to the United States of America, the world premiere of *The Drums of Father Ned* ultimately repudiated Lafayette, Indiana, and the US's simultaneous

²²⁸ Photograph from the LLT production of *The Drums of Father Ned*, photographer unknown, Eileen O'Casey Papers, NLI MS 44,728/6.

²²⁹ Robert Hogan to Seán O'Casey, April 30, 1959, SOCP, NLI 37,846/3; Hogan, *Experiments*, 143.

²³⁰ Henry Hewes, "Broadway Postscript: The Green Crow Flies Again," *Saturday Review*, May 9, 1959, accessed November 25, 2017, <http://www.unz.org/Pub/SaturdayRev-1959may09-00022>.

intolerance and exceptionalism. By making the case that communistic politics and culture can actually help to achieve a more equal, more tolerant world, and presenting an Ireland that accepts those ideas and practices that US containment culture rejected, the LLT production rebutted its own metanarrative about Lafayette's exceptionalism. Yet because the company built its framework around the notion that the Hoosiers already occupied the ultimate possible political position, even a utopian play that reminded them of their political intolerance and posited that those very same politics which they had rejected could make their world better failed to offer much beyond the challenge itself. While Ireland might have played a small role in shaping how Lafayette's theatregoers understood themselves, taking on the prosthetic memory of Irish censorship very likely produced more ambivalence than serious reflection, let alone an empathetic renegotiation of their own biases. And despite the pretensions to progress that making banned cultural objects accessible can entail, the cultural memory of censorship might well work in many cases to limit progress to accessibility alone and rather inspire political complacency.

4.0 Surrogates as and for Censorship: The West German Performance of Samuel Beckett's Mimes, 1963

Assassination is the extreme form of censorship.

—George Bernard Shaw¹

When the curtain came down on Samuel Beckett's *Act Without Words I, II*, and *Play* at the Ulmer Theater in a small city in the Federal Republic of Germany, the production was met with what some publications called a "protest." Comparing accounts of the event reveals a divided audience. Reports in German newspapers noted "mutinous" but "shy boo shouters."² "Applause drowned out some vague protest" – "a few boos" among the "reluctant applause."³ The "disgruntled audience members" met Beckett's play with "weary applause, and even a quiet protest."⁴ Perhaps because of this mixed reception, the journalists did not devote much print space to consider the protest's causes or detail the ornery audience's criticisms. One chalked it up to the boredom and tedium that Beckett's repetitious abstractions could induce, while another blamed Beckett's "depleted world."⁵ If depletion was operative in upsetting the German

¹ George Bernard Shaw, *Statement of the Evidence in Chief of George Bernard Shaw Before the Joint-Committee on Stage Play (Censorship and Theatre Licensing)* (No Location: Printed Privately, 1909), 16.

² R. T., "Demnächst im Marmeladeneimer," *Frankfurter Rundschau*, June 20, 1963, Deutsches Theatermuseum (DT), Munich. I am indebted to Dorothee D. Ehrhardt for the English translation of German-language archival materials. I commissioned these translations through the funding of a Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences Summer Fellowship.

³ Clara Menck, "Dreieck aus der Urne," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, June 19, 1963, DT; Hans Bayer, "Dem Publikum verging das Lachen," *Hamburger Abendblatt*, June 19, 1963, Dokumentations fonds zum deutschsprachigen theater, Akademie der Künste (AdK), Berlin.; Tillman Moser, "In den Urnen hausen nicht nur Tote," *Die Welt* (Hamburg), June 20, 1963, AkD.

⁴ Fritz Rumler, "Beckett-Uraufführung in Ulm," *Abendzeitung* (Munich), June 18, 1963, DT; Rudolf Goldschmit, "Aus der Urne Gesprochen," *Der Tagesspiegel* (Berlin), June 28, 1963, DT.

⁵ R. T., *Frankfurter Rundschau*; Hermann Dannecker, "Samuel Beckett: 'Spiel,'" *Main-Post* (Würzburg), June 19, 1963, DT.

spectators, though, I argue it was in part because of the plays' capacity to provoke memories of wartime devastation and atrocities – to fill the void left in the wake of Nazism.

Beckett's bodies and use of theatrical form respond to histories that were especially volatile in the western Federal Republic when his plays performed there in 1963. As far as I have been able to tell, although both mimes received individual productions elsewhere, this was the first time that Beckett's mimes were produced together as well as the first time that Deryk Mendel performed both of them.⁶ Beckett wrote the pieces for Mendel, and it was Mendel who was supposed to perform both of them (plus one that remained unwritten) at the 1958 DITF. In this chapter, I argue that Mendel's body acted as a conduit for multiple histories of censorship. All three of the plays in this production focus the spectators' attention on bodies in duress, continuing Beckett project of populating his plays with characters who are in pain, maimed, disabled, immobile, and/or sick. Fascistic logic considered whole segments of society "life unworthy of life" (*lebensunwerten lebens*) and "subhuman" (*untermenschen*). The exercise of this logic resulted in the radical exclusion of people with disabilities, Jews, Romani, and homosexuals from social and national life through forms of legalized prejudice and censorship, and culminated in mass murder.⁷ For Hannah Simpson, the performances and bodily discourses in *Waiting for Godot* resist and disrupt Nazi orthodoxy, "placing quite literally front and centre

⁶ *Act Without Words I* previously appeared at the Royal Court Theatre in London in 1957 along with the world premiere of *Fin de partie*, at the Studio des Champs-Élysées in Paris in 1957, in Berlin at the Schlosspark-Theater in 1957, and in a televised production in Ireland in May 1963. *Act Without Words II* premiered at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London in 1959 and subsequently performed at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in 1962. Samuel Beckett, *The Letters of Samuel Beckett*, eds. George Craig, Martha Dow Fehsenfeld, Dan Gunn, and Lois More Overbeck, vol. 3, 1957–1965 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 36n3, 52, 543n4, 487n1; Photographs of *Act Without Words I*, Schlosspark-Theater, Berlin, September, 1957, Beckett Collection, University of Reading, BC MS 5538/H2; C. J. Ackerley and S. E. Gontarski, *The Grove Companion to Samuel Beckett: A Reader's Guide to His Works, Life, and Thought* (New York: Grove Press, 2004), 4.

⁷ Henry Friedlander, *The Origins of Nazi Genocide: From Euthanasia to the Final Solution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 14; Beth A. Griech-Polelle, *Anti-Semitism and the Holocaust: Language, Rhetoric, and the Traditions of Hatred* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017); Henry T. Gwiazda II, "The Nazi Racial War: The First Stage in Building the New World Order in Poland," *The Polish Review* 59, no. 4 (2014): 45–72.

the... bodies that [Beckett's] fascist contemporaries had attempted to erase from both artwork and community.”⁸ If, however, as James McNaughton argues, “a willingness to remember once-potent political iconography is enough” to read Beckett’s writing as political responses to history, the critical response to the Ulmer Theater performances evince a distinct unwillingness to remember.⁹

Historically speaking, this is unsurprising for a few reasons. The critical trend of the day was to interpret Beckett’s works as universal expressions of the human condition, especially through the lens of existentialism and the absurd.¹⁰ The reviews for the Ulm production largely followed this trend, with at least six critics referencing the absurd.¹¹ At the same time, the legacy of the historical imagery and language Beckett used in his plays were still very contested in postwar Western Germany. By the time of the Ulm production, Chancellor Konrad Adenauer had presided over a fourteen-year period of rehabilitation and economic recovery that entailed a national process of forgetting and moving past the Nazi period.¹² In a novel contemporary reading, German thinker Theodor W. Adorno argued Beckett’s writing provokes attempts to

⁸ Hannah Simpson, “Waiting for Godot and the Fascist Aesthetics of the Body,” in *Beckett and Politics*, eds. Helen Bailey and William Davies (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), 164.

⁹ James McNaughton, *Samuel Beckett and the Politics of Aftermath* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 18.

¹⁰ On Beckett’s German reception, see Rolf Breuer and Werner Huber, “Beckett Criticism in German,” in *Critique of Beckett Criticism: A Guide to Research in English, French, and German* by P. J. Murphy, Werner Huber, Rolf Breuer, and Konrad Schoell (Columbia: Camden House, 1994), 93–115; Gaby Hartel, Klaus Völker, and Thomas Irmer, “The Reception of Beckett’s Theatre and Television Pieces in West and East Germany,” in *The International Reception of Samuel Beckett*, eds. Mark Nixon and Matthew Feldman (London: Continuum, 2009), 75–96; Eckart Voigts-Virchow, “Shades of Negativity and Self-Reflexivity: The Reception of Beckett in German Literary Studies,” in *The International Reception of Samuel Beckett*, eds. Mark Nixon and Matthew Feldman (London: Continuum, 2009), 97–107.

¹¹ “Becketts Urnen-Schau,” *Freie Presse* (Zwickau), August 24, 1963, AdK; D. W., *Die Welt* (Berlin), June 17, 1963, AdK; “Die Eingeurnten,” *Christ und die Welt*, June 28, 1963, AdK; “Die Wüste wächst weiter,” *Der Spiegel*, June 25, 1963, DT; Joachim Kaiser, “Ehebruch-Erinnerungen im höllischen Licht,” *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (Munich), June 18, 1963, AdK; Menck, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*.

¹² Wulf Kansteiner, “Losing the War, Winning the Memory Battle: The Legacy of Nazism, World War II, and the Holocaust in the Federal Republic of Germany,” in *The Politics of Memory in Postwar Europe*, eds. Richard Ned Lebow, Wulf Kansteiner, and Claudio Fogu (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 102–20; Siobhan Kattago, *Ambiguous Memory: The Nazi Past and German National Identity* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2001), 1–7, 35–42.

universalize his figures, but “his dramaturgy – precisely by virtue of its limitation to exploded facticity – twitches beyond it.... In Beckett, history devours existentialism.”¹³ As McNaughton helpfully summarizes, for Adorno, “Beckett’s work invites philosophical interpretations, only to call them to account for obscuring the horror of” history.¹⁴ In performance, this would suggest that Beckett’s plays risk reproducing the very dynamics of ahistorical interpretation that Beckett seeks to critique.

The 1963 productions of his plays at Ulm would seem to demonstrate that’s what they did, at least in part. Critics also used images like “living corpses” to describe the figures onstage, dancing around recent history without naming it exactly. Beckett’s plays held the potential to bring markers of a painful cultural history into the present and disrupt the attempt to forget – but only in part or in an incomplete manner. Because the plays could also invite abstract interpretations by design, they also participated in the contemporary culture of active forgetting.

I argue that Beckett’s theatre produces imperfect surrogates that simultaneously make some cultural memories (more) visible while erasing or obscuring others. According to performance historian Joseph Roach, surrogation is a performance process by which people fix substitutes into the social and cultural spaces depleted by death or other forms of departure or loss. Surrogates inevitably fail to replicate what they replace, though, creating excesses or deficits of cultural memory that enable forgetting.¹⁵ The figures in Beckett’s theatre that indirectly represent historical atrocity operate as just such surrogates. As German theatre historian Katrin Sieg notes, though, rather than theorize the exchange of culture along imperial

¹³ Theodor W. Adorno, “Trying to Understand *Endgame*,” translated by Michael T. Jones, *New German Critique* 26 (Spring – Summer 1982): 121–5, at 122.

¹⁴ McNaughton, 7–8.

¹⁵ Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 2–3.

networks of contact in the early modern circum-Atlantic world, surrogation in the postwar German context “captures the ambivalence of memory and mourning, and denial and historical revisionism” that characterized West Germans’ fraught and fluctuating relationship with the Nazi past.¹⁶ The surrogates in Beckett’s theatre, which oscillate between historic specificity and ambiguity, open up just such ambivalence. In the case of the 1963 Ulmer Theatre production, Beckett’s plays acted as effigies to multiple vacancies in the Federal Republic’s cultural memory, and this multiplicity contributed to the audience’s ambivalence as evinced by their decidedly mixed response on opening night.

This chapter thus charts censorship’s movement through multiple processes of surrogation by locating both the historical cavities Beckett’s plays worked to fill and how they did so. Here, censorship moved through certain elements of the performance itself: the performers’ bodies, costumes, and other visuals. The empty historical spaces in West German cultural memory were the result of translating, as historian Henry Friedlander puts it, “an ideology of inequality into a policy of exclusion” – from censoring art, to deporting “undesirables,” to euthanizing babies with disabilities, to genocide.¹⁷ The material, bodied characters onstage function as one surrogate that, together with their costumes and the actors’ performances, offered uneasy not-quite representations of Nazi victims. However, in each of these three plays Beckett instrumentalizes the mechanisms of theatre itself to subjugate the characters. The fly system, spotlight, and a prod that comes from offstage work upon the characters in nefarious ways. I argue that while these systems literalize the ways states enact oppression and normalize suffering, the politics of spectatorial complicity Beckett’s theatre

¹⁶ Katrin Sieg, *Ethnic Drag: Performing Race, Nation, and Sexuality in West Germany* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002), 13.

¹⁷ Friedlander, *Origins*, 1.

models also has particular resonance with the counter-myth of German victimhood. Pervasive in West German cultural memory was the revisionist history that a small group of powerful Nazis had coerced and duped the nation into complicity and war. The form of Beckett's theatre created a surrogate for the victims of Nazism, but the ambiguity of Beckett's characters and the prevalence of the counter-myth situated the audience itself as a surrogate for a version of the German nation caught in the Nazi engines of violence, obfuscating those murdered by the regime and relaxing national culpability. Beckett's plays could simultaneously move the exclusions of the past into the present and blur their import.

A more subtle act of surrogation was also at play in the production: the replacement of the planned 1958 production of Beckett's mimes in Dublin. After learning about the success of Archbishop McQuaid's protest, Beckett cancelled productions of his plays that were still slated for the 1958 DITF and banned any of his plays from appearing on the Republic of Ireland's stages – a ban which lasted until the spring of 1960.¹⁸ The DITF's Brendan Smith had arranged with Beckett for Deryk Mendel, a Liverpool-born dancer and whiteface clown, to perform his pantomimes for the 1958 DITF. Beckett wrote the pieces specifically for Mendel, and it is virtually impossible that Smith and Beckett made plans to send Mendel to Dublin without Mendel's knowledge.¹⁹ At the time of the 1958 DITF collapse, Mendel had only performed the first of the three projected pieces. The 1963 Ulmer Theater production was the first time Mendel performed both plays that Beckett wrote for him and, as the production's director, too, it is likely that Mendel was pivotal in bringing them to the city of Ulm in the Federal Republic. While I

¹⁸ Beckett, *Letters*, 3: 332.

¹⁹ Beckett, *Letters*, 3: 58, 58n3, 76, 77n5, 106, 107n1–2. On the genesis of the first mime play, see James Knowlson, *Damned to Fame: The Life and Times of Samuel Beckett* (New York: Grove Press, 2004), 377–8. See also, Samuel Beckett, *The Letters of Samuel Beckett*, eds. George Craig, Martha Dow Fehsenfeld, Dan Gunn, and Lois More Overbeck, vol. 2, 1941–1956 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 540, 561.

have not found any evidence that suggests that Ulmer Theater audiences would have known about the production's connection with the 1958 DITF, nor any contemporary reporting on it in the German language, Mendel, Beckett, and the Ulmer ultimately furnished its surrogate.

Because of this, while I gesture towards *Play*, I focus on the mime plays. The history of the 1958 DITF was the largely invisible foundation for the production in a very practical sense.²⁰ In this case study, the DITF scandal helped beget the production, which conjured other national memories of radical censorship for the German spectators, keeping censorship in circulation.

This does not mean, however, that Ireland was absent from the cultural milieu that surrounded the production. Many of the reviews for the production noted that Beckett came to Ulm to supervise rehearsals, implicitly or explicitly suggesting that this meant the performance had his stamp of approval, or that, further, Beckett's authorial vision was achieved vis-à-vis Mendel.²¹ As Shane Weller notes, throughout his career and beyond, critics and the broader public frequently identified Beckett as an Irishman.²² German critics of the Ulmer production dutifully noted not only Beckett's national origin, but some even suggested ties between Beckett's Irishness and the plays' form. Another critic further noted that Beckett wrote the mime

²⁰ An important caveat is due here. At the start of 2020, I had begun plans to travel to both France and Germany to undertake additional archival research and even secured funding to support this research. Then the COVID-19 pandemic occurred and travel restrictions went into effect. I managed to secure digital copies from some of the archives I hoped to visit, and I thank the librarians for helping me gain access to these documents. However, this ultimately represents a small fraction of the resources I would have been able to study otherwise, including unpublished letters between Mendel and Beckett, Mendel's other professional papers and correspondence, Ulmer Theater archival material, and other materials whose digital access is restricted due to copyright issues. What's more, there is precious little about Mendel or the Ulmer in French or English-language scholarship. Finally, German-language newspapers are not all accessible and searchable to the degree that English-language newspapers are. My hope is that I will have the opportunity to visit these archives in-person post-pandemic. I anticipate that this chapter, therefore, might change the most in revision. That said, I wanted to lay bare the archival limits of my claims in this chapter and acknowledge what I see as the heightened potential for this chapter to morph based on what might be available to me in the future.

²¹ Goldschmit, *Der Tagesspiegel* (Berlin); Moser, "In den Urnen"; Tillman Moser, "Theologie aus Urnentiefe," *Stuttgarter Zeitung*, June 18, 1963, AkD; Rumler, *Abendzeitung*. In reality, Beckett wasn't totally satisfied. See Beckett, *Letters*, 3: 546.

²² Shane Weller, *Samuel Beckett and Cultural Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 2.

plays specifically for Mendel.²³ Some German spectators clearly used their perception of Beckett's Irishness to imbue the performances' meanings, transferred via Beckett's perceived touch to Mendel's direction and performance and his authorship of the texts. The production happened to coincide with what the historian of Irish-German cultural relations Emer O'Sullivan describes as "the post-war German love affair with Ireland" as an imagined other.²⁴ Displacing Beckett's forms and figurations onto Ireland and away from Germany served to further veil the Nazi past. Ireland could help Germans avoid their national history.

4.1 Filling the Void with Silence: Memories and Erasure in *Act Without Words II* and *I*

As one reviewer described it, the first image the Ulmer Theater audience saw on the night the production opened was that of two "crusted" cloth sacks sitting side-by-side to the right side of an otherwise bare stage. Just to the left of the bags was a pile of neatly folded clothing. The nearly empty stage was "violently lit," as Beckett's script dictates. From the right, a long, pointed goad – like a lance, according to the same critic – emerged from the theatre's wings. Moving horizontally, it inched towards the withered bags, stopping short of them. It retreated about a foot before suddenly springing forward with a jolt, forcefully prodding the closest bag and then recoiling. There was a pause before the goad repeated its strike upon the sack. Then, there was movement from within the sack. Seemingly satisfied, the spear retracted into the wings. Then, a figure emerged from the sack. Played by Deryk Mendel, he was horribly dirty,

²³ "Dirigent für Becketts Partitur," *Theatre Heute*, date unknown, 1963, 9–10, DT.

²⁴ Emer O'Sullivan, "From the Particular to the Universal (and back again?): Irish Children's Literature in Germany," in *Ireland and the Irish in Germany – Reception and Perception*, eds. Claire O'Reilly and Veronica O'Regan (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 2014), 109.

bald except for a few meagre tufts of unkempt grey hair. His skin was lightened and his facial features gaunt and sunken. His frame appeared slender underneath a filthy, oversized striped shirt. For the same critic, Mendel played his role in both mime pieces with a “nightmarish grotesqueness.”²⁵

Mendel made the interesting choice to open his evening of Beckett plays with *Act Without Words II* instead of *I*.²⁶ The effect was to affront the audience with representations of destitution and coercion. To critics, Mendel and his cohort transmitted “the deplorable suffering of the humiliated,” which was “frighteningly accurate” and “played realistically.”²⁷ Exactly what they “accurately” depicted is obscure in such assessments, but grisly descriptors abound: “reduction of the human,” “living corpses” (which appeared in two separate reviews), and “stripped” or “exposed life.”²⁸ Such language recalls the Holocaust or World War Two, suggesting the performances brought images and memories consigned to the darkness into the light. Scholars have previously attended to the mime plays in relation to Beckett’s aesthetic development, the French mime tradition, as meditations on theatre’s manipulation of the body,

²⁵ Rumler, *Abendzeitung*; Samuel Beckett, “*Act Without Words II*,” in *The Collected Shorter Plays* (New York: Grove Press, 2010), 43; Production photograph, Deryk Mendel Papers, Département des Arts du spectacle, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, France, BNF/4-COL-251(7 bis). This photo is untitled and undated but the actor and design elements do not seem to match the production photos from the 1966 *Akt ohne worte II* that Mendel directed at the Schiller Theater Werkstatt in Berlin. Further, the actor in the undated photograph bears a much closer resemblance to ones identified as Deryk Mendel from the 1957 production of *Acte sans paroles I* at the Théâtre du Studio des Champs-Élysées in Paris. Since Mendel did not appear in the 1966 performances, that would suggest these undated ones are likely from 1963. The 1966 photographs can be found in the Samuel Beckett Collection, University of Reading, Reading, UK, BC MS 5538 H/3. For the 1957 photos, see the Samuel Beckett Collection, University of Reading, Reading, UK, BC MS 5538 H/1.

²⁶ Program slip for the Ulmer Theater production of *Drei stück von Samuel Beckett*, 1963, DT.

²⁷ Kaiser, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*; Dannecker, *Main-Post*; Rumler, *Abendzeitung*.

²⁸ “Die Eingeurnten,” *Christ und die Welt*; Menck, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*; R. T., *Frankfurter Rundschau*. The German term for “stripped” or “exposed life” used in the article is “entblößten Lebens.”

and in comparison to Michel Foucault's panopticon. To the best of my knowledge, scholars have not explored the historical and political import of the mimes' bodies and form in performance.²⁹

That said, since the historical and political turn in Beckett Studies, scholars have analyzed how the conditions and victims of death and concentration camps can appear to approximate characters, situations, and discourses in Beckett's *oeuvre*.³⁰ Much of the scholarship traces how Beckett responded to his very real and near-deadly first-hand wartime experiences, the six months he spent in Nazi Germany prior to the war, and other adjacent historical ejecta within his archival and published texts.³¹ This body of criticism is often at pains to search out and examine Beckett's aesthetic transformation of and commentary on history. Others enter critical dialogue with philosopher Giorgio Agamben's theorizations of testimony, sovereign power, and "bare life" – humanity stripped down to its mere organic, biological fact of living, life that may be killed but not sacrificed – which Agamben largely routes through the historical example of the Nazi camps.³² Although their 1963 production precedes Agamben's theories and

²⁹ Anna McMullan, *Performing Embodiment in Samuel Beckett's Drama* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 57–66; Jonathan Tadashi Naito, "Writing Silence: Samuel Beckett's Early Mimes," *Samuel Beckett Today/Aujourd'hui* 19 (2008): 393–402; Jürgen Siess, "The Actor's Body and Institutional Tensions: from *Act Without Words I* to *Not I*," in *Drawing on Beckett: Portraits, Performances, and Cultural Contexts*, ed. Linda Ben-Zvi (Tel Aviv: Assaph Books, 2003), 297–308; Michael Palmese, "Beckett's Theatre of Punishment: *Act Without Words I* as Panopticon," *Samuel Beckett Today/Aujourd'hui* 29 (2017): 417–27.

³⁰ See Helen Bailey and William Davies, "Introduction," in *Beckett and Politics*, eds. Helen Bailey and William Davies (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), 1–19; Emilie Morin, *Beckett's Political Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 1–16.

³¹ For examples, see Jackie Blackman, "Beckett Judaizing Beckett: 'A Jew from Greenland' in Paris," *All Sturm and No Drang: Beckett and Romanticism*, eds. Dirk Van Hulle and Mark Nixon, special issue of *Samuel Beckett Today/Aujourd'hui* 18 (2007): 325–40; Jackie Blackman, "Beckett's Theatre 'After Auschwitz,'" in *Samuel Beckett: History, Memory, Archive*, eds. Seán Kennedy and Katherine Weiss (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 71–87; William Davies, *Samuel Beckett and the Second World War: Politics, Propaganda, and a 'Universe Become Provincial'* (London: Bloomsbury, 2020); Andrew Gibson, "Beckett, Vichy, Maurras, and the Body: *Premier amour* and *Nouvelles*," *Irish University Review* 45, no. 2 (November 2015): 281–301; Andrew Gibson, *Samuel Beckett* (London: Reaktion Books, 2010), 74–127; McNaughton, 1–24, 60–163; Morin, *Beckett's*, 130–83; Mark Nixon, *Samuel Beckett's German Diaries 1936–1937* (London: Continuum, 2011); Marjorie Perloff, "'In Love with Hiding': Samuel Beckett's War," *Iowa Review* 35.2 (Spring 2005): 76–103.

³² Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998). For representative Beckett studies that engage with Agamben, see, Joseph Anderton,

language by some three decades, the reviews attest to the performance's approximation to something similar. If this was the case, it was in part because of the enormity of Nazi memory.

In this section, I situate the production within several different but related memoryscapes in order to show how Mendel and the other actors' embodiment of Beckett's plays acted as surrogates for multiple memorial spaces emptied by Nazi history and its aftermath. By attending to both national atrocities and the specific environs of the small south-central city of Ulm (where the Ulmer Theater is located), I posit that the imperfect surrogates in Beckett's play carried memories of radical censorship and exclusion into the present. Although their visual iconography, movements, and subjugation might have held the potential to rupture the silence of the past, their imprecise match with the victims of National Socialism alternatively meant they could simultaneously help audiences actively forget. The critics' rhetorical dance around explicitly naming the Nazis and their crimes can be seen as evincing the "orchestration of 'forgetting,'" as Sieg puts it. Since acknowledgment of a memory signals remembrance, however fleeting, Sieg astutely observes, "forgetting therefore requires the production of figures that simultaneously evoke and displace the historical matter in question."³³ As such, technologies of forgetting like surrogation cannot only fill censored spaces and carry censorship histories through time and space, but can also perpetuate the censorship of memory in its own right. Surrogation keeps censorship moving, continuing in new guises the cultural processes of inclusion and deletion that work towards the production of consensus.

Under Adolf Hitler, the Nazi regime from 1933 until its defeat in the war in 1945 worked towards the racist dream of a homogenous, utopian white German nation and state through the

Beckett's Creatures: Art of Failure After the Holocaust (London: Bloomsbury, 2016); David Houston Jones, *Samuel Beckett and Testimony* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); McNaughton, 129–36.

³³ Sieg, 84–5.

exclusion of the Jews, Roma, and other ethnic, racial, and religious minorities alongside homosexuals, political prisoners, people with disabilities, and others. Jews were by far the largest target, however. Exclusion was achieved through many means including segregation, criminality and imprisonment, deportation, bars on miscegenation, access to education, and civil rights, among others. The “Final Solution” to the “Jewish Question” was genocide. This Nazi *Judenpolitik* inflected every field of politics and policymaking in the Third Reich: the racism at its core and its aim of exclusion was central to German life and policy for twelve years of terror and horror.³⁴

Following the collapse of the Nazi regime, the occupying Allied forces implemented denazification programs with the hope of reforming, punishing, and transforming Germany, from purging Nazi party members from government and civic posts, to the confiscation of Nazi symbols, to the renaming of streets and public buildings. Counterpropaganda was a key mechanism for shaming and confronting Germans with the reality of Nazi war and human crimes and reorienting German national consensus toward western values. In the American zone (which included Ulm), atrocity propaganda was particularly extensive. Occupying Americans forced Germans who lived near camps to tour the grounds. American operators restaged the camps to look as they had found them, returning emaciated bodies to wagons and piles for display. They even replaced disintegrating corpses with newer ones as necessary between tours. The US Military Government also deployed visual propaganda like posters, films, and photographs, like the documentary *Die Todesmühlen (The Mills of Death)*, 1946, dir. Hanus Burger). The entrance

³⁴ Peter Longerich, *Holocaust: The Nazi Persecution and Murder of the Jews* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 4–8; Friedlander, *Origins*, xi–xiv, 1.

to Auschwitz, the piles of clothes, shoes, gold teeth, the living skeletons in baggy striped uniforms, the corpses, and the gas chambers became synonymous with Nazism.³⁵

Films like this turned these cruel images into global icons loaded with the memory of Nazi brutality, and Mendel's 1963 *Act Without Words II* features several approximations of these. Germans saw the camp garb with vertical stripes in film footage almost as soon as the war ended in 1945. The Nazis shaved the hair from victims whom the Nazis did not immediately kill upon arrival at the various camps, stripped them of their belongings, and gave them what were often dirty and previously-used striped uniforms. The Nazis also typically provided men with a jacket, trousers, and clogs. Notable, too, is the fact that prisoners typically bundled their jacket to hold any other possessions they managed to keep, and slept on them to keep them safe.³⁶

None of this matches the costumes in Mendel's production or the scheme in Beckett's script exactly. The dark stripes on the Mime's shirt were thinner than those seen in camp documentaries, and his head bald but for some messy knots of hair above the ears rather than shaved. In the production photographs, the Mime appears cadaverous beneath his not-quite uniform, and he moved "morosely" and "with oppressive frailty" as critics put it.³⁷ Prisoners' bundles approximate the sacks that the Mimes sleep in and inhabit rather than upon. Alternatively, the Mimes' sack-shelters more directly mirrors the situation of the millions of homeless displaced persons in postwar Germany, a population that included concentration and labor camp survivors, prisoners of war, and even Nazi collaborators. As the Cold War

³⁵ Michael Gehler, *Three Germanies: West Germany, East Germany and the Berlin Republic* (London: Reaktion Books, 2011), 22–33; Cora Sol Goldstein, *Capturing the German Eye: American Visual Propaganda in Occupied Germany* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 2–5, 18–22, 28–35, 41–67; 106–8.

³⁶ James Taylor, "Concentration Camp Uniform as a Tool of Subjugation and a Symbol of the Holocaust," in *Bodies in Conflict: Corporeality, Materiality, and Transformation*, ed. Paul Cornish and Nicholas J. Saunders (London: Routledge, 2014), 325, 328, 334.

³⁷ Dannecker, *Main-Post*; Moser, "Theologie," *Stuttgarter Zeitung*.

progressed, West Germany also became a refuge for East German, Czechoslovak, and Hungarian nationals who fled from the communist east, ensuring the perseverance of the refugee in national memory.³⁸ The images onstage at the Ulmer Theater evoked recent memories without representing them directly. Nevertheless, in their mere evocation they still fit into a particular cultural space and worked upon it, however indirectly.

If and when such memories echoed in the minds of audience members at the Ulmer, they would have generally registered in a particularly disruptive way. Part of this is because denazification came to a close before its aim of provoking collective guilt had been achieved. In order to understand the performances' disruptive potential, it is necessary to understand the cultural and political environment that settled in West Germany in the decade-and-a-half following the war. While Germans broadly came to accept that the atrocities had actually taken place, most felt that a relatively small number of Nazi overlords and elites were to blame for the nation's crimes against humanity and peace – and many of them had already been tried and punished during the Nuremberg trials before the close of the 1940s. The heating up of the dawning Cold War made occupied Germany a front line for both the US and USSR, and military governments in the western zones shifted their priorities to shore up anticommunist sentiment and confidence in liberal democracy, ultimately contributing to Germany's partition and the establishment of two separate states.³⁹

³⁸ Sharif Gemie and Louise Rees, "Representing and Reconstructing Identities in the Postwar World: Refugees, UNRRA, and Fred Zinnemann's Film, *The Search* (1948)," *International Review of Social History* 56 (2011): 441–73; Patrice G. Poutrus, "Asylum in Postwar Germany: Refugee Admission Policies and Their Practical Implementation in the Federal Republic and the GDR Between the Late 1940s and the Mid-1970s," *Journal of Contemporary History* 49, no. 1 (January 2014): 115–33.

³⁹ Gehler, 26–51. For a summary of the Nuremberg Trials, see Frederick Taylor, *Exorcising Hitler: The Occupation and Denazification of Germany* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2011), 227–36.

The steady re-establishment of sovereignty in the western Federal Republic (FRG) gave West Germans the chance to make a cleaner break with the past. In some respects, Western Germans defined themselves against the Nazis that they (now) were not. Fatigue of the past was strong by the end of the 1940s. Through the next decade, Chancellor Adenauer and his government worked to bring closure to the past, granting amnesty for most crimes to former Nazis, releasing almost all war criminals from prison, and bringing German POWs home from the USSR. FRG teachers tended to instruct German history only up to the end of the nineteenth century or so, although the perspective centering German racial superiority eroded. A reparations treaty with newly-established Israel gave Germans additional cover to move on. Nazi-period stars returned in movies that satisfied a taste for nostalgia. FRG cinema also drew distinctions between Nazis and German soldiers through unapologetic depictions of Third Reich soldiers valorously fighting communists on the Eastern Front, feeding into Cold War culture.⁴⁰

The Cold War likewise furnished West Germany the opportunity to literally sweep away the rubble through the Marshall Plan. West Germany's subsequent "economic miracle" allowed for unprecedented abundance and a sustained, US-like consumer culture but was predicated upon showing the world that the country had internalized the Nazi past. Condemned internationally for sanctioning Hitler's regime, West Germans "turned the defect of their industrious obedience into a national virtue," as historian Tony Judt puts it. This simultaneously smoothed over their role in the horror and kept in place many of the institutions, bureaucracies, and systems that enabled

⁴⁰ Kansteiner, 108–12; Sieg, 8–9; Kattago, 35–41; Kathleen J. Nawyn, "'Striking at the Roots of German Militarism': Efforts to Demilitarize German Society and Culture in American-Occupied Württemberg-Baden" (PhD diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2008), 442–3.

Nazism. In doing so, they recast themselves as victims, emphasizing their struggles during the war years and largely ignoring the suffering their nation had caused.⁴¹

The Ulm region's consistent support for Adenauer's right-of-center Christian democratic governing coalition reflected their approval for his policies and stances but doesn't capture the specificity of the Ulm experience. Historically a garrison city, Ulm was also an industrial center with numerous large factories. Located on the River Danube at the crossroads of the larger cities of Munich and Stuttgart, the Allied bombing of Ulm left roughly two-thirds of the city in ruins.⁴² In the postwar years, Ulm developed a reputation as a stronghold for former Nazis, with many former soldiers and high officers residing and working there in professions that ranged from policemen to teachers. Anecdotal evidence abounds. For instance, at a political forum broadcast by local radio, when one local called British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and US President Harry S. Truman "war mongers" who were "equally as guilty" and deserved to be "as ruthlessly punished as our men," the crowd went wild. Ulm officials also managed to work around or defy US denazification and demilitarization mandates, for example, by retaining streets named for German military figures and history, allowing it to retain some of its militaristic character.⁴³ Examples like these suggest that selective and revisionary memory practices were constitutive of Ulm's postwar relationship with the past. The situation in Ulm was generally even more recalcitrant to collective guilt narratives, examinations of the roots of Nazism, and questions of complicity, leaving open pockets of memory that Beckett's plays could jostle.

⁴¹ Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945* (London: Penguin, 2005), 265–77, at 275; Kansteiner, 111.

⁴² Nawyn, 28–9 ; Gehler, 11; Ulm's population of nearly 75,000 in 1939 was as small as 28,000 when the city surrendered in 1945. A 1961 FRG census recorded the Ulm population at nearly 93,000. The metropolitan area counted some 117,000 people. See also, Statistisches Bundesamt/Wiesbaden, ed., *Statistisches Jahrbuch für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1962), 42, accessed June 3, 2021, http://www.digizeitschriften.de/download/PPN514402342_1962/PPN514402342_1962___log12.pdf.

⁴³ Nawyn, 131–3, 140, 164, 367–8.

Theatre in the FRG followed and contributed to these trends. Germany has a long tradition of municipal theatres stretching back to the court theatres patronized by the multitude of Dukes, Princes, and Electors of the early modern period. By 1973 there were 137 theatre companies across West Germany, and the FRG and local jurisdictions heavily subsidized them. Conservative stagings and performances of pre-war classics proliferated.⁴⁴ Former Nazi theatre professionals were largely able to continue working in the field. Major international modern hits appeared in Germany after the war that were or would have been barred in the Reich for their modernism and/or foreignness. This was partly a reaction to the Nazi abhorrence of modern art which had been a major target of the Nazi censorship project that sought to shape German culture in the mold of Nazi ideology with rigid adherence. The staging of these plays was another attempt to forget the past and project West German modernity.⁴⁵ Similarly, philosemitic representations of Jews – like the hundreds of productions of Gotthold Lessing’s *Nathan the Wise* (1779) staged in the postwar years – worked to mystify rather than remedy antisemitism, taking the place of direct confrontations of recent history and its roots.⁴⁶

As Sieg argues, plays chosen for performance through the 1950s fed into the discourse that not only allowed Germans to dodge responsibility but to identify with the victims of Nazism

⁴⁴ Michael Patterson, *German Theatre Today: Post-war Theatre in West and East Germany, Austria and Northern Switzerland* (London: Pitman Publishing, 1976), 5; Hermann Glaser, “1945 – Cultural Beginnings: Continuity and Discontinuity,” in *Culture in the Federal Republic of Germany, 1945–1995*, ed. Reiner Pommerin (Oxford: Berg, 1996), 27–32. Excluding opera and musical theatre, classics and plays from the 1870s to 1945 made up about 60% of a typical season at any given West German theatre. See Patterson, 6.

⁴⁵ Barbara Panse, “Censorship in Nazi Germany: The Influence of the Reich’s Ministry of Propaganda on German Theatre and Drama, 1933–1945,” in *Fascism and Theatre: Comparative Studies on the Aesthetics and Politics of Performance in Europe, 1925–1945*, ed. Günter Berghaus (Providence: Berghahn Books, 1996), 143–4; Wolfgang Welsch, “Modernity and Postmodernity in Post-War Germany (1945–1995),” in *Culture in the Federal Republic of Germany, 1945–1995*, ed. Reiner Pommerin (Oxford: Berg, 1996), 111–13. International postwar offerings included the Algerian-born Frenchman Albert Camus’s *The Just* (1949), Spaniard Federico García Lorca’s *Blood Wedding* (1933), and American Tennessee Williams’s *The Glass Menagerie* (1944) among many others. See Glaser, 28.

⁴⁶ Sieg, 66. It’s worth noting, tangentially, that Beckett was familiar with this play. See Nixon, 78.

as well.⁴⁷ This was the case whether the plays directly or indirectly addressed the Nazi years. For example, Austrian Fritz Hochwalder’s *The Public Prosecutor* (1948) displaces postwar sentiments to the French Revolution in a drama about a historical lawyer who, upon being convicted for sending the Reign of Terror’s victims to the guillotine, declares, “I merely used the means put to my hands. I deny any responsibility!”⁴⁸ Other German-language plays centered “good German soldiers” or pitiful soldiers who return from the war in states of desperation.⁴⁹

At the Ulmer Theater, plays that challenged political or cultural values were not tolerated. Beckett’s plays were only the latest in a string of recent protests and anger against the theatre. In September 1961, Ulmer Theater manager Kurt Huebner produced Bertolt Brecht’s *The Trial of Joan of Arc at Rouen, 1431* (1952). The production took place only about one month after communists began erecting the Berlin Wall to encircle and cordon off democratic West Berlin from communist East Berlin and East Germany. Artistic directors across the FRG instated boycotts on the communist Brecht during the crisis. Huebner defied his colleagues and was met with outrage, including a threat of assassination by bombing.⁵⁰ Only a month later, Huebner roused Ulm again, this time with a production of Irishman Brendan Behan’s *The Hostage* (1958). The Ulmer company transformed the auditorium of the girls’ school where they performed their plays from the end of the war until 1969 into the brothel of Behan’s play. Further, the City Council, which subsidized the company to the tune of over a million German marks, roiled over

⁴⁷ Sieg, 9.

⁴⁸ Qtd. in Peterson, 18.

⁴⁹ An example of the latter category is Wolfgang Borchert’s *The Man Outside* (1947), and one from the former is Carl Zuckmayer’s *The Devil’s General* (1946). For more, see Peterson, 34–8. This brief survey is by no means exhaustive and only serves to highlight certain features.

⁵⁰ “Proze in Ulm,” *Der Spiegel*, September 12, 1961; “Fast nur solches,” *Der Spiegel*, November 6, 1963; Stefan Mahlke, “Brecht ± Muller: German-German Brecht Images before and after 1989,” *TDR* 43.4 (1999): 42. There were two other Brecht boycotts in the postwar FRG. The first was in 1953 during strikes and uprisings in East Germany and the second in 1956 during the Hungarian Revolution. On the East German Uprising, see Gehler, 86–96. On the construction of and crises surrounding the Berlin Wall, see Gehler, 114–16.

Behan's communist sympathies. When a collection of the former IRA man's writings appeared in German translation, at least one critic remembered that *The Hostage* had caused enough of a stir that it made the German theatre where it played "unsafe."⁵¹

Under a new artistic director, Ulrich Brecht, Ulm audiences came to expect boundaries to be pushed – and they were not enthusiastic about the new direction. Brecht (no relation to Bertolt), first raised local eyebrows with an avant-garde staging of poet and dramaturge Claus Bremer's *Ödipus (Oedipus)*, 1963). His choice to stage Frenchman Jean Vauthier's play *The New Mandrake* (1952) in Ulm, though, received national attention for its negative reception. Residents and representatives from Adenauer's Christian Democracy Unity party on the City Council demanded the play close. A modern adaptation of Machiavelli's cuckold satire *The Mandrake* (1526), Vauthier's version features a corrupt monk and partly takes place in a church. Critics panned it as "embarrassing" and "filthy," and audiences protested during performances. Brecht admitted he overestimated what the city would tolerate. When Pope John XXIII died just after the scandal, it gave Brecht the chance to close the show without appearing to cave to local politics.⁵² Although different from Beckett's plays in content, form, and style, these preceding incidents illustrate the Ulmer audience's low tolerance for political and cultural deviation.

By the late 1960s, West Germany had shifted away from the dominant narrative of victimization and toward a reckoning with German perpetration and complicity. This shift, though, came in fits and starts and was by no means uncontroversial. Theatre played a significant

⁵¹ "O Beachain," *Der Spiegel*, November 6, 1963; "Fast nur solches," *Der Spiegel*, November 6, 1963; "Brendan Behan: Stücke fürs theater," *Der Spiegel*, September 10, 1962. Behan was never a member of the Communist Party of Ireland, but was certainly a leftist if not a communist in everything but name. See Michael O'Sullivan, *Brendan Behan: A Life* (Boulder, CO: Roberts Rinehart Publishers, 1999), 23, 33, 76, 78–9, 188. On the Ulmer Theater's use of a school auditorium, see "Geschichte," *Theater Ulm*, accessed July 3, 2021, <https://www.theater-ulm.de/theater/geschichte>.

⁵² "Fast nur solches," *Der Spiegel*.

role in bringing reminders of the past in circulation. Performances of *The Diary of Anne Frank* shocked audiences across the FRG in 1956. Max Fisch's controversial play *Andorra* (1961) inspired heated debate as much for Fisch's depiction of anti-Semitism and Holocaust imagery and scenarios (including forced head-shaving and imprisonment) as for his displacement of these events to a fictional setting and centering the action on a Gentile who is mistaken for a Jew. Most provocative of all was Rolf Hochhuth's *The Deputy*. Premiering just four months before the Ulmer Beckett plays in 1963, the play depicts the failure of Pope Pius XII to resist Nazi violence, casting the pope and the faith as complicit accomplices to Nazism.⁵³

The courtroom also offered a stage for the renegotiation of Nazi memory. One of the first major shifts came in Ulm, itself, with the trial and conviction of ten former members of the paramilitary *Schutzstaffel* (SS) for war crimes committed against Lithuanian Jews. The head of the group reintegrated and attained employment as the director of Ulm's refugee camp. The 1958 trial stood in stark contrast to the overwhelming majority of previous trials for similar crimes in West Germany, which concluded in acquittal.⁵⁴ Then, Adolf Eichmann, a major figure behind the implementation of the Final Solution, stood trial for and was convicted of crimes against humanity in Jerusalem in 1961. Widely covered in West Germany in print and on television, this trial made even clearer the extent of Nazi brutality and brought further attention to their true victims. However, while the trials did make West Germans newly re-aware of the past, they were still unwilling to address Nazism's roots or acknowledge how that refusal was part and parcel with their prosperity. West Germans by and large rather saw the trials as evidence for the theory

⁵³ Kattago, 41–2; “Germans Silent at ‘Anne Frank,’” *New York Times*, October 3, 1956, 30; Patterson, 40–2, 75–7.

⁵⁴ Patrick Tobin, “No Time for ‘Old Fighters’: Postwar West Germany and the Origins of the 1958 Ulm *Einsatzkommando* Trial,” *Central European History* 44 (2011): 684–710.

that the Reich's crimes were due to a few "bad apples" and that the nation as a whole was not to blame.⁵⁵

Beckett's *Act Without Words II* (*AWWII*) at the Ulmer were not only a part of this particular transitory memory culture but modeled and produced its ambivalence. The production of Beckett plays at the Ulmer began with embodied images that evoked Nazi atrocities. How the play processed that iconography over the course of the short play created ambiguity that invites multiple or split interpretations. After the goad stirs the Mime, he crawls from the sack and begins an abbreviated ritual of daily life. The Mime prays, rises to his feet, takes a pill bottle from his sack, takes a pill, moves to the pile of clothes to the left of the two sacks, and puts on the coat, trousers, hat, and boots. He then removes a partially-eaten carrot from the pocket of the coat, nibbles it, spits out the chunk of root in disgust, and returns the carrot to his coat. The Mime then carries both his own empty sack and the second sack housing the other Mime to center stage. "Bowed and staggering," the Mime is "slow, awkward... and absent." He then reverses his initial routine. Removing the clothes (except for his striped shirt), he lets them fall to the stage floor to the right of his sack in an "untidy heap." The Mime then takes another pill, prays, and crawls back into his sack. Between every action Beckett indicates the Mime should "brood," slowing his progression and adding to his weary, absent-minded execution of tasks.⁵⁶

If the play begins with images that evoke memories of wartime catastrophe like homeless refugees and concentration camp survivors, the Mime's actions would appear to curtail that specificity, making them an even more imperfect replacement for the would-be forgotten Nazi victims. However, their ambiguity rather explodes interpretive possibilities – and that's part of

⁵⁵ Kansteiner, 113; Kattago, 42; Longerich, 151–7, 174–5, 261–5, 280–1, 306, 320–3, 360–7, 394–5, 407–13.

⁵⁶ Beckett, "Act Without Words II," 43–4.

Beckett's point. The prayer, for example, surely distanced the play from associations with Jewish victims. Unless it was performed as a Jewish prayer (which seems unlikely), a Christian prayer would have not been taken as exceptional in Ulm and allowed audiences to code the praying Mime as a non-exceptional (that is, non-Jewish) everyman.⁵⁷ That the particularity of Judaism would hinder philosophical interpretations is part of Beckett's critique. By staging how difference is erased in the process of humanistic interpretation, the play models how arguments of universal suffering ignore the material differences between how groups within unequal societies live and die. However, by modeling that process, the Ulm production also perpetuated it, obscuring the memory of atrocity from view, and allowing at least some to leave the production and publish about how it shows universal truths of how life makes victims of all.⁵⁸

In this reading, the everydayness of the Mime's actions collapses particularity and turns him into an everyman whose life is reduced to a series of meaningless tasks. This metaphor for life as sleep, routine, and struggle becomes all the more absurd when, at the end of the play, the goad once again prods the Mime to action and he repeats, exactly, his opening ritual as the curtain falls. The only difference from the beginning is that he has moved farther to the left of the stage and the goad had to travel farther across it (supported by two wheels) to wake him.⁵⁹ Life is just a series of repetitions with no end. Interpreted this way, Beckett shows the world as "absurd" in Albert Camus's sense of the word, but also that people persevere through the absurd

⁵⁷ It is unclear what kind of prayer Mendel performed in the production. It is not mentioned in any review I have found. Given that Jewish representation was something of a lightning rod issue, especially in contexts even remotely related to Nazi-era conditions, it is highly likely that they would have mentioned it if Mendel had performed the prayer in the Judaic manner. This is also not to say that the difference between a Catholic or Protestant prayer might not have been significant to the Germans, but under the Christian-oriented political coalition that dominated the day, Christian culture if not the specifics of faith were likely unifying rather than divisive characteristics.

⁵⁸ See Menck's review, for example.

⁵⁹ Beckett, "Act Without Words II," 44–5.

meaninglessness of life.⁶⁰ That the goad prods a second mime-character into action who performs his own set of tasks with rapid precision and even “cheerfully,” as one reviewer put it, suggests that while life may entail toil, it is also what one makes of it that matters.⁶¹ To proponents of absurd readings of Beckett, like literary scholar Michael Y. Bennett, such a possibility for individual differentiation in Beckett’s play articulates alternatives to what Camus describes as responses to the confrontation with the absurd. Bennett reads the world of Beckett’s text as “kind” insofar as it “will not let its inhabitants pass up the chance to live and be themselves.”⁶² Such a redemptive reading, though, projects good will upon the goad and takes for granted that it regulates and subjugates the Mimes’ existences. Bennett makes a virtue of their forced participation in life – of the performance of meaningless tasks that merely perpetuates their own subjection. Rendering this meaningless productivity as beneficial to the Mimes’ lives and naturalizing the violence of coercion as a universal given rather than a recent historical reality amplifies liberal humanism and its capitalistic underpinning. Anticipating Winnie in Beckett’s *Happy Days* (1961), who, as I have argued elsewhere, embraces the administration of her corporeal being as a means to keep busy and distract herself from the horror of her own entropy, the goad and the “work” that the Mimes undertake are violent

⁶⁰ The “absurd” interpretation of Beckett was most famously argued by critic Martin Esslin, first in a 1960 *TDR* essay and then in his influential book *The Theatre of the Absurd*. Esslin’s argument is that the expressions of a group of postwar avant-garde playwrights including Beckett, Eugène Ionesco, Jean Genet, and (in a revised 1980 edition) Harold Pinter are best described via Albert Camus’s definition of “the absurd.” In his 1942 essay, Camus uses the myth of Sisyphus, doomed to forever push a massive boulder up a cliff only to have it tumble back down the mountainside when he reaches the top, as a metaphor for a particular feeling and condition of life under modernity as futile and potentially meaningless. For Esslin, each of the playwrights he examines give form to and comment upon this condition. Albert Camus, “The Myth of Sisyphus,” in *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays*, trans. Justin O’Brien (New York: Vintage, 1991), 1–138; Martin Esslin, “The Theatre of the Absurd,” *Tulane Drama Review* 4, no. 4 (May 1960): 3–15; Martin Esslin, *The Theatre of the Absurd* (New York: Vintage, 2004).

⁶¹ “Aus Urnen ragen Menschenköpfe,” *Weser Kurier* (Bremen), June, 21 1963, DT.

⁶² Michael Y. Bennett, “The Response to the Offstage Presence in Beckett’s ‘Act Without Words I’ and ‘Act Without Words II,’” *ANQ: A Quarterly Journal of Short Articles, Notes, and Reviews* 25, no. 1 (2012): 17.

instruments that cause them to normalize and constitute their subjectivity through the internalization of regulation.⁶³

The philosophizing that the exceptional ordinariness of the Mimes' tasks invites also functions to paper over the extremity of wartime memories of labor and their significance for contemporary politics. "Extermination through labor" was a key step toward the systematic slaughter of Nazi "undesirables." Implemented in mid-1941 by the SS in Nazi-occupied Soviet territory and then carried out across the Greater Reich by 1942, the SS transported Jews and other prisoners to labor camps in which the SS hoped they would literally work until they exhausted themselves and the Nazi's economic use for them. The SS pushed the logic of capitalism to a dark apogee, coercing capitalist production to the point of liquidating the alienated worker.⁶⁴ Further, the work of putting on the provided clothes itself constitutes an act of subjections and reflects the way Nazis utilized clothing like uniforms to shame, demoralize, and depersonalize individual prisoners.⁶⁵ Even if the Mimes only put on the clothing to remove them, they are compelled to do so as part of their process of literally getting on with their lives, to satisfy the offstage presence, and move the sacks away from visibility. Whether they do so morosely (as in Mime A) or cheerily (as in Mime B) ultimately makes little difference. Resistance to depersonalization is futile as either approach will still lead the Mimes (if their act continues as is implied) off the stage – to eventually extinguish themselves from visibility.

Beckett literalizes the injunction to labor most horrifically and famously distilled in the Nazi slogan "work sets you free" (*arbeit macht frei*) wrought in iron over the entrance to

⁶³ Nic Barilar, "Beckett's Queer Time of *Défaillance*: Ritual and Resistance in *Happy Days*," in *Beckett Beyond the Normal*, ed. Seán Kennedy (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020), 105–16.

⁶⁴ Longerich, 314–20.

⁶⁵ Taylor, 328, 330.

Auschwitz.⁶⁶ In what McNaughton charts as a consistent tactic in Beckett's postwar work, the play ironizes Nazi political rhetoric by taking slogans to their logical and extreme ends: total instrumentation and loss of subjectivity.⁶⁷ For McNaughton, "Beckett's bodies in bins [as in *Endgame*] and urns [as in *Play*] provides a powerful literal image of nonidentity, remnants, the unbearable truth of what rational systems can also produce: disposable subjects."⁶⁸ By evoking the Holocaust in the embodiment of coerced and rather meaningless but quotidian labor for its own sake, *AWWII* blurs the distinctions between the Nazi past and capitalist present. Coalescing the memory of Nazi atrocity with a model of Cold War-era habitus, the play suggests that the self-destructive economic and social models that helped bring about the catastrophes of fascism continue to be enacted in the postwar era, a claim Adorno forwarded.⁶⁹ Beckett's mime play echoes his earlier satire of liberal capitalism in the novel *L'Innommable/The Unnameable* (1953/1958) that, according to McNaughton, "confronts postwar confidence in regulated capitalism with the question of whether the logic of capital extraction might find it expedient to eliminate the unproductive."⁷⁰ At the same time, this elision is also what invites philosophical interpretations that encroach on memories of the Holocaust and the war, obscuring and forgetting them. Even if analyses that abstract the play into universal humanism are flawed and model the dangers of enlightenment rationality, the play nevertheless allows it to happen, demonstrating how active forgetting occurs while problematically performing that process itself. In this

⁶⁶ Christoph Buchheim and Jonas Scherner, "The Role of Private Property in the Nazi Economy: The Case of Industry," *Journal of Economic History* 66, no.1 (June 2006): 390–416; John K. Roth, "Holocaust Business: Some Reflections on Arbeit Macht Frei," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 450 (July 1980): 68–82; Claus-Christian W. Szejnmann, "Nazi Economic Thought and Rhetoric During the Weimar Republic: Capitalism and its Discontents," *Politics, Religion, and Ideology* 14, no. 3 (September 2013): 255–76.

⁶⁷ McNaughton, 8, 12–16, 66–7, 84–5, 90, 101–2, 138–41. See also Nixon, 84–99.

⁶⁸ McNaughton, 83.

⁶⁹ Theodor W. Adorno, "Education After Auschwitz," in *Never Again!: The Holocaust's Challenge to Educators*, eds. Helmut Schreier and Mattias Heyl (Hamburg: Krämer, 1997), 11–20. See also Kansteiner, 105.

⁷⁰ McNaughton, 114.

production at least, *AWWII* could move silenced memories into the consciousness of the spectators only to allow them to be censoriously repressed again.

If the performance of work-as-life contributed to interpretive approaches that flatten political difference even as it literalized politics and recalled recent horrors, the form of mime and the way it was performed in *AWWII* likewise worked to both subtly summon memories of Nazi crimes against people with disabilities through surrogation only to blur them simultaneously. As Simpson argues, Beckett's postwar staging of ill, pained, immobile, "or simply physically maladapted bodies" puts center stage those that fascist cultures in Germany and Vichy France excluded from cultural and national life for their illnesses and impairments. Simpson holds that the "maladapted bodies" in Beckett resist the fascist aesthetics of corporeality "based on the containment of vital forces; movements are confined, held tight, held in," as exemplified by the fit, abled, and coordinated body.⁷¹ The silence of Mime A, together with his wartime iconography and various physical struggles (moving the sacks, the difficulty of putting on the clothes, and the performed strain of mobility) fails to measure up to fascist aesthetics of bodily normalcy.

As early as 1920, German legal scholar Karl Binding and psychiatrist Alfred Hoche proposed euthanasia as a practical if radical solution to the "problem" of Germany's people with disabilities, labeling them as "life unworthy of life." Combining then in-vogue eugenic science with legal and economic theories, the pair and their supporters held that those with disabilities were not only "unproductive" members of society but negated value. To them, people with disabilities were *ballastexistenzen* – beings who are nothing but ballast to be jettisoned from life. Nazis adopted many of their arguments and accepted eugenic euthanasia "as a logical outgrowth

⁷¹ Simpson, "Waiting," 168.

of the cost-benefit analysis at the heart of race hygiene” that animated the Nazi cause. The Reich’s radical attempt to censor “unworthy life” from the national community led to compulsory sterilization, euthanasia, and mass murder of people with disabilities across Europe. Deaf and mute people were among those the regime systematically murdered, and, like the Jews, they were marked in the camps with a specific badge labeled *Taubstumm* and generally categorized as “retarded” because of their inability to communicate in the normative ways the Reich expected. The victims included children and newborn infants as well, with Nazis seizing children from hospitals and even schools for the deaf without their parents’ consent. Murdered in assembly-line fashion in secret gas chambers or simply starved to death or euthanized via lethal drugging, the SS adopted many of the practices the Nazis developed for the elimination of people with disabilities for the genocide of the Jews.⁷²

The purging of art that represented bodies that deviated from Nazi ideals was a key part of Hitler’s aim of actualizing inequality through exclusion. Through the Reich Chamber of Culture, Minister for Propaganda Joseph Goebbels oversaw art’s instrumentation for the benefit of the Nazi project. As with all of the Reich’s propagandistic censorship, from book burnings to laws governing who could and could not work as an artist or even advertise their art, the Nazis curated culture to build consensus. The infamous art “Degenerate Art” exhibition highlighted, as Simpson notes, both artwork that represented people with disabilities as well as modernist art that stylized the human body into “unnatural” forms. The burning of cubist paintings followed.

⁷² Friedlander, *Origins*, 14–17, 23–85; Mark Zaurov, “‘Deaf Holocaust’: Deaf Jews and Their ‘True’ Communication in the Nazi Concentration Camps,” in *Interpreting the Nazi Concentration Camps*, ed. Michaela Wolf (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 141; Patricia Heberer, “Targeting the ‘Unfit’ and Radical Public Health Strategies in Nazi Germany,” in *Deaf People in Hitler’s Europe*, ed. Donna F. Ryan and John S. Schuchman (Washington, D. C.: Gallaudet University Press, 2002), 70n40.

The Nazis also banned plays that depicted physical impairment from the stage.⁷³ As Mark Nixon has shown, Beckett was particularly aware of the Nazi war on modern art and body aesthetics thanks to his trip through the Reich, during which he meticulously studied visual art.⁷⁴

As in the case of the Holocaust, after the war, a series of prosecutions against those who had organized and carried out the euthanasia programs went to court, raising public awareness of Nazi crimes against people with disabilities. But as with the Holocaust, too, from 1947 through the early 1960s, after West Germans began trying the cases themselves, defendants tended to face more and more lenient treatment at court. Portrayed as accomplices to the regime rather than perpetrators, those brought to trial received milder sentences and even acquittals. Many who were prosecuted returned to medical practice after their trials, contributing to Adenauer's goal of reintegrating "compromised elites," prosecuting "the lower-class sadists within the... camp system," and unifying German society.⁷⁵ Legally speaking, the people with disabilities who suffered under the Nazis did not come to be recognized as persecuted persons. They received no restitution for their time in killing centers or for Nazi-mandated sterilization. In 1950 and 1964, West German courts denied the appeals of two sterilized deaf individuals, the latter case on the grounds that the diagnosis of congenital deafness was accurate.⁷⁶ There was surely knowledge of the Nazi crimes against people with disabilities in Ulm, where Dr. Irmfried Eberl, director of the

⁷³ Guenter Lewy, *Harmful and Undesirable: Book Censorship in Nazi Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 28–9; Peter Jelavich, "Metamorphoses of Censorship in Modern Germany," *German Politics and Society* 27 (Fall 1992): 28; Simpson, "Waiting," 159.

⁷⁴ Nixon, 132–61.

⁷⁵ Michael S. Bryant, *Confronting the "Good Death": Nazi Euthanasia on Trial, 1945–1953* (Boulder: University of Colorado Press, 2005), 217–18, 162, 146.

⁷⁶ Henry Friedlander, "Holocaust Studies and the Deaf Community," in *Deaf People in Hitler's Europe*, ed. Donna F. Ryan and John S. Schuchman (Washington, D. C.: Gallaudet University Press, 2002), 28–9.

killing centers in Brandenburg and Bernburg and camp commandant at the Treblinka extermination camp, committed suicide in an Ulm prison while awaiting trial in 1948.⁷⁷

The silent mime-characters in Beckett's plays carry these histories with them, and the actors transmit them through their embodied silence. This element of the performance was yet another marker of the past in the present, with Beckett literally putting center stage (or rather, on stage right at the curtain's rise) bodies would have been marked for exclusion for their silence. Again, though, critics nervously tilted away from interpreting the mime-characters and their muteness in such a literal way that would call attention to the material politics of the body and its history. As was the case for this production, generally, critics surmised the Mimes' suffering was part of a philosophical human tragicomedy of errors.

Disability theorist Ato Quayson's claim that Beckett commentators' "almost subliminal move *away* from accounting for the *reality* and discomfort of the body as such" and as "marker[s] for something else" – namely existential phenomenology and deconstructive anti-humanism – holds true in this case. Quayson's own analysis of *Endgame* reviews notes how critics allegorize Hamm's blindness and wheelchair dependence as general conditions of human absurdity and the like.⁷⁸ These kinds of interpretations are made all the easier, as Patrick Bixby argues, when the actors playing characters with disabilities are able-bodied.⁷⁹ Although the mime-characters are quite literally mute, and although Mendel performed his roles with a pained strain, in neither *Act Without Words I* or *II* do the characters have objects, costumes, or dialogue that clearly pinpoints them as character with disabilities, as in *Endgame*. Rather, the form of

⁷⁷ Bryant, 59–61.

⁷⁸ Ato Quayson, *Aesthetic Nervousness: Disability and the Crisis of Representation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 55–6, emphasis in original.

⁷⁹ Patrick Bixby, "this... this... thing: The *Endgame* Project, Corporeal Difference, and the Ethics of Witnessing," *Journal of Beckett Studies* 27, no. 1 (April 2018): 117.

pantomime and the clowning tradition facilitated the critic's capacity to overlook the reality of their muteness and other potential physical disabilities as material conditions loaded with political meaning and history. Where Beckett experienced how fascists wielded an aesthetics of the body to eliminate certain bodies from national imaginaries and communities, Beckett wields aesthetic forms to occlude politics – once again modeling how aesthetics can invite a perverse logic that erases difference and history.

None of the reviews I have seen for the 1963 performances at the Ulmer discuss or even mention the silence of the mime-characters as silent bodies. For some, the brief “work day” that Beckett gives the Mimes condensed the human experience: “The senselessness of humans carrying out daily tasks [in *AWWII*] becomes particularly clear in this pantomimic perfection.... [In *Act Without Words I*] Mendel played Beckett's nihilistic defiance as overwhelming resignation, which let the viewer feel pity rather than the intuition of his watching his own ‘Condition humaine’” as was the case in *AWWII*.⁸⁰ The form of pantomime is the vehicle that allows critics to substitute the particular politics of the Mimes' silence for philosophical categories precisely because of its power to distill and represent action through embodied aesthetics. The “pantomimic” form itself allows spectators to interpret and distill a few minutes of toil as “the perpetual repetition of daily work and the daily struggle,” as another critic put it.⁸¹

Others circuit their interpretations through clownery, which similarly led the critics to abstract the mime-characters. For one, “Both of the skits originate directly from the tradition of great clownery, whose longstanding favorite topic, the cussedness of things, is the topic in a nutshell.”⁸² Clowning – the act and the genre – functioned to provide thematic interpretations

⁸⁰ Moser, “Theologie,” *Stuttgarter Zeitung*.

⁸¹ Menck, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*.

⁸² Menck, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*.

with philosophical implications. *AWWI* has Mime A fumble through the routine of putting on and taking off his clothes (which Beckett labels in the script as “gags”) after the goad prods him.⁸³ The objects act upon him and present problems in themselves that blur the location of subjectivity. Similarly, in *Act Without Words I (AWWI)*, a single Mime (also played by Mendel) is at the mercy of an offstage presence that tortures and conditions him. For his first entrance, he appears as if hurled from offstage into the bare space. Whistles from offstage prompt him to exit, only to be flung back onto the stage. This sequence repeats on the opposite side of the stage. Upon the third whistle, he moves to exit but hesitates before halting. The whole play proceeds in more or less this manner, with the offstage force dropping objects to him through the theatre’s fly system which might help him but are either pulled away from him, fail to function properly, or fail to help him.⁸⁴ Mary Bryden notes that clowning is constituted by the enactment of certain formulas that the clown replays with variable differences. Among these is a pattern of repetitious failures that beg the question of whether or not the clown can ever succeed, “trapped in a process which *forces* them to endure what no right-minded person would tolerate.”⁸⁵ Here, aesthetic conventions become an anchor for attempts at interpretation.⁸⁶ If the mime-characters are surrogates for the chasms left in history’s undertow, if they bring forward into the present literal and implicit reminders of the exclusionary, censorious past and resuscitate memory, the

⁸³ Beckett, “*Act Without Words II*,” 43.

⁸⁴ Samuel Beckett, “*Act Without Words I*,” in *The Collected Shorter Plays* (New York: Grove Press, 2010), 35–40.

⁸⁵ Mary Bryden, “Clowning with Beckett,” in *A Companion to Samuel Beckett*, ed. S. E. Gontarski (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 365, 367.

⁸⁶ Another incident that may have influenced the way Ulmer audiences interpreted Beckett’s clowns was the controversy surrounding the Heinrich Böll’s novel *The Clown*, which he published in early 1963, just a few months prior to the performance of Beckett’s plays. The novel provoked national outcry for its criticism of the Catholic Church’s hypocrisy during and after the war. A professional clown is the novel’s cynical protagonist and its narrator. Given Böll’s influence on the German imagining of Ireland, there are multiple layers to investigate here. I flag this possibility as a potential site for additional research. See also Michael Butler, “‘*Ansichten eines Clowns*’: The Fool and the Labyrinth,” in *The Narrative Fiction of Heinrich Böll: Social Conscience and Literary Achievement*, ed. Michael Butler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 132–52; Robert C. Conard, *Understanding Heinrich Böll* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1992), 1–33, 79–88.

processes of understanding that the performances themselves invite lead the critical spectator away from those histories.

But what memories might *AWWI* have conjured? First, it's worth remembering that in the 1963 production at Ulm, this play performed after *AWWII*. The audience would have already been confronted with iconography that evoked the camps, and Mendel's silence in both, I hold, put under the stage's bright lights bodies that were consigned to darkness in the Reich. In the transition from *AWWII* to *AWWI*, though, Mendel did not look the same. There are no suggestions in the reviews that he was the same mime-character across the two plays. When he flung himself onto the stage for *AWWI*, he now wore a long, thick, double-breasted coat and removed the bald-cap, revealing his neat, short light hair. His eyes now also appear even more sunken, even cavernous and skull-like. The coat, in particular, is reminiscent (but not an exact match) of the Nazi greatcoat – light gray, complete with a thick collar and buttoned to the neck, but shorn of its epaulettes and other embellishments.⁸⁷ In the demilitarization of German culture following the war, the occupying American government banned uniform wearing in the zone, including in Ulm, but made an exception for former uniforms that wouldn't be recognized as uniforms. The uniforms weren't only worn by ex-soldiers and military personnel. During the final years of the regime, when the war had made resources scarce, German civilians took to wearing discarded military gear, or repurposed their fabrics to make other clothes. A huge number of people suddenly had to dye and alter their uniforms by set deadlines. In Ulm, the mayor urged all local tailors to set aside all other work to alter uniforms. Upon receiving word

⁸⁷ Photograph by Stefan Odry, "Deryk Mendel in Becketts « Spiel ohne Worte I »,” *Theatre Heute*, date unknown, 1963, 10, DT.

from US authorities, Ulm police announced they would enforce the ban through arrest.⁸⁸ Many spectators in Ulm would have likely remembered such days.⁸⁹

Despite their potential potency as political signifiers from the recent past, Mendel's performance contributed to its obfuscation and abstraction.⁹⁰ One critic noted that Mendel played his part in *AWWI* "with a Buster Keaton poker face," and another found Mendel moved "grotesquely" in *AWWII*, "like a silent movie."⁹¹ Keaton, the silent movie star, was well-known globally for performing dangerous stunts and highly physical roles with a blank, placid facial expression. Beckett was, in fact, a fan of silent movies and was very familiar with the era's comedic stars like Keaton and Charlie Chaplin, whose films he saw when he was a student in Dublin.⁹² The critic follows the reference to Keaton with a description of *AWWI* that focuses on Mendel's physical style and tempo, two key elements of clowning that help distinguish one

⁸⁸ Nawyn, 297–307.

⁸⁹ Alternatively, Mendel's coat may have resembled a Soviet greatcoat or wartime greatcoats generally. More research is necessary on international uniforms in the West German imagination in order to tease this out.

⁹⁰ As I mentioned in note 20, there is precious little on Mendel's career. One of the biggest lingering questions I have about the contents of this chapter relates to Mendel's politics and how he might have related them to his art. The listing of the materials in his archive reveal much and make me all the more eager to study there someday. He worked on a wide range of performances. In addition to the mimes and *Play*, Mendel directed several other Beckett plays in Germany including the German translations of *Happy Days* in 1964, *Waiting for Godot* in 1965, *Endgame* around 1965, and *All That Fall*, *Krapp's Last Tape* (1958), *Come and Go* (1966, the world premiere), and the television play *Eh, Joe* (1966) all in 1966. In 1962 he choreographed the German premiere of Manuel de Falla's opera *Atlántida* (1961) at the West Berlin Opera. Just after staging and performing the Beckett plays in Ulm, he directed Peter Weiss's short play *Night with Guests* (1963), a highly symbolic and stylized piece in which a robber breaks into a family's house and everyone but the family's children end up dead after fighting over a treasure chest that ultimately only contains turnips. Mendel followed this piece with the French musical comedy *Irma la Douce* (1956) back at the Ulmer. He would go on to choreograph the original production of Weiss's *Marat/Sade* (1964) at the Schiller Theater in West Berlin. In 1964, he also directed Frenchman Gabriel Cousin's *The Drama of Fukuryu-Maru* (1964?), a play about the effects of fallout from nuclear weapons, in Brussels. Mendel also regularly performed as a whiteface mime called Frolo (from the villain from Victor Hugo's *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame* [1831]) in Paris. Before I leap to any conclusions about the politics of Mendel's work, more research is necessary. "Fonds Deryk Mendel (1920–2013)," Archival listing, *Bibliothèque nationale de France*, accessed June 23, 2021, <https://archivesetmanuscrits.bnf.fr/exportBranchePdf.html?eadCid=FRBNFEAD000099780>. See also, "Notes de mise en scène manuscrites de Deryk Mendel," Deryk Mendel Papers, BNF/4-COL-251(19); Knowlson, 376, 468–9; Peter Weiss, "Night with Guests," in *The Best Short Plays, 1968*, ed. Stanley Richards, trans. Laurence Dobie (Philadelphia: Chilton Books, 1968), 131–58.

⁹¹ Menck, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*; Rumler, *Abendzeitung*.

⁹² Knowlson, 71. One year after the Ulmer production, Beckett would work with Keaton who was as the protagonist in Beckett's only film, *Film*. See Knowlson, 464–7.

clown from another. Keaton's silent film antics ghosted Mendel's stoic performance of repetitious failure, shaping the critic's response.⁹³ The silence of the aesthetic form, the actor's physicality, and their cultural associations provide critical frameworks that operatively shroud or distance the material performance from wartime memories and politics. Although this may work as a critique in and of itself, the acts of theatre and interpretation also performed the social function of repressing or censoring memories, preserving historical denial and the logic and structures that sustain it, and reinforcing West German identity through exclusion.

4.2 Beckett's Dramaturgy of Complicity

Clowning presents another problem with historical and political resonance for the West German audience watching *AWWI* and *II* at the Ulmer Theater. Actor, mime, teacher, and performance theorist Jacques Lecoq argued that if the clown never succeeds at his attempted tasks, even accidentally, the performance begins "tipping over into the tragic."⁹⁴ The mime-characters in *AWWII* only succeed insofar as they get the goad to stop prodding them and delay their coerced movement across the stage and into oblivion, eternity, or exhaustion. In *AWWI*, the solitary Mime fails at nearly everything. After the fly system lowers the representation of a palm tree – a flat, theatrical scenic element painted in a non-realistic way – and transforms the bare, brightly lit stage into a desert of self-conscious metatheatricality, the offstage presence lowers a carafe with a large label reading "WATER" (or, "WASSER," in German). Throughout the play,

⁹³ On "ghosting," see Marvin Carlson, *The Haunted Stage: Theatre as Memory Machine* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001), 1–15.

⁹⁴ Qtd. in Bryden, 365.

the carafe remains just out of reach. The offstage presence even gives him tools like wooden blocks and a rope to help reach it. When the Mime does not frustrate his own efforts, the offstage force does, withdrawing items and creating more distance to the water. At the end of the play, the Mime no longer responds to the theatrical prompts. Seemingly no longer able to tempt him, the offstage being withdraws the tree and the water. Left alone on the stage, the Mime looks at his hands as the curtain falls. The play's conclusion is, as Michael Palmese argues, utterly ambiguous. There is no certainty that the Mime has escaped the coercive power structure he inhabits, has given up, or if he will eventually allow himself to be caught up in the theatre's machinations again.⁹⁵ The play frustrates the success/failure binary for limbo. All that remains is struggle, suffering, or a chasm of vapidty. And in the darkness of the auditorium a community of onlookers witnesses this violence, feels things through it, ponders it, and give it reason.

If the act of interpretation and other responses are a part of the performance event, the plays actually interpolate their audience into the dramaturgy of the performance and do so to political effect. Beckett's mime-characters are trapped in structures that force them to endure what no one would tolerate, as Bryden muses of clowns generally. By placing suffering bodies within the material medium of theatre before a live audience, Beckett lays bare how theatrical aesthetics and conventions model the politics of complicity. For both McNaughton and Simpson, Beckett utilizes the norms of western performance etiquette to entrap audiences into implicitly condoning the pained spasms and futile efforts against Beckett's torturous theatrical environments and scenarios: "the audience's prurient gaze implicates them as voyeurs," as I've previously argued.⁹⁶ For McNaughton, Beckett's metatheatrical dramaturgy instrumentalizes

⁹⁵ Palmese, 426.

⁹⁶ Barilar, 108.

theatre to show “that passivity toward individual suffering and historical catastrophe has been democratized” in an age of unyielding suffering.⁹⁷ For Simpson, Beckett’s postwar theatre suggests people “are more likely... to perpetuate the suffering of others – even by dint of inaction – than to prevent it.”⁹⁸ Indeed, for performance phenomenologist Stanford B. Garner, Jr., argues, “spectacle is set into motion by our gaze – we sanction this being-present through our applause, our laughter, even the attentiveness of our silence.”⁹⁹

The enactment of this dramaturgy has profound implications in the West German context, where the nation largely continued to deny that everyday Germans had anything to do with the evil of the Nazi regime. In this version of history, they were powerless to stop Hitler and his brutes, and were, themselves, equal victims of wartime terror. If the dangerous abstracting and universalizing Beckett’s plays invite can function as technologies of forgetting, so, too, can this reduction or obscuring of the political encourage bizarre systems of identification that perpetuate historical denial and self-victimization. In this formulation, the plays evoke Nazi crimes, but the plays’ utilization of non-identity, genre conventions, and the like elicit general humanist interpretations that ignore history and politics. Through this interpretive maneuver, spectators can implicitly surrogate themselves in the place of those who didn’t survive, were excluded, and have vanished but for their lingering memory. Beckett’s plays implicated audiences in violence but also allowed them to blur their own culpability by flattening distinctions between political experiences. The plays moved radically censored subjects and memories to the stage only to have audiences surrogate them with themselves, effectively censoring the censored.

⁹⁷ McNaughton, 90.

⁹⁸ Hannah Simpson, “‘He wants to know if it hurts!’: Suffering Beyond Redemption in *Waiting for Godot*,” in *Beckett Beyond the Normal*, ed. Seán Kennedy (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020), 80.

⁹⁹ Stanford B. Garner, Jr., *Bodied Spaces: Phenomenology and Performance in Contemporary Drama* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 49.

In all three of the plays that Mendel staged for the 1963 production in Ulm, Beckett uses theatrical stagecraft to model and subject the characters to forms of coercion. The goad prods them to action in *AWWII* – perhaps a sinister opposite to the classic image of the vaudeville-era hook that pulled bad acts offstage.¹⁰⁰ The fly system and offstage presence tortures the Mime with tantalizing objects that could relieve him from his situation in *AWWI*.¹⁰¹ A spotlight prompts the urned lovers (itself another image of death and ash) in *Play* to speak, as in an interrogation or “police protocols,” as one critic described it.¹⁰² The very theatricality of each of these tools rendered them in symbolic terms for the critics. For one critic, the spotlight in *Play* was “a higher authority, unknown and merciless, [who] tortures” the characters.¹⁰³ Another called the offstage forces in the mime plays “an evil power” and “a god, an evil, an unrecognizable, a misleading god” who demands they conduct their absurd labor in *AWWII* and acts like a “devilish” tempter in *AWWI*.¹⁰⁴ While this latter reading particularly abstracts and even spiritualizes the theatrical implements, neither acknowledges how they structure power and politics by theatrical means.

That omission is important. Part of Beckett’s gambit in these plays is that repetition normalizes violence, cushioning its impact upon the spectator and subsuming it into an expected, natural order that is no longer questioned. Repetitions abound in these three plays. For this, the world premiere of *Play*, Beckett wrote that the entire play should be performed in its entirety at least twice through. Under Mendel’s production, it began for a third time before the curtain

¹⁰⁰ On the vaudeville hook, see David Monod, *Vaudeville and the Making of Modern Entertainment, 1890–1925* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2020), 109.

¹⁰¹ *AWWI* resembles the Tantalus myth, wherein the Gods condemn a man to stand in a body of water for eternity, but no matter how much he drinks, he is unable to slake his thirst. Cohn, 218.

¹⁰² Samuel Beckett, “*Play*,” in *The Collected Shorter Plays* (New York: Grove Press, 2010), 147–62; Rumler, *Abendzeitung*.

¹⁰³ Goldschmit, *Der Tagesspiegel*.

¹⁰⁴ Kaiser, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*.

fell.¹⁰⁵ Sitting in their urns, with only the actors' heads (two women and one man) exposed, when the spotlight hits them, they begin talking. Together, they come to tell the story of a typical love affair, where the man has cheated on his wife or partner with a mistress. In the production, they spoke rapidly and in a strict monotone, immediately speaking once the light hit them. Critics recorded a distinct tonal shift in the house of the theatre when the repeat began: "it was heard as tiring;" "In the first text round, the audience tried to pull themselves out of the affair by some laughter. The second time, it sank, more in stupor than in distress;" "Boredom sneaks into the monotonous pattern;" "The first time, the audience followed with excitement. The second time, they succumbed to the extra-artistic monotony."¹⁰⁶ For the critics, these purgatorial repetitions revealed that even the stuff of melodrama – the revelation of an affair – here, in a space most took to be beyond death, becomes deadly dull. For one critic, Beckett and Mendel "claimed that the dullest of all types stand for life."¹⁰⁷ The repetition mutes the coercive violence that drives the play, gives it its form, and allows spectators to all but ignore both the power of the spotlight and the characters' painful confinement. Reducing this violence to a universal absurdity takes for granted the constant threat of persecution and policing some groups face (and faced in the recent history of Germany). Suffering becomes banal with time even when people are witnesses to it. As one critic wrote, "One has got used to the living corpses inside of barrels, sand heaps, or urns."¹⁰⁸ Indeed.

As Simpson notes, Beckett was witness to a remarkably unrelenting succession of violence and human suffering. For Beckett, there was little evidence to suggest that new waves

¹⁰⁵ Goldschmit, *Der Tagesspiegel*.

¹⁰⁶ Goldschmit, *Der Tagesspiegel*; R. T., *Frankfurter Rundschau*; Bayer; Kaiser, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*.

¹⁰⁷ R. T., *Frankfurter Rundschau*.

¹⁰⁸ "Die Eingeurnten," *Christ und die Welt*.

of violence would deter it from happening again, nor that people would necessarily be keen to intervene. His early years were witness to the Irish revolutionary period and Civil War alongside the mechanized carnage of the First World War. The Spanish Civil War soon followed, then, by the cataclysm of the Second World War, the Holocaust, and the atomic bomb. Victory in Europe Day coincided with the outbreak of imperialist violence in French North Africa. Decolonial wars followed, including the War for Algerian Independence, which saw great turmoil in Beckett's adopted city of Paris. Violence circulated like a revolving door. Beckett's postwar drama transmits and models this pessimism, integrating the spectator into his dramaturgy to interrogate passivity.¹⁰⁹ The crux is that the plays invite a certain degree of passivity and complicity through their theatrical form and inducement to apolitical interpretation. And, as in the previous section, in practice these dynamics embedded in Beckett's dramaturgy jeopardize the critique of violence, politics, and interpretation that Beckett seeks to make.

In the 1963 production, they did this in part through the collapse of difference and universalizing of the characters, which eased the process of identification. For instance, one commentator reduced the particularities of *Play* down to a "demonstration" of "the total absurdity of existence." The entombed triad of lovers compelled to retell their story by an external force becomes a metaphoric model for all existence. To this same critic, the pantomimes stand for the universal "perpetual repetition of daily work and the daily struggle" that exemplifies life writ large."¹¹⁰ Rather than material, silent individuals with particular historical and political resonances who are subjected to torturous conditions, the critic naturalizes the violence and universalizes it. Likewise, for another reviewer, *AWWI* expressed "the

¹⁰⁹ Simpson, "He wants," 80. See also: Gibson, *Samuel*; Knowlson; Morin, *Beckett's*.

¹¹⁰ Menck, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*.

mechanization of life... as well as literally the condition of 'being tossed' of the human being."¹¹¹ All of these reviews turn the characters into relatable everybodies. Attempting to comprehend the plays, they bridged the material differences between spectator and performer.

By allowing the spectator to identify with the performers and their conditions, the plays also allow spectators to collapse differences between the two. The spectator fills a vacancy in the model of politics that Beckett's plays provides but those same plays also invite reductive interpretations that allow audiences to identify with the over-determined subjects onstage. This slippage between the spectator and the embodied character is where the plays' dramaturgy can – perhaps inadvertently – become a technology of forgetting. Identification erases the specificity of the mime plays' Holocaust and wartime iconography, the characters' different, pained, silent bodies, their over-determined subjugation by script, clothing, and the theatrical apparatuses that press upon them (or, in the case of *Play*, the characters' confinement, their status as "living corpses," and their extorted speech). By positing sameness, the problem of complicity gets buried because the spectator takes their own role in the dramaturgy for granted. In this logic, the drama takes place for them, not through them. Here, then, the audience can imagine themselves as just as subjugated "to life" as Beckett's characters are to the authority of the offstage presences. In this model of politics, all but the all-powerful authority are imprisoned, permitting the audience to silence the characters' particularities and differences and actively forget the histories they might conjure. Never mind that, however rude it might be, a spectator can still run from the theatre screaming while the character is consigned to inhabit the stage until the actor drops it or the curtain severs it from the audience's sanctioning gaze.

¹¹¹ Dannecker, *Main-Post*.

Reviews also suggest that some in the audience likely felt identification with the Mime in *AWWI* as well as the offstage torturer. According to one critic, “The audience watched [*AWWI*] tensely with bated breath. The mere theatrical procedure and the way in which the human reactions were portrayed captivated the audience. Children burying a beetle must ask a similarly sadistic question: Will he be able to get out of this?”¹¹² The suggestion that the audience identified with the torturous offstage manipulator speaks to the mutually-constitutive politics of authoritative violence. It’s as if the performance enacts its cruelty not only for the audience’s amusement, but by their very approval. In this review, though, there’s some recognition that audiences shared the offstage torturer’s perspective, fascinated by the suffering before them and desirous to see the outcome, whether the Mime makes it out or not. The critic does not place the audience’s sympathy squarely with the oppressor, however. By condensing the Mime down to the category of “the human” and noting that his reactions are what attract fascination, the critic also implies a shared connection with the Mime. Beckett said that he hoped his play *Not I* (1972) would “work on the nerves of the audience, not its intellect.”¹¹³ That critics described the audience themselves as “impatient” and “disgruntled” as often as they were arrested and captivated speaks to the idea that the play acted upon the audience. Their ambivalent emotional cues and moods mark the anxiety of these split, multiple forms of identification with offstage perpetrator, onstage victim, and confused spectating accomplice/victim. Collapsing distinctions between audience and victim, and audience and perpetrator, and the audience as a separate entity, the play’s interpolative dramaturgy can also scramble neat identifications. This model of politics, though, nevertheless participates in a kind of nihilistic humanism that figures all parties

¹¹² Rumler, *Abendzeitung*.

¹¹³ Qtd. in Enoch Brater, “The ‘I’ in Beckett’s *Not I*,” *Twentieth Century Literature* 20, no. 3 (July 1974): 200.

as potentially both responsible for and victims of violence – except, perhaps, for the offstage presence, which remains powerful and essentially unaffected by the violence below.

Even this last example that finds the audience sitting side-by-side with both torturer and victim, though, reflects the counter-mythology of national German victimhood thanks to the all-powerful theatrical apparatus. Facilitated in part by brushing aside differences in subject positions within the theatre through the process of interpretation, interpolation, and identification (however messy or even), audiences positioned themselves on level ground with the characters, hindering political confrontation with the histories and memories of censorship, exclusion, and murder they evoked. This act of surrogation eased forgetting in its implicit side-saddling of those who suffered under the hands of authoritarian power while the demos sat not-quite-idly by. Although reviews suggest this process varied in degree and that audiences could split their identification across multiple agents, the effect remains: perpetuating myths of universal victimhood across categories of difference and covering up traumatic memories.

4.3 The Irish Parabolic: Beckett's Plays at the Ulmer as a Transnational Cultural Production

There is one final element of this production I wish to briefly examine, and that's the potential influence of Beckett's imagined Irishness on the production's reception. As I explained earlier, West Germans knew Beckett was Irish. They also knew that Beckett, himself, had attended rehearsals, and that Beckett and Mendel were friends. Two critics also reported that

Beckett was pleased to give his explicit approval of the performance.¹¹⁴ These personal and professional connections gave the production a sense of authorial authenticity and so the idea of or imagined “Beckett” may have weighed a little heavier on the imagination of the Ulmer audience, the critics, and their responses to the performance. Whether or not Beckett’s relationship with Mendel or his work on the play brought Ireland any further to the foreground is uncertain but entirely possible.

That some reviewers brought up Beckett’s Irish heritage in their assessments of the production suggest it was on the minds of at least some when they saw and attempted to interpret the show. For instance, musing over Beckett’s choice to situate the characters in *Play* in urns rather than toilets or the morgue, one critic pondered, “the morgue might have appeared to the Irish parabolic, who for a decade has condensed the absurdity of human turmoil into poetry, inappropriately naturalistic.”¹¹⁵ Another suggested that the plays “focus on the Irishman Beckett’s central theme: the decrepit creatureliness of human beings,” implicitly tying thematic content to the author’s national origin.¹¹⁶

So, what cultural work might the West Germans’ imagined versions of Ireland and the Irish have performed upon the plays?¹¹⁷ I argue that the most likely answer to this question is that Ireland served as an interpretive tool that, once again, helped audiences understand the plays as metaphors for philosophical conditions rather than literal or analogous renderings of politics and historical suffering. The moniker “the Irish parabolic” suggests as much by calling Beckett a

¹¹⁴ Moser, “In den Urnen,” *Die Welt*; Moser, “Theologie,” *Stuttgarter Zeitung*; Rumler, *Abendzeitung*; Goldschmidt.

¹¹⁵ “Die Wüste,” *Der Spiegel*.

¹¹⁶ Dannecker, *Main-Post*.

¹¹⁷ While other reviews noted that the Irishman lived in Paris, I have somewhat artificially limited my study to Irish-German cultural exchange. Judging from the scholarship on Beckett’s German reception, though, it seems likely that the dominant association between Beckett and French culture in postwar Germany would have been Parisian existentialism and the avant-garde. Still, there may be more to uncover about performances of Beckett’s work as French (or French-Irish) cultural objects.

maker of parables and connecting that form of story to his nationality. To that critic, there seems to be at least an implicit connection between Beckett's Irishness and his artistic expression, which prefers to express human absurdity in poetic rather than naturalistic terms. In this last section, I want to briefly meditate on the possible meaning of the performances against the West German perception of Ireland and how they functioned in culture. West Germany's mostly-apolitical and idealized Ireland may have contributed to the tendency to evacuate Beckett's plays of political memory, and by extension, support the plays' capacity to facilitate forgetting.

In the immediate postwar years, Germans saw Ireland as a friend thanks to the combination of its humanitarian aid and Éamon de Valera's infamous visit to the home of the Reich's ambassador to Ireland to express his condolences on Hitler's death. In a world of few friends during the rubble years, the help that Irish charities and the Irish government provided the German people brought the FRG to give the Republic of Ireland a statue of the Three Fates of Nordic mythology in gratitude in 1956, which still stands in St. Stephen's Green in Dublin. Ireland was also the first state to appoint an ambassador to the new FRG and generally helped to normalize the state as any other western democracy, for example, by hosting West German sports teams for international competition. In the realm of politics, however, Adenauer's government came to see the Irish Republic as overly conservative, pre-modern, and too devoted to their sectarian identities. Efforts by Irish diplomats to find parallels between Irish and German partition embarrassed FRG officials and they resolutely avoided making similar comparisons so as to not upset the British. The FRG nevertheless welcomed Irish anticommunist propaganda against East Germany and the injustice of partition on the world stage (especially after Ireland joined the UN in 1955) so long as they avoided comparing it too closely to the question of Northern Ireland. Seán Lemass's assumption to the taoiseachship in 1959 thawed FRG

frustrations with Ireland over its economic protectionism and foreign policy under de Valera and generally brought even warmer relations between the two countries, especially from the West German perspective.¹¹⁸

Culturally speaking, the postwar period was such that historian Emer O’Sullivan describes it as a “post-war German love affair with Ireland.”¹¹⁹ At least some in Germany recognized a shared, ancient Celtic past with Ireland. Shared cultural affinities were not confined to antiquity, either. In Catholic southern Germany (where Ulm is located) many of the region’s saints, monasteries, and foundational monks were supposedly of Irish origin.¹²⁰ Over the centuries, a handful of Irish writers gained widespread popularity in Germany, including Jonathan Swift, who had a contemporary following in Germany during his lifetime, and the study of his works continues in Germany today. Both Oscar Wilde and George Bernard Shaw were imminently popular on German stages, but Germans regarded both as Londoners and even English writers. One of the most influential Irish contributions to German culture was the Brothers Grimm’s translation of Irish fairytales in the early nineteenth century, which remained in print through the twentieth century. In these stories, Ireland was a depoliticized imaginary space of fairies and magic, laying the foundation for a romanticized image of Ireland in Germany that would last at least through the postwar period.¹²¹

¹¹⁸ Mervyn O’Driscoll, “West Germany,” in *Ireland Through European Eyes: Western Europe, the EEC and Ireland, 1945–1973*, eds. Mervyn O’Driscoll, Dermot Keogh, and Jérôme aan de Wiel (Cork: Cork University Press, 2013), 24–42. An exception to the good relations between the nations was the early 1960s impression by many Irish that German foreign investors were acquiring Irish land in a way that resembled colonialism and which accompanied accusations of Nazism. Back in the FRG, however, the press managed to refute claims of anti-German sentiment in Ireland as a whole.

¹¹⁹ O’Sullivan, 109.

¹²⁰ O’Driscoll, 11–13.

¹²¹ Heinz Kosok, “Thomas Crofton Croker, the Brothers Grimm and the German Image of Ireland,” in *Ireland and the Irish in Germany – Reception and Perception*, eds. Claire O’Reilly and Veronica O’Regan (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 2014), 85–6, 90–2, 97, 99–100.

The single most influential object on the West German imagination of Ireland, though, was Heinrich Böll's travel memoir, *Irish Journal*, published in 1957. Böll, who had been a soldier in the Reich army during the war, was an extremely popular Catholic novelist. His criticisms of the FRG's economic and rearmament policies, targeting of the Church's hypocrisy on economic and social morality (during and after the Nazi regime), and countervailing refusal to let Germans forget the horrors of the war earned him the unofficial title of the "conscience of the nation."¹²² Böll began visiting Ireland in 1954 as a getaway destination, but bought a cottage on Anchill Island in western County Mayo in 1958 where he and his family would ultimately spend years of their lives.¹²³ *Irish Journal* sold incredibly well, and was so popular that the image of young Germans with the book became something of a trope for the young, reconstituted nation still searching for its identity. As O'Sullivan puts it:

His image was an idyllic one of Ireland as an innocent paradise and substitute homeland uncontaminated by Nazi *Blut und Boden* [Blood and Soil, that is, ethno-nationalist] ideology. Key elements were nature, unspoilt by industrialisation, time, of which there was always plenty, the natives, red-haired, easy-going, non-materialistic, religious and fond of the drink, and imagination. Ireland, for Böll, was the country of storytellers, fairytales and legends.¹²⁴

Böll's Ireland was an imaginary space, one all-but-devoid of the history of Irish nationalism and its constitutive colonial history. Böll subsequently made a documentary on Ireland, *Children of*

¹²² O'Sullivan, 108–9; Michael Butler, "The Conservative Moralist," in *The Literary Achievement of Heinrich Böll: Social Conscience and Literary Achievement* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 1.

¹²³ Gisela Holfter, *Heinrich Böll and Ireland* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011), 27, 45.

¹²⁴ O'Sullivan, 109.

Éire, which was broadcast on German television in 1961 and spread his imagined Ireland to an even wider audience.¹²⁵

This is not to say that West Germans only understood Ireland via Böll's depiction. For example, Behan's *The Hostage* stirred outrage in Ulm for his perceived communism and the play's morality, as I previously mentioned (it happened to be a translation by Annemarie Böll, Heinrich's wife, and he worked on it, too).¹²⁶ Similarly, *Der Spiegel*, a major national magazine, published a story about Archbishop McQuaid's censorship of J. P. Donleavy's *The Ginger Man* (1959) at the Gaiety Theatre in Dublin in 1959. Noting that the Irish are "known to get angry at Irish self-criticism," and implying that Irish media tends to be overly "sensitive," it was McQuaid and not the people or the press who wanted to cancel the show for once.¹²⁷ Despite such criticism, as cultural historian Heinz Kosok notes, Irish history and politics never seems to have eclipsed its romantic image inaugurated with the Brothers Grimm and brought into the contemporary imaginary by Böll.¹²⁸

If Böll's Ireland was what was in the minds of audience members at the Ulmer Theater performance of Beckett's plays in 1963, it would have most likely served as an apolitical canvas through which to filter the plays. Böll's Ireland provided a utopic idyll for West Germany. If the audience took the plays as German performances of Irish cultural texts, there would be no reason to read Irish history into Beckett's plays because that's not what the dominant imaginary of Ireland provides. Rather, Ireland was a space to project what German politics and history was not

¹²⁵ Irish television showed the film in 1965, and it caused controversy in Ireland for its depiction of the nation. See Holfter, 158–70.

¹²⁶ Annemarie took the lead on the couple's translation projects, if not actually translating them alone. These included several Irish plays. See Holfter, 144–57.

¹²⁷ "Osborne und kein Ende," *Der Spiegel*, November 17, 1959.

¹²⁸ Kosok, 100.

but, in many respects, wanted to be at the time: a space without history or political differences. Interpreting Beckett's plays as Irish parables in the postwar West German context most likely meant to extract from them an imagined, alternative, possible Germany in very subtle ways. The plays are far from romantic or idealized visions of anything, but stripped of history there remains a depoliticized humanity in which all toil away ad nauseam or until exhaustion extinguishes all. Absorbing the tyrannical structures that subjugate humanity as a given for its condition might seem to absolve the subject from the responsibility of calling historical and political differences into account for atrocity, inequality, and exclusion, but it only provides a way to look over them. Like the German youths reading a travel memoir on Ireland in search of Germany, replacing German identity with this imagined, ahistorical version of Irish identity only serves to avoid, deny, and censor historical memories and political possibilities.

Censorship has a productive element. It helps to produce and sustain identities and histories through processes of selection and erasure. This theory holds true when censorship travels through surrogation. If censorship's performative contradiction transforms and paradoxically recirculates that which it censors, it can paradoxically disrupt the censor's attempt to silence the person, perspective, or text at which they aim. Surrogates for silenced bodies and objects can function to relegate the voices and experiences they replace into the ashbin of history even as they replace and make differently visible the censored object or subject. Simultaneously manifesting the performative contradiction and obscuring that which is censored, surrogation is a remarkably negative form of mobile censorship because it actually holds the potential to keep the censored object or subject's visibility to a minimum. It can perpetuate the deletion at the heart of acts of censorship that seek to exclude. In contrast, some people in the next chapter's case study called upon censorship's memory to mark cultural progress.

5.0 Chapter Four: Marked by Censorship: The Return of Allan McClelland's *Bloomsday* to Dublin, 1962

TOOTS. Oh, Connie, if only you didn't imagine yourself an intellectual.

CONNIE [*sniffing*]. I *am* an intellectual [*defiantly*]. I've read "Ulysses" through twice!

TOOTS. Only for pornographic pickings.

In this exchange from her 1931 tragicomedy *Youth's the Season...?*, playwright Mary Manning satirizes a segment of the Protestant bourgeoisie in post-Independence Dublin. Together with her costume, which Manning describes as "leaning towards Bohemianism," Connie's reference to James Joyce's novel *Ulysses* cues the audience in on her pretensions.¹ She no sooner namedrops Joyce's famous rendering of a single day in the lives of three Edwardian Dubliners, though, than Toots undermines her cosmopolitanism by implying Connie read the novel for its alleged pornography – a suggestion that, funnily enough, Connie doesn't refute.

Manning's lampoon distills a number of ideas I take up in this chapter. While the exchange points out Joyce and *Ulysses*'s contested place in the Irish imaginary (even at the more avant-garde Gate Theatre where Manning's drama first played) and the continued association between Joyce's work, pornography, and foreignness, the most telling feature of Manning's joke for this chapter is that it crucially depends upon her audience's familiarity not with the details of the novel itself but its reception and reputation. Both were synonymous with its censorship, but

¹ Mary Manning, *Youth's the Season...?*, in *Plays of Changing Ireland*, ed. Curtis Canfield (New York: Macmillan, 1936), 335, 329.

that censorship was not strictly or only Irish. After all, while *Ulysses* was difficult to come by, the Censorship of Publications Board in Ireland never banned Joyce's text. Rather, a transnational history of censorship that spanned the Atlantic informed the local attitudes that Manning satirized. As literary historian Paul Vanderham argues, the novel's censorship in the United States and United Kingdom profoundly influenced its reception in the wider Anglophone world and its composition, too, thanks to the revisions Joyce made between its censored serial form and its publication as a single volume.² This history of censorship was so pervasive and so closely linked with the novel that it formed a distinct cultural memory that persisted for decades.

That doesn't mean, however, that the cultural memory of *Ulysses*'s censorship went unchanged and, in fact, Irish attitudes began to shift in the 1950s and 1960s. Archbishop McQuaid's objections to Joyce in general and *Ulysses* in particular added a new wrinkle to that history. The cancellation of the 1958 DITF reinforced the hegemonic place of Joyce and his work in the Irish cultural imagination – at least in the immediate sense. In the long term, it also created openings to rethink Joyce, his work, and his legacy and to conduct that work onstage in Ireland and beyond. Indeed, Allan McClelland's *Bloomsday* – the same adaptation of *Ulysses* to which McQuaid objected – made its Dublin debut just four years after the 1958 DITF debacle.

Staging Joyce's fiction in the aftermath of the 1958 DITF was “far from a neutral act,” as Patrick Lonergan puts it. Lonergan takes the DITF cancellation as the context for his study of Joyce adaptations since 1958. For Lonergan, Joyce's fiction served as a vehicle for women artists to not only make assertions about Irish culture but also to make feminist interventions into that discourse by making his canonical worlds and characters their own.³ Adding the 1962 Dublin

² Paul Vanderham, *James Joyce and Censorship: The Trials of Ulysses* (New York: New York University Press, 1998).

³ Patrick Lonergan, *Irish Drama and Theatre Since 1950* (London: Bloomsbury, 2019), 112–8, at 114.

performances of *Bloomsday* to Lonergan's brilliant account – the first to identify this trend – highlights the role co-producer Phyllis Ryan and actress Anna Manahan played in its success and cultural meanings. And *Bloomsday* was a success. The production received very favorable reviews and ran for three weeks, filling the 237-seat Eblana Theatre, located in the basement of the Busáras, Dublin's Central Bus Station. According to reports, the production only shuttered because of a busser strike and the producers didn't want artists and audiences to have to cross a picket line.⁴ Not only that, but there was a revival at the larger Gate Theatre in 1964, two years after its initial bow. Apart from references to it in the context of the 1958 DITF, *Bloomsday* is absent from Irish theatre histories of the period. Adding *Bloomsday* to the narrative of early 1960s theatre in Ireland offers an opportunity to nuance extant historical narratives by theorizing the specific political and cultural work it undertook in performance.

Performances of Joyce's works also opened up opportunities for audiences as much as artists to wrestle with Irish identities, histories, and traditions – to continually reconsider what it meant to be Irish. While it is tempting to interpret the relatively quick return of McClelland's *Bloomsday* to Dublin in 1962 as a cultural sea change, the reality is more complicated. *Bloomsday* is not *Ulysses* in several respects. As José Lanteris argues in his formalist analysis of stage adaptations of Joyce's fiction, what a playwright chooses to omit in their translation from page to stage is often just as if not more important than what they include, and McClelland cut a great deal from *Ulysses*.⁵ In fact, the play's approach to sex and gender politics is ambivalent, at turns performing much more conservative values than what appears in Joyce's prose, and at

⁴ "Hotel Paradiso," *Irish Press*, July 9, 1962, 9. On the Eblana's seating, see Phyllis Ryan, *The Company I Kept* (Dublin: Town House, 1996), 167.

⁵ José Lanteris, *Missed Understandings: A Study of Stage Adaptations of the Works of James Joyce* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1988), 12. Lanteris's analysis of the play is the only one I have been able to find, and it is a formalist, literary analysis from the perspective of adaptation studies rather than a historical narrative or analysis of the play.

others embracing its unorthodoxy. This is not to say that the play totally smoothed over the provocative sexual content of Joyce's novel. Rather, the text's gender and sexual politics were only one part of a complicated cultural product that continued what Christopher Murray identifies as the project of Irish playwrights in the 1950s: the attempt to locate Ireland's location between tradition and modernity.⁶

The 1962 performance of *Bloomsday* navigated this terrain in a number of ways and to different political and cultural effects. In addition to its depiction of gender and sexuality, it also presented an ethnically plural Irish society through Leopold Bloom, *Ulysses*'s protagonist, whose parents were Jewish Hungarian immigrants. The adaptation retains Bloom's conversion to Catholicism, his devotion to Irish nationalism, and his famous argument advocating for solidarity between the persecuted people of Ireland and Israel. Molly Bloom also adds international and imperial commentary as an Irishwoman who grew up in British Gibraltar. Further, set as it is in 1904, the performance implicitly asked its Irish audiences to rethink its past. Unlike the explicit teleology from the War for Independence to the malaise of the Irish 1950s that Seán O'Casey embedded in *The Drums of Father Ned*, *Bloomsday*'s performance created a dialectic between the colonial Dublin it represented and the post-colonial Ireland of 1962.

In addition to its representational politics, the economic politics of *Bloomsday*'s production also staked a claim in debates about Ireland's modernity. The production participated in Taoiseach Seán Lemass's economic modernization project that sought to emphasize tourism and international trade. The production was a part of some of the earliest official, state-supported commemorations of Joyce and his work and was explicitly intended to help bolster tourism and

⁶ Christopher Murray, "'Where Are They Now?': Plays of Significance in the 1940s and 1950s," in *Players and Painted Stage: Aspects of the Twentieth-Century Theatre in Ireland*, ed. Christopher Fitz-Simon (Dublin: New Island Press, 2004), 70.

international prestige. To that end, the production capitalized on Joyce's status as an intercultural commodity. *Bloomsday* already had successful runs in Britain both onstage and on the air as a radio drama. Its overseas success likely continued the Joyce/*Ulysses* associations with the foreign – but many more in Ireland now saw that as economic advantage.

The memory of censorship colored all of these issues and gave them additional meaning in performance. In Chapter Two, I theorized how the memory of censorship moved from Ireland to Indiana through the construction of a prosthetic memory. My third chapter located censorship's movement in the acts of surrogation performed through Samuel Beckett's mimes. *Bloomsday* offers the opportunity to understand how the memory of censorship moves through what memory scholar Astrid Erll calls "forms." For Erll, forms refer to "condensed Figures" or "shorthands" like "the Somme" or "East and West" that are detached from context and details but which nevertheless convey historical/cultural narratives and interpretive information.⁷ Both "Joyce" and "*Ulysses*" constituted forms that harbored transnational memories of censorship. These included the history of the novel's censorship in New York as well as the play's recent expulsion from the 1958 DITF. As in the case of Lafayette's *Father Ned*, these memories served as a framework through which audiences could interpret the play. The forms contained accumulated histories, allowing audiences at the Eblana to interpret the play against long-past and recent memories of censorship and compare the Irish present to the past. At the same time, a different memory of censorship haunted Anna Manahan's performance of Molly Bloom, specifically that of the Pike Theatre's ill-fated production of *The Rose Tattoo*, which Manahan

⁷ Astrid Erll, "Travelling Memory," *Parallax* 17.4 (2011): 13–4. For Erll, texts are media like books and films. Forms are not necessarily bound to media, but they can be. By using scare quotes, I hope to distinguish "Joyce" and "*Ulysses*" from the material man and the contents of a particular book and reference instead the *idea* of Joyce and *Ulysses*. Erll's terminology has the benefit of nuance, allowing historians to distinguish between the two while also noting their interaction.

continued to be closely associated with even five years later in 1962. These “layers” of censorship, I argue, ultimately held the potential to make McClelland’s version of *Ulysses* more politically progressive than an analysis of his text alone would suggest. However, its humanist utopianism calls into question the efficacy of its politics.

5.1 “James Joyce is a sewer”: Creating “Joyce” and “*Ulysses*”

The cultural work that Bloomsday performed at the Eblana critically depended on two related journeys: the movement of “Joyce” and “*Ulysses*” and especially how censorship’s memory attached and informed those forms; and Bloomsday’s circulation in Britain. If “Joyce” and “*Ulysses*” became mnemonic forms or shorthands, it is because their proliferation partly detached them from the times, places, events, and people to which they originally referred, becoming signifiers of generally understood cultural and/or historical data. Mnemonic forms are akin to what is sometimes called “reputation.” Rethinking reputation as a memory form, I argue, allows historians to locate and track its evolution and geographic movement over time.

Transatlantic censorship hugely informed what “Joyce” and “*Ulysses*” and thus *Bloomsday* meant to the English-speaking world. As they moved, they carried truncated memories. Joyce’s relationship to censorship and how it informed his work has been a topic of scholarly attention for decades.⁸ While audiences largely would have understood these histories

⁸ See, for example: Kevin Birmingham, *The Most Dangerous Book: The Battle for James Joyce’s Ulysses* (New York: Penguin Press, 2014); Richard Brown, *James Joyce and Sexuality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Richard Brown, “Joyce, Postculture and Censorship,” in *Writing and Censorship in Britain*, eds. Paul Hyland and Neil Sammells (London: Routledge, 1992), 243–58; Carmelo Medina Casado, “Sifting through Censorship: The British Home Office ‘Ulysses’ Files (1922-1936),” *James Joyce Quarterly* 37, no. 3/4 (Spring – Summer 2000): 479–508; Claire A. Cullerton, *Joyce and the G-Men: J. Edgar Hoover’s Manipulation of Modernism* (New York:

through their reductive mnemonic forms, it is here necessary to survey some of the contexts and details that contributed to the crafting of those forms and Joyce's critique of censorious cultures.

From the earliest days of his career as a writer, Joyce framed himself and his work in relation to censorship. He published an essay on the Irish Literary Theatre in 1901 with a preface noting that the censor of *St. Stephen's*, a new magazine at University College Dublin where he was then a student, rejected the piece. This censor was the magazine's faculty advisor who apparently had supreme editorial discretion, and Joyce's effort to appeal the decision failed. This incident and an earlier one with the college's president – who tried and failed to persuade Joyce to amend a paper he was going to deliver on ethics and drama – contributed to Joyce's sense that he had been and would continue to be persecuted in Ireland for his moral, religious, and aesthetic beliefs. Joyce experienced another run in with unofficial censorship when, in 1904, another publisher rejected his "A Portrait of the Artist," an autobiographical essay on his aesthetic values, finding it incomprehensible (although Joyce's brother claimed the rejection was due to the piece's sexual content). Just months later, *St. Stephen's* rejected a second work of his, this time a satirical poem called "The Holy Office" in which Joyce skewers what he saw as the hypocrisy of his contemporaries, declaring, as Vanderham puts it, "that his will be the holy office of exposing what they fear to discuss." Censorship was a foundational condition of Joyce's aesthetic identity and process, compelling him to draw on these experiences in his writing and to

Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Leah Culligan Flack, "'Cyclops,' Censorship, and Joyce's Monster Audiences," *James Joyce Quarterly* 48, no. 3 (Spring 2011): 425–44; Chris Forster, *Filthy Material: Modernism and the Media of Obscenity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 151–80; Joseph M. Hassett, *The Ulysses Trials: Beauty and Truth Meet the Law* (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 2016); Barbara Leckie, "Reading Bodies, Reading Nerves: 'Nausicaa' and the Discourse of Censorship," *James Joyce Quarterly* 34, no. 1/2 (Fall 1996 – Winter 1997): 65–85; Celia Marshik, *British Modernism and Censorship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 126–66; Katherine Mullin, *James Joyce, Sexuality and Social Purity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Adam Parkes, *Modernism and the Theater of Censorship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 65–106; Rachel Potter, *Obscene Modernism: Literary Censorship and Experiment, 1900–1940* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Vanderham.

flee Ireland's enabling cultural and political environment by way of self-exile to Europe.⁹ As literary scholar Celia Marshik argues, in his early writing, Joyce portrays himself "as a writer whose career was marked by censorship before it truly began but who never capitulated to or compromised with the 'censor.'"¹⁰ Framing himself as censored influenced both his writing and constructed a memory of censorship through which readers could interpret his work. "Joyce" would only become a mnemonic form with time and attention, but Joyce, himself, helped to construct it from the start.

Joyce continued to frame his work against an imagined (but not unfounded) background of post-Victorian prudery when he first sent his collection of short stories, *Dubliners* (1914), to the London publisher Grant Richards for his consideration in 1905. In his cover letter, Joyce explained that he thought *Dubliners* was marketable precisely for its tempting of the censor. As Hans Walter Gabler suggests, this may have been a foolish move on Joyce's part, as it warned Richards as a businessman to beware Joyce's work. Richards would eventually publish the collection – nine years later. After first accepting the collection, Richards's printers refused to print it. In his letter informing Joyce of that development, Richards actually added to their protest by marking out his own objections. Even after Joyce made some concessions, Richards broke the contract and rejected the book in the fall of 1906.¹¹

⁹ Ellsworth Mason and Richard Ellmann, eds., *The Critical Writing of James Joyce* (New York: Viking Press, 1959), 68–9; Robert Scholes and Richard M. Kain, eds., *The Workshop of Daedalus*, (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1965), 56–9; Vanderham, 59–61, 67. Joyce drew directly on these experiences for scenes in his *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) as well as his abandoned novel *Stephen Hero*, which survives only in part and was only posthumously published in 1944.

¹⁰ Marshik, 126.

¹¹ Hans Walter Gabler, introduction to *Dubliners*, by James Joyce, ed. Margot Norris (New York: W. W. Norton, 2006), xix, xv–xxi. Richards would end up as the publisher, anyway, but only after some nine years had passed, publishing *Dubliners* without omission in 1914. For more on the tumultuous publication history of that book, see Gabler, xv–xxxiv; Andrew Gibson, *James Joyce* (London: Reaktion Books, 2006), 89–94; Marshik, 140–2.

Joyce's difficulties with editorial censorship (itself very much influenced by censorship laws and purity culture) intensified as he tried to get *Dubliners* published. After years of rejections, in 1909, the Dublin publisher Maunsel and Company agreed to publish *Dubliners*, but within months they, too, would demand alterations. By 1911, Joyce and Maunsel reached an impasse over Joyce's references to actual place names in Dublin that could be libelous and to Edward VII that might offend. Joyce took the extraordinary step of appealing the case to King George V (Edward VII's son), but to no avail. Joyce then managed to get his version of the story (at least in part) into two newspapers in Ireland, but this, too, failed to move the publisher. After further wrangling, Joyce sought to buy any printings and publish them himself. When he inquired to the would-be printer, John Falconer, the printer refused to turn over the pages, telling Joyce that they would soon destroy them.¹²

As it had in previous instances, this experience with censorship jostled Joyce to creativity. He composed a satiric dramatic monologue called "Gas from a Burner" (1912) shortly after the incident. In the poem, Joyce imagines the publisher/printer burning his book in repentance for even considering to publish a book that so maligns Ireland. Joyce's creative output again helped him build a public persona, develop his criticism of censorship, and link the two in the minds of those few who received a copy of Joyce's poem, which he privately printed and distributed.¹³

In the poem, Joyce complicates assumptions about the foreign roots of modernity and obscenity and ties Irish censorship to colonialism. Joyce concentrates much of the poem on what

¹² Gabler, xxii–xxv; Gibson, *James Joyce*, 91–3; Marshik, 140–2. It's worth noting that Gabler doubts certain aspects of this history, particularly Falconer's destruction of the *Dubliners* sheets, or at least how many sheets were destroyed. Regardless, Joyce believed the sheets destroyed, or at least projected that he believed it.

¹³ Marshik, 142.

he saw as the hypocrisy of the Maunsel press. Citing their publication of controversial texts like Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World* and George Moore's *The Apostle* (1911), the poem's speaker "draw[s] the line at that bloody fellow / That was over here dressed in Austrian yellow, / Spouting Italian by the hour" who depicted "dirty and dear" Dublin "in a manner no blackamoor printer could bear."¹⁴ Then living in Trieste in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Joyce marks himself as foreign, speaking Italian and wearing the yellow associated with the Austrian Habsburgs. However, Joyce doesn't imagine himself completely foreign, but places himself in a tradition of exiled Irish. The poem's speaker won't print Joyce's work because of their

...duty to Ireland:

I hold her honour in my hand,

This lovely land that always sent

Her writers and artists into banishment

And in a spirit of Irish fun

Betrayed her own leaders one by one.¹⁵

Joyce's vision of Ireland casts out its authors and artists who have anything to say about their homeland en masse while also handing those who would free Ireland over to its imperial master, linking the politics and culture that lead to exile with colonialism. For Joyce, contributions to Irish culture come in spite of and because artists retreat from Ireland, at least for a time.

Further, to Joyce, the censorious impulse in Ireland was both a deeply ingrained aspect of Irish life and cultural production and a colonial, foreign imposition. Joyce's initial title for "Gas from a Burner" was "Mr. Falconer Addresses the Vigilance Committee," a reference to the

¹⁴ James Joyce, "Gas from a Burner," *The Critical Writings of James Joyce*, ed. Ellsworth Mason and Richard Ellmann (New York: Viking Press, 1959), 242–4.

¹⁵ Joyce, "Gas from a Burner," 243.

network of social purity movements whose campaigners policed morality as private citizens, acting variously as a corrective to and/or extension of state policing of sexual morality, especially. Although Joyce changed the title, he clearly believed that the social purity movement influenced his oppressors' thinking. Crucially, though, as Katherine Mullin's research reveals, in the Ireland of Joyce's day, vigilance committees and their like were not just overwhelmingly Protestant and unionist, but intimately bound to the late-Victorian project of conferring the state with the authority to regulate sexuality. This is not to say, as Mullin points out, that there wasn't also intense moral regulation emanating from the Catholic Church in Ireland (there was), but it was largely confined to the spiritual spaces of the pulpit and confessional stall. The social purity movements, on the other hand, were much more public and their surveillance could even lead to confiscation of property, arrest, and litigation. Many Irish, in fact, saw the social purity movement as an intrusive, English attempt to wrest moral authority away from the Catholic Church. As Mullin convincingly argues, for Joyce the result was a competing but interwoven discourse that ironically blurred national and religious distinctions.¹⁶

This is also to say that Joyce saw censorship in Ireland in all its various forms as what would today be called a transnational phenomenon. His work, including his effort to frame his fiction and build an audience, increasingly anticipated, provoked, and grappled with the politics of those multinational entanglements. For example, when Joyce tried to publicize the problems he was then encountering with the Maunsel house in 1911, he sent his account to both British and Irish newspapers. Although it was only printed in Belfast and Dublin, Joyce's attempt points to his desire to build a transnational audience and memory of his censorship.¹⁷

¹⁶ Mullin, 15, 18–21, 83–4.

¹⁷ Hans Walter Gabler, introduction to "A Curious History," by James Joyce, in *Dubliners*, ed. Margot Norris (New York: W. W. Norton, 2006), 197.

Since that censorship had largely taken place in private and the article's first appearance failed to garner support, Joyce revised and republished it for a more targeted audience. Later, when he sent *Dubliners* back to Grant Richards for reconsideration in the autumn of 1913, he revised this article as a preface for the book in anticipation of Richards's and the world's objections. As it should turn out, Richards agreed to publish *Dubliners* the following spring and did so without Joyce's preface, but a target audience of some 1,000 readers already inclined toward modernist defiance had access to it ahead of *Dubliners*'s appearance. Perhaps expecting Richards to reject the book again, Joyce sent the piece, titled "A Curious History," to Ezra Pound, who published it instead of his own regular column in the avant-garde periodical the *Egoist*. Joyce introduces his "History" by framing it as an exploration of "the present conditions of authorship in England and Ireland." Throughout, Joyce casts himself as beset upon by both Irish and English publishers and printers who use their authority to publish and print to pressure him into changing his book or refusing it outright. Here, Joyce undertakes similar work as Robert Hogan in Indiana when he staged O'Casey's *The Drums of Father Ned* by building a memory of its censorship for readers who weren't already familiar with its history. At the same time, like Hogan, Joyce here builds an audience, using his censorship to garner support and frame himself and his work that could (and would) be later recalled. Joyce concludes with the story of Falconer burning the sheets and his exit from Ireland, leaving his readers with a portrait of the artist defeated by censorship, or nearly so.¹⁸ With the book still unpublished, Joyce leaves the future alone, building anticipation for his work and further censorship by extension. In the process of foregrounding his career against a background of censorship the essay forecasts it into the future

¹⁸ Gabler, introduction to "A Curious History"; Mark Morrisson, "Marketing British Modernism: *The Egoist* and Counter-Public Spheres," *Twentieth Century Literature* 43, no. 4 (Winter 1997): 466n42; James Joyce, "A Curious History," in *Dubliners*, ed. Margot Norris (New York: W. W. Norton, 2006), 197–200.

as well. “A Curious History” simultaneously works to catch its readers in a kind of interpretive Möbius strip that forecloses reading “Joyce” and his work any other way.

The pattern of foregrounding Joyce’s work as censored even before it appeared in publication continued ahead of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), his first completed novel. The January 15, 1914 edition of the *Egoist* included “A Curious History,” and the next edition on February 2, 1914 included the opening pages to *A Portrait* in serialized form. When Pound printed “A Curious History,” he was already using it to lay the groundwork for the appearance of Joyce’s work itself within the *Egoist*’s pages. Through “A Curious History,” Pound implicitly gave a justification for providing Joyce with an outlet and provided an interpretive framework for readers to interpret that work.

Separate *Egoist* editorials on *A Portrait*’s censorship coupled the memory of “Joyce” with censorship yet again. This time, though, others gave voice to its construction. It wasn’t long into the serialization process before printers once again refused to produce Joyce’s work because of the novel’s obscenities. After seven rejections, *Egoist* editor and patroness Harriet Shaw Weaver took it upon herself to publish the book and committed to getting it through the presses without censorship. She ended up spending half a year in search of a printer. Weaver narrated these events in the *Egoist*, contributing to the novel’s anticipation and framing via censorship. Once again casting Joyce as a defiant hero against repressive forces, Weaver used the *Egoist* to announce the book would be printed, only to insert an asterisk noting that since she wrote her editorial the book had again encountered the refusal of the print shop. Compounding this image of “Joyce,” Pound wrote a follow-up announcement once the book finally was printed. In a more belligerent tone, Pound argued they had triumphed over “bigots” and “their sectarian publishing

houses” in both Ireland and England.¹⁹ Joyce no longer had to advance his history himself. Already, others were able to wield it for him and to his benefit – a sign that “Joyce” as a mnemonic form closely affiliated with transnational censorship was taking hold.

The ubiquity and reach of that association virtually exploded with his next major work. *Ulysses* is a simple story told in a profoundly complicated way. Broadly speaking, *Ulysses* is an adaptation of Homer’s ancient Greek epic *The Odyssey*, which charts Odysseus’s journey home to Ithaca after the Trojan War. Joyce condenses Odysseus’s years-long trek “there and back again” into a single day, June 16, 1904, through the lives of three Dubliners.²⁰ The first is Stephen Dedalus, Joyce’s alter-ego, who was the protagonist in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Stephen is a young teacher who aspires to be a writer. Listless and moody, Stephen is haunted by his own failure to acquiesce to his recently-deceased mother’s dying wish for him to pray at her bedside for her. He quits the digs he’s been occupying with his mate, Buck Mulligan, after Buck insults Stephen with an insensitive comment about Stephen’s mother and

¹⁹ Hans Walter Gabler, introduction to *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, by James Joyce, ed. John Paul Riquelme (New York: W. W. Norton, 2007), xviii–iv; Gibson, *James Joyce*, 93–6; Mullin, 15–17; Harriet Shaw Weaver, “Views and Comments,” *Egoist*, March 1, 1916, 35; Ezra Pound, “James Joyce: At Last the Novel Appears,” *Egoist*, February 1, 1917, 22.

²⁰ In each chapter or “episode” of the novel, Joyce translates an event or character from Homer’s poetry both by creating direct correlates as well as by playing with different linguistic, historical, and aesthetic styles and forms. For instance, Bloom is Joyce’s Odysseus, Stephen stands in for Odysseus’s son Telemachus, and Molly is Odysseus’s wife Penelope. For the events of Homer’s epic, Joyce sometimes transforms them in a fairly straightforward manner. For example, Homer’s “Hades” episode becomes the funeral Bloom attends. Joyce transformed other sequences from Homer in more complicated ways, though. For instance, in Homer, Odysseus’s men slaughter the Sun Titan Helios’s sacred cattle. In retribution, Zeus strikes their ship with a lightning bolt, killing all but Odysseus, who did not partake in the sailors’ feast. Joyce’s version is set at the maternity ward, where a stern Bloom waits for news of an acquaintance who is in labor. As Bloom waits, Stephen and his friends drunkenly carry on, violating the solemnity of the hospital. For Stuart Gilbert, who worked closely with Joyce to write a defensive 1930 analysis of the novel, Helios’s herds are symbols of fertility which Joyce uses as a backdrop and topic of conversation among the boisterous young men. Joyce further uses fertility as an organizing principle by dividing the episode into three parts, one for each trimester of pregnancy, which he further divides into nine parts for the nine months of gestation. The chapter takes on the evolution of language, moving from a prose that evokes Latin, to an alliterative poetry akin to Anglo-Saxon oral literature, to parodies and pastiches of specific authors like Daniel Defoe, Horace Walpole, and Charles Dickens, among others. See Stuart Gilbert, *James Joyce’s Ulysses: A Study* (London: Faber and Faber, 1930), 291–2.

invites an English student to move in with them without consulting Stephen. After teaching a history class, Stephen picks up his pay from his anti-Semitic, unionist employer, and sets out to wander Dublin, feeling rejected from home, family, faith, and nation.

The novel then shifts its focus to Leopold Bloom, a middle-aged, middle-class Irish Catholic whose father was a Hungarian Jew. Bloom's wife, Molly, is a singer who is having an affair with her concert manager, Hugh "Blazes" Boylan. Bloom knows about the affair, but Molly doesn't know that her husband knows. Bloom knows the two are set to meet and so spends his day avoiding his home, leaving for a funeral and not returning until late in the night. In between, Bloom gazes at women on the street, stops at the newspaper office where he works as an advertisement canvasser, grabs lunch at a pub, avoids Boylan on the street by stepping into Ireland's National Library, has dinner with Stephen's uncle, goes to another pub and debates politics and religion with its denizens, watches a young woman on the beach, masturbates into his pants when she shows him her legs, and visits a maternity ward where a friend is giving birth. Throughout, Bloom, like Stephen, is haunted by his past, especially the untimely death of his only son, Rudy, his father's suicide, and Molly's ongoing infidelity. At the hospital, Bloom meets Stephen, who is now quite drunk. Concerned for the young man, Bloom follows Stephen into Nighttown, Dublin's red-light district, holding on to Stephen's money for him and aiding him when he gets into a fight with an English sailor. Bloom gets Stephen sobered up, and brings him back to his home to stay the night, but Stephen slips out into the night shortly after arriving. Bloom goes to bed and Molly asks him about his day. In the final chapter, the novel shifts to Molly's internal monologue. Her mind wanders through her personal history as a young girl who grew up on the British military base in Gibraltar. She reminisces about her coming of age, past lovers, her menstrual cycle, and concludes with the memory of Bloom's proposal to her.

The novel's first appearance from March of 1918 to January 1920 as a serial novel in the New York-based arts journal the *Little Review* provoked backlash for its "filthiness." The journal was intentionally provocative, already had a history with censorship, and much of its content was nakedly political. Explicitly opposed to any law or value that barred total artistic freedom, the journal's founder and editor, Margaret Anderson, started it in 1914 with the aim "to make the world safe for Art." Echoing the wartime rally to "make the world safe for democracy," Anderson felt an affinity with causes that challenged the status quo and replicated that enthusiasm in her journal. For instance, in 1915, Anderson wrote and published a tirade in support of anarchist Emma Goldman's call for revolution. Further, the journal was already an object of censorship history unto itself. The US Post Office suppressed the magazine in 1917 for publishing a supposedly obscene story, but that edition happened to also include a story critical of the First World War, which the US had only entered into a few months prior.²¹ That Joyce's work received backlash in such a magazine is telling, especially considering that the journal's commitment to revolutionary and anti-censorship stances would have framed *Ulysses* by simple virtue of its publication there even without any knowledge of its author.

Beyond the radical pages that carried *Ulysses*, the story's suppression had a profound impact on the meaning of "Joyce" and "*Ulysses*" and their widespread recognition. This process began when the US Post Office began seizing editions they deemed violated obscenity law, including: January 1919, which contained a portion of the "Lestrygonians" episode in which Bloom observes two mating flies and is reminded of an early amorous interaction with his wife;

²¹ Margaret Anderson, *My Thirty Years' War: An Autobiography* (New York: Covici, Friede, 1930), 174–6, 226–7; Vanderham, 1, 16–18, 37. It's worth noting that the *Little Review* was available to purchase both in subscription and at book stalls and the like. It is probable that many if not most of the scorn Anderson received came not from their committed audience but those who happened to grab a copy.

May 1919 for its references to incest, bestiality, and masturbation in the second half of “Scylla and Charybdis;” the third part “Cyclops” appeared in the January 1920 edition, which included criticism of Christianity’s complicity with imperialism; and the July/August 1920 edition, featuring the portion of “Nausicaa” in which Gerty MacDowell flirts with Bloom as he masturbates into his pants pocket. According to Anderson, when the Post issued a ban they would send her a “BURNED” notice afterwards, and there was nothing to be done about it.²²

Had that been the sum of the state’s action against the novel, the American censorship of *Ulysses* might have ended in relative obscurity, but it was only the beginning. What happened was this: seeking to expand the *Little Review*’s subscribers, Anderson mailed unsolicited copies. The edition with the masturbatory “Nausicaa” excerpt ended up in the hands of the daughter of a prominent New York lawyer. Horrified by it, she gave the journal to her father, who sent it to New York district attorney Edward Swann, whose office alerted John Sumner, Secretary of the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice. Sumner was the successor of the infamous Anthony Comstock, whose legislative jockeying helped bring about the existence of US obscenity laws in the first place, and Joyce’s depiction of a “corrupted” youth who explicitly understands that she is arousing Bloom was a challenge to “the very institution he was sworn to protect,” as Vanderham puts it. Sumner acquired several additional copies of the text and an explanatory complaint to the police. A judge then ordered a hearing and, subsequently, a trial. The New York Court of Special Sessions ruled that *Ulysses* was obscene and corrupting, fining both Anderson and her associate Jane Heap \$50 each, and barring them from publishing any

²² Vanderham, 1–2, 28–36; Anderson, 175. The entire print run of both the *Egoist* and *Little Review* are available online through the Modernist Journals Project (see <https://modjourn.org/journal/egoist/> and <https://modjourn.org/journal/little-review/>). For the suppressed passages as they appear in book form, see James Joyce, *Ulysses*, eds. Hans Walter Gabler with Wolfhard Steppe and Claus Melchior (New York: Vintage, 1986), 124–47, 162–79, 268–77, 299–313.

more of *Ulysses* in the *Little Review* or elsewhere. A federal court of appeals upheld the decision. The implication was that anyone in the US who published *Ulysses* might meet the same fate. New York essentially instituted a nationwide ban from the bench.²³

The impact of the case reverberated far beyond the US and tied “Joyce” and “*Ulysses*” to transnational memories of indecency, obscenity, and censorship. *Ulysses* was, in Fredric Jameson’s words, “always-already-read”: already interpreted before it was even (or ever) read.²⁴ Legal authorities, customs officials, and would-be readers who had never seen a copy would be required to make what scholar Joseph Brooker calls “highly mediated” assumptions about the book and its author.²⁵ That mediation came first by way of news reports of the case that spread a general sense of taboo around Joyce and *Ulysses*. It gave printers in England good cause to refuse to even set type for *Ulysses*. English publishers, too, rejected it explicitly because of the New York case. The legal danger and financial risk (to speak nothing of moral issues) the novel now presented were too great.²⁶

When Joyce’s friend Sylvia Beach finally did publish the book through her Parisian bookshop, Shakespeare and Company, in 1922, publication didn’t solve the problem but rather compounded it, and the novel’s global movement incurred more and more censorship. In the US where it was already ostensibly banned, authorities regularly confiscated and destroyed the French import. The New York Society for the Suppression of Vice raided bookstores through the 1920s, seizing both *Ulysses* and secondary criticism on the book. It appeared in erotica

²³ Vanderham, 2–3, 5, 37–56, quote at 39.

²⁴ Fredric Jameson, “*Ulysses* in History,” in *James Joyce and Modern Literature*, eds. W. J. McCormack and Alistair Stead (London: Routledge, 1982), 126.

²⁵ Joseph Brooker, *Joyce’s Critics: Transitions in Reading and Culture* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), 24.

²⁶ Vanderham, 3, 56.

catalogues, and French and US publishers specializing in “dirty books” sought permission to sell it. One such purveyor of pornography, American Samuel Roth, went so far as to begin serializing the novel (in bowdlerized form) without Joyce’s consent. The powers that be in New York noticed, however, and charged Roth. Even his cut version couldn’t escape prosecution. A *New York Times* headline in March 1927 proclaimed the accusation of indecency against Roth, Joyce, and *Ulysses*. Only two years later, Roth tried again, this time disguising his print as the Paris edition. Police also confiscated and destroyed this edition as well.²⁷

The fact of the novel’s French publication did not help matters. The Anglophone world very much associated France with the modern and the obscene. According to Marshik, this was in part because of a 1910 international agreement to curtail indecent literature. The French, however, carved out an exemption for themselves, noting that French law distinguishes books from other publications. As a result, the French could produce texts like *Ulysses*, but those texts were immediately suspicious to Anglophone censors. By publishing in France a book that forcefully challenged the social and moral order of the day, Joyce reinforced extant Anglophone assumptions.²⁸ To do so was also to further mark himself and his work as “always-already” indecent in the transnational imagination.

The book’s French publication and banning in the US halted its voyages and gave multiple states symbolic fodder for their policing of morality. Weaver published an *Egoist* edition in France shortly after Beach’s Shakespeare and Co. imprint, but US Customs seized 400 copies intended for her US subscribers. The following year, the English followed suit, tossing 499 of Weaver’s 500 copies that constituted the second edition into the dustbin.²⁹ Weaver later

²⁷ Vanderham, 82, 58, 85, 221n114, 82–3.

²⁸ Marshik, 157–8.

²⁹ Vanderham, 82.

estimated that US and UK officials destroyed at least 1,000 of the *Egoist's* 3,500 copies published in France. Officials most likely shredded the copies through guillotines that destroyed their physical coherence and symbolically ended their “lives” as foreign fugitives seeking (from the states’ perspectives) to poison the minds of their respective (and respectable) populations.³⁰ Canada took the cues from the US and UK and banned the book in 1922, burning the imported prints. Australia, too, followed suit in 1927.³¹

Ireland observed Britain’s importation prohibition, too, even after their independence from the United Kingdom, which happened to occur later in the same year Joyce published *Ulysses*. Upon independence, the Irish Free State adopted British statutory and common law with only minor exceptions, none of which impacted the censorship of publications. According to historian Michael Adams, Free State Customs officers already used the British exclusion lists and simply continued to use them.³² As Brooker notes, the de-facto Irish ban on *Ulysses* “was a reflection of *British* law” and would remain a rare commodity for Irish booksellers at least through the mid-1950s despite the fact that Ireland’s own Censorship Board never banned it.³³ The postal prohibition was an imperial holdover that gave Irish Customs the authority to screen and ban books, but one that nevertheless continued to largely comport with the politics of Irish cultural and moral regulation even after the passage of the 1929 Censorship of Publications Act in the Free State. This is to say that the Irish Free State maintained transcultural ties to Britain

³⁰ Marshik, 158.

³¹ Vanderham, 4, 56, 82–3, 155.

³² Michael Adams, *Censorship: The Irish Experience* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1968), 13, 31, 171–2.

³³ Brooker, 186–7, emphasis in original. That it was never banned in Ireland is possibly due in part to its scarcity. Copies had to be supplied to the Censorship Board and one was apparently difficult enough to come by, let alone multiple copies.

through its customs practices even as it did so, paradoxically, in the name of maintaining “postcolonial” Ireland’s national moral health – to bolster its own nationalist project.

The actual censorship of *Ulysses* constitutes only one part of how “*Ulysses*” became a mnemonic shorthand for transnational censorship histories. One of the others was its reception in print, which collectively helped to build that memory. The novel’s censorship staggered responses. Critical and popular opinions, positive, negative and indifferent commentaries, all appeared over time rather than at the point of the book’s release.³⁴ As Marshik explains, “reviews played a significant role in disseminating Joyce’s work” because it was both largely unavailable, and when people could access a copy, many found it impenetrably dense.³⁵ Many of the book’s first reviews weighed in on the debate of its indecency. To highlight but a sampling: Shane Leslie for the *Quarterly Review* called it “an Odyssey of the sewer,” “unquotable,” and demanded its destruction; Holbrook Jackson of *To-Day* felt it was “not indecent” but was instead “naked... neither moral nor immoral;” the *Observer*’s Sisley Huddleston admitted it was “undoubtedly an obscene book,” but that was because life was obscene, too; author Arnold Bennett said, “The book is not pornographic” insofar as it couldn’t possibly cause “the effects” of pornography, but nevertheless insisted that it “is more indecent, obscene, [and] scatological than the majority of professedly pornographical books;” a critic called “Aramis” announced in the *Sporting Times* that Joyce was “a perverted lunatic who has made a speciality [*sic*] of the literature of the latrine;” and psychologist Joseph Collins (who knew Joyce) claimed in the *New York Times* that it would likely leave most readers with little more than “bewilderment and a

³⁴ Brooker, 24.

³⁵ Marshik, 159.

sense of disgust.”³⁶ This critical body of work not only helped readers and would-be readers gain an impression or understanding of the book, but proved useful to government officials as well. Leslie’s article, for instance, brought the book to the attention of the Home Office in Britain, which opened an investigation.³⁷ Ironically, the prolonged discussion contributed to bringing Joyce and his novel more attention, dredging up its history (whether explicitly or implicitly), and often deepening the association of “Joyce” and “*Ulysses*” with censorship and obscenity.

Joyce worked diligently to manage his book’s reception. He advised scholars and critics studying his writing, acting as something of a critical ventriloquist (to borrow Brooker’s phrase), or at least a covert collaborator.³⁸ Among these projects includes the famous schema that Valère Larbaud developed with Joyce ahead of the Shakespeare and Company printing. Presented first in a talk and then in a published essay, Larbaud explicitly meant to defend Joyce and *Ulysses* from censorship by elaborating on the novel’s form and especially its debt to Homer. Joyce was in close contact with Larbaud and took a keen interest in his scholarship precisely because it would provide him and his allies with defensive ammunition against censorious attacks that skirted the scandalous contents entirely in favor of formalist analyses.³⁹ Once again, Joyce anticipated additional censorship and provided ways for his readers to frame and understand his work, but now he was able to appear above the brawl. Similarly, Joyce collaborated with Stuart Gilbert on his book *James Joyce’s “Ulysses”* (1930), which not only bestowed scholarly

³⁶ Leslie qtd. in Marshik, 159 and Brooker, 26; Jackson qtd. in Brooker, 25; Huddleston qtd. in Brooker, 25; Bennett qtd. in Brooker, 26; “Aramis” qtd. in Brooker, 26; Collins qtd. in Brooker, 27.

³⁷ Marshik, 159–60. It’s worth noting that this investigation also led officials in Britain to intervene into academic interest in Joyce, including the cancellation of lectures and the refusal to admit any of Joyce’s fiction into scholarly curricula. Those actions remained largely secret and were totally unknown to Joyce at the time of his death in 1941. See Marshik, 160–2.

³⁸ Marshik, 158–9; Brooker, 69.

³⁹ Vanderham, 74–6.

respectability on the book (for those willing to listen) but joined with Larbaud's schema as expert scholarship that played a key role in the book's 1933 retrial and 1934 appeal in the US.⁴⁰

This is not to say, however, that such scholarly efforts obliterated the memory of censorship. On the contrary, by acting as scholarly defenses of just such attacks the studies paradoxically kept the memory alive and in circulation. In the labor of defending his work and building a larger audience, Joyce and his allies often engendered a kind of productive tension between censorship and obscenity on the one hand and high art on the other. For instance, Joyce and Beach adopted both positive and negative reviews to advertise the book.⁴¹ In doing so, they kept recent histories in the minds of those who encountered "Joyce" and "*Ulysses*." Conjuring up even only a glimpse of that history gave people a framework through which to navigate the discursive field before them, whether in press coverage, scholarship, casual conversation, or the rare copy of the actual book. Even as the bans began to come down, these transnational forms continued to shape local national imaginaries.

This is in part because the memory of censorship continued to not just linger but assert itself. Random House Publishing began the case to lift the US ban on *Ulysses*, and, in the 1933 case of *United States of America v. One Book Called Ulysses*, Judge John M. Woolsey ruled that the book was not obscene in the language of US federal law.⁴² After the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice lost their 1934 case to appeal Woolsey's decision at the High Court, *Ulysses* could be published in and imported into the US. The decision directly influenced Britain to remove its ban in 1936 and Irish Customs similarly dropped the book from its exclusion list

⁴⁰ Brooker, 60–8; Vanderham, 14, 127–8, 152–4. Gilbert's book was, in fact, one of no less than seven books on *Ulysses* that appeared by 1934.

⁴¹ Brooker, 24.

⁴² For a detailed narrative and extensive analysis of the case and Woolsey's decision, see Vanderham 87–131.

sometime around 1934, likely due to similar international influence.⁴³ After the case, Random House included Woolsey's decisions in their edition of the book in the form of a preface. Joyce encouraged the editors at Bodley Head, his new British publisher, to include both US decisions, which they did as an afterward. As Marshik argues, both of these popular editions preserved the book's status as an object of censorship for decades, "remind[ing] readers that the text had been censored" and "foreclos[ing] other ways of reading" *Ulysses*.⁴⁴

If the US and UK editions of *Ulysses*'s inclusion of the US legal decisions implied Joyce's triumph over censorship in the memory that they constructed, the novel's absence in Ireland speaks variously to Ireland's continued reluctance about, lack of interest in, and hostility toward Joyce and his work that persisted long after Irish Customs removed it from the exclusions list. In Joyce's native Ireland the memory of "Joyce" and "*Ulysses*" remained thoroughly negative and mired in obscenity and blasphemy. The memory of Joyce's censorship was persistent and pervasive in Ireland. For example, Irish novelist Brian Moore recalled a mid-century conversation with his father, who claimed, "James Joyce is a sewer" despite never having read any Joyce.⁴⁵ Even through the 1960s, booksellers refused to stock their shelves with Joyce's fiction.⁴⁶

Although the memory of "Joyce," "*Ulysses*," and their censorship was transnational in its reach and formation, the divergence of the Irish response from the 1930s through 1960s demonstrates that people navigate those memories locally and in doing so they negotiate the terms of their own identities and values. To the vast majority in Éamon de Valera's Ireland,

⁴³ Vanderham, 5; Marshik, 163–4; Adams, *Censorship*, 31, 172. Australia kept its ban in place until 1937 but then implemented it again in 1941. Canada's ban remained in effect until 1949. See Vanderham, 5.

⁴⁴ Marshik, 164–5.

⁴⁵ Qtd. in Brooker, 188.

⁴⁶ Brooker, 188. A copy could be purchased through special order if the bookseller was willing.

“Joyce” and “*Ulysses*” went against what it meant to be good Irish citizens. Their memory remained a challenge but one that they kept in circulation precisely to help define ideal Irishness – as in the case of the 1958 DITF’s collapse. An example of embracing Joyce demonstrates this point from an alternative angle. At University College Dublin, where Joyce once was censored as a student, something of a Joyce cult emerged in the 1930s. This resolutely Irish Catholic group of undergraduates exalted in Joyce’s criticisms of the repressive Catholic Church and Irish culture – narrow-mindedness that was just as (if not more) identifiable in the Republic as it had been in the colonial Ireland Joyce represented. That “Joyce” remained taboo made him and his work politically powerful, a challenge to de Valera, the Church, and hegemonic Irish nationalism. That, I argue, is one of the reasons why Phyllis Ryan staged *Bloomsday* in 1962. That she did so as a part of a project that had the economic support of the state – that the production worked at least somewhat from within the hegemony – and without a major show of protest, helped to realize a transitory shift in the meaning of Irishness vis-à-vis “Joyce” and “*Ulysses*.”

5.2 Making Ireland Safe for Joyce: Irish Culture and Modernization

In the autumn of 1957, as Archbishop McQuaid made his first inquiries about whether or not O’Casey and Joyce would be included in the coming spring Tóstal, Phyllis Ryan was working toward her dream: the start of her own theatre company. Called Orion Productions (a pun on her last name and suggestive of her astral-high ambitions), Ryan’s company made its debut with an original Christmas revue of songs, sketches, and stories called *Guided Mistletoe* (a pun on the Soviet Union’s advancements in intercontinental ballistic missile technology, then much in the news thanks to the launch of *Sputnik*). Featuring several major Irish actors –

including Anna Manahan, who performed Oscar Wilde's children's story "The Selfish Giant" (1888) as a monologue – *Guided Mistletoe* successfully launched Orion into Dublin's theatrical orbit. Writing in 1996, though, Ryan recalls, "Controversial and thought-provoking plays... were what I really wanted to present, and most of all, new Irish plays."⁴⁷ In 1962, she met both aspirations in a single title: Allan McClelland's *Bloomsday*. Yet, for a play that caused so much perturbation just four years earlier, *Bloomsday* opened and closed with little disturbance. Why?

In the four-year interim "Joyce" and "*Ulysses*" gained an international currency that Seán Lemass's administration was generally more willing to prop up and support, especially if it meant increasing the Republic's economic prospects and reputation on the world stage. *Bloomsday* was a part of a celebration commemorating "Joyce" that had the explicit (although minor) financial backing of the state and tracked with Lemass's economic modernization policies. As Lionel Pilkington argues, though, "Ireland's post-war modernization was not a matter of simple policy changes or of government-sponsored initiative," but also a cultural reexamination of nationalism's history, militant republicanism, and Ireland's relationship to the outside world in light of new and still-emergent economic realities.⁴⁸

Bloomsday's appearance in Dublin participated in a renegotiation of Ireland's relationship to "Joyce" and all that memory contained, to speak nothing of the specific representations of Irish gender, sexuality, and nationality that it embodied onstage. To a certain degree, economic modernization helped insulate *Bloomsday* and the other Joyce events from boycott despite the prevailing memory of "Joyce" and "*Ulysses*." *Bloomsday*'s Dublin production in 1962 was made possible partly because of the growing international cultural

⁴⁷ Ryan, 148. On *Guided Mistletoe* and the beginning of Orion Productions, see Ryan, 140–7.

⁴⁸ Lionel Pilkington, *Theatre and the State in Twentieth-Century Ireland* (London: Routledge, 2001), 144–5.

capital around Joyce's works and a handful of important predecessors that enabled Irish cultural producers and audiences to begin reforming their relationship to "Joyce" and their own milieu. As historian Mary E. Daly argues, Lemass's economic development policies were, indeed, economic, and many Irish institutions sought to control and even limit liberalization and secularization as much as possible.⁴⁹ After all, a 1962 sociological survey of Dublin Catholics showed the Church held greater sway than any political or cultural body, that people believed the clergy knew best and that their advice should be followed, and that 90% felt that the Church was the country's greatest force for good.⁵⁰ Moral and sexual censorship continued to prevail, and 1962 saw the censorship of Edna O'Brien's novel *Girl with the Green Eyes/The Lonely Girl* (1962), a candid portrait of young women coming of age in contemporary Ireland.⁵¹ *Bloomsday* and the other Joycean performances I take up in this section tracked with the status quo of economic modernization, but also offered alternative political formations that challenged the institutions that resisted cultural and social change.

Ireland stood to benefit greatly from growing global interest in Joyce, and some recognized this as early as 1954, when one observer wrote to the *Irish Times* that Ireland occupied a "ridiculous position... by our persistent ignoring of this great Dublin-born artist. After all we *are* in the tourist market, and these misguided foreigners think quite a lot of Joyce."⁵² The nod to tourist infrastructure as a way to support an Irish market for Joyce is telling.

⁴⁹ Mary E. Daly, *Sixties Ireland: Reshaping the Economy, State and Society, 1957 – 1973* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 6.

⁵⁰ Bruce Biever, *Religion, Culture and Values: A Cross-Cultural Analysis of Motivational Factors in Native Irish and American Irish Catholicism* (New York: Arno Press, 1976). See also Tom Garvin, *Preventing the Future: Why was Ireland So Poor for So Long?* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 2004), 200–1.

⁵¹ Adams, *Censorship*, 252. This was the sequel to O'Brien's *The Country Girls* (1960), which was also banned.

⁵² Qtd. in John McCourt, "Mapping the Holy Ground: The Expansion of Irish Joyce Reception in the Nineteen Sixties," in *Parallaxes: Virginia Woolf Meets James Joyce*, eds. Marco Canani and Sara Sullam, (Newcastle upon Tyre: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), 51. According to McCourt, this statement was actually written by a Joyce supporter looking to drum up support.

A 1954 survey of Irish-Americans indicated “an immense interest in James Joyce” among academics and students and a more general desire to visit Dublin.⁵³ The US academy took Joyce more and more seriously from the 1930s onward, and Richard Ellmann’s monumental 1959 biography of Joyce signaled a watershed moment that provided popular and scholarly accessibility. Joyce studies boomed and spread to British universities.⁵⁴ Scholarly advances pointed to increased interest in Joyce that could bring prestige to Ireland, but represented only a fragment of the potential, especially as evidenced in British channels.

The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) exhibited a particularly keen attachment to Joyce once the ban in Britain fell. In the decade from 1946 to 1956, the BBC produced 74 different items on Joyce and broadcast several of them multiple times. These ranged from readings of Joyce’s texts, to radio adaptations, lectures, and original musical compositions inspired by Joyce.⁵⁵ The 50th anniversary of June 16, 1904 – again, when *Ulysses* takes place – saw five such programs, alone.⁵⁶ The BBC broadcast the vast majority of their Joyce offerings through the Third Programme, a deliberately cosmopolitan evening show that sought to cultivate and support more intellectual and “sophisticated” publics. The Third Programme had a smaller audience of listeners than other BBC outlets, but it had similar Arnoldian aims of using the radio as an educational medium that would instruct and, in the process, “civilize” the masses.⁵⁷ By the

⁵³ Patrick Callan, “Electrically Filtered for All Irish Earths and Ohms: Broadcasting the Work of James Joyce on BBC Radio, 1931–1956,” *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 39, no. 4 (2019): 843.

⁵⁴ On Ellmann’s biography, see Brooker, 100–15.

⁵⁵ Callan, 846–57. It’s worth noting that BBC officials squashed attempts to broadcast Joyce in 1931, before the ban on *Ulysses* fell. Also, it is likely that the BBC would have broadcast even more Joyce in the 1950s, but a successful libel case in 1954 made producers more cautious for at least a time. See Callan, 841–3, 844.

⁵⁶ Callan, 856. These included a talk on the novel’s theme by William Empson, readings of two episodes from the novel (“Hades” and “Aeolus”), a recording of Joyce reading from the book, and a talk on music in *Ulysses* by Sean O’Faolain.

⁵⁷ Emily C. Bloom, *The Wireless Past: Anglo-Irish Writers and the BBC, 1931–1968* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 20–1; Hugh Chignell, *British Radio Drama, 1945 – 63* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2019), 24–5.

late 1950s and early 1960s, the BBC regularly produced radio dramas by (and adaptations of) such contemporary avant-garde writers as Beckett, Ionesco, Sartre, Harold Pinter, and Arthur Adomov alongside historical writers like Shakespeare, Ibsen, Alfred Jarry, and Sophocles.⁵⁸ The BBC's Joyce programs sat squarely alongside other highbrow cultural offerings and contributed to their project of making that culture accessible to a wide audience.

The exact political implications of the BBC's project were complicated. On the one hand, from its foundation the BBC actively constructed the British nation on the air, one with moral as much as social and cultural underpinnings.⁵⁹ On the other hand, as Emily C. Bloom recently argued, radio de-territorializes culture at least to some degree because of its transnational reach, creating alternative forms of political and cultural entanglement. Many Irish could and did listen to BBC Radio, as it provided much more programming than Ireland's national radio. In fact, even as it maintained its mission of curating and showcasing the "best" of British culture, the BBC urged programming that would appeal to an Irish audience, too, especially from its regional Belfast station (much to the chagrin of the Northern Irish government).⁶⁰

None of this means that Irish folks welcomed or listened to the BBC's Joyce-focused broadcasts *en masse*. The number of Irish listeners for these programs are difficult to even speculate.⁶¹ What is clear is that the aural Joyce was just as contested in Ireland as the textual

⁵⁸ Chignell, 149–55.

⁵⁹ Todd Avery, *Radio Modernism: Literature, Ethics, and the BBC, 1922–1938* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 5–7.

⁶⁰ Bloom, 2–3, 7–16; Christopher Morash, *A History of the Media in Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 131–53. For instance, the BBC extensively hired Irish actors and writers and regularly broadcast Yeats's poetry and Abbey Theatre performances. See Bloom, 27–63; Callan, 834–5.

⁶¹ Audience research was a key part of the research that the BBC undertook to help it make decisions about programming. As far as I have been able to tell, that research focused exclusively on UK listeners. Because of the Belfast outfit, I am inclined to think that the audience research could have gone beyond the border, but I have been unable to find any sources that would prove this. For more on the BBC's audience research, see Robert Silvey, *Who's Listening?: The Story of BBC Audience Research* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1974). The COVID-19 pandemic has here limited what I've been able to access, too, as I had hoped to research more about these radio productions but was unable to travel to conduct that archival research. This is, therefore, one area I wish to investigate more fully for the revision and expansion of this dissertation into a book.

and mnemonic “Joyce.” This was in part because the BBC programming brought Joyce under the umbrella of British culture and, as such, could be and was often viewed with suspicion in Ireland as variously foreign and/or modern and therefore an intrusive pollutant, especially to traditionalists. That the BBC brought Joyce into its fold could have appeared to confirm such logic. Catholic lay organizations pressured Radio Éireann to prohibit its contracted performers from collaborating with the BBC on proposed *Ulysses* performances in 1953. It wasn’t until 1954 that any Irish newspapers even began regularly announcing the BBC’s Joyce programs, let alone substantively reviewing or otherwise covering them.⁶² In the late 1950s, Cyril Cusack and actress Siobhan McKenna performed excerpts from Joyce’s *oeuvre* for release on record, but the distributors refused to sell any recording featuring *Ulysses* because they mistakenly believed it to be banned in the Republic.⁶³ Still, it seems likely that some Irish would have heard and even sought out the BBC’s Joyce offerings. That Irish presses belatedly came to report on them and that Irish actors sought them out as performance opportunities suggests a growing interest and audience for them as time went on. These productions certainly made up a part of the growing international cultural industry, and at least some in Ireland clearly saw cultural and economic potential in that field.

Bloomsday, itself, emerged partly from this context. Its author, Allan McClelland, worked for the BBC and adapted *Bloomsday* for both BBC Radio and TV. McClelland began his career as an actor in Dublin, appearing in Shaw’s *The Millionairess* (1936) at the Gaiety Theatre in 1937.⁶⁴ According to Fergus McClelland, Allan’s son, the actor was originally from Dunmurry, a southwest Belfast suburb, and emigrated to London in 1945 or 1946 upon receiving

⁶² Callan, 844, 833.

⁶³ McCourt, 55.

⁶⁴ “He Puts Ulysses On the Stage,” *Sunday Independent*, June 17, 1962, 22.

an invitation to perform in a specific project, but the company invited the wrong actor. McClelland decided to stay anyway and found work in short order, putting his dramatic training to use as a speech therapist working with shell-shocked WWII soldiers. He quickly immersed himself in London theatre, befriending the likes of Laurence Olivier and marrying a designer, Charlotte McClelland (born Edith French Cox).⁶⁵ He continued to work as a stage actor, appearing in such prominent productions as the original cast of Agatha Christie's *The Mousetrap* (1952, as Christopher Wren).⁶⁶ Eventually, he joined the BBC staff as a reporter and actor. Seeing performance opportunities in radio versions of literary works, he took to writing them himself, including adaptations of Anne Brontë's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848) in 1954 and Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* (1796) in 1985. McClelland "obsessively" labored on *Bloomsday* for several years and continued to revise it within and across different mediums – so much so that Fergus recalls complaining to his parents, "Bloom! Bloom! Bloody Bloom! I'll be sick if I hear any more about bloody Bloom!"⁶⁷ *Bloomsday* performed onstage at least twice in Britain before the Dublin production, once at Oxford University Experimental Theatre Club in the autumn of 1958 and again at London's amateur Unity Theatre in 1960.⁶⁸

Although he wrote it first for theatre, given his success and professional network at the BBC, McClelland probably had ambitions for *Bloomsday* to have a life on radio and television

⁶⁵ Interview with Fergus McClelland, July 12, 2018. I thank Fergus for his candor and time. There is virtually no scholarship on Allan McClelland and I've found precious little about him from archival sources, so this interview filled in vital details about his life and work.

⁶⁶ "Surprise for 'Bloomsday' Writer," *Evening Herald*, June 16, 1962.

⁶⁷ McClelland interview; "The Tenant of Wildfell Hall" by Anne Brontë. adapted as 2-part play by Allan McClelland," BBC Genome, <https://genome.ch.bbc.co.uk/ab79c00611a6a242734745317acc40d3>; "The Monk," BBC Genome, <https://genome.ch.bbc.co.uk/4266a00f83a04b6f87a9afd9f0905973>.

⁶⁸ Correspondence between the Oxford University Experimental Theatre Club and the Lord Chamberlain's Office, October 14, 1958 to November 21, 1958, BL, LCP CORR 1958/1376; McClelland interview; Cuttings about *Bloomsday*, Unity Theatre Records, Theatre and Performance Archives, Victoria and Albert Museum, THM/9/5/108. The production at the Unity is another performance I hope to investigate further at a later time. As a radical, revolutionary group, their selection of *Bloomsday* is fascinating.

from its early stages, which it eventually did. The radio adaptation premiered on the BBC's Third Programme on May 10, 1961, and was broadcast a second time on June 2. BBC Radio 3 later revived it in a new performance and broadcast it on Bloomsday, 1974. McClelland also wrote a teleplay version. Starring Milo O'Shea as Leopold Bloom, the BBC filmed and broadcast it on BBC One on June 10, 1964. McClelland also performed the part of Mr. Deasy, Stephen's anti-Semitic, unionist employer, in each of these productions.⁶⁹

Thanks to the BBC's audience research division, specifics about the listening audience for *Bloomsday*'s radio performances are readily available. According to the BBC's Audience Research Report, it was a success. Although it received a slightly below-average grade of B (on a five-point scale of A+, A, B, C, C-), the researchers estimated that about 0.1% of the British population tuned in – a considerable number of some 52,600.⁷⁰ That number does not include those outside of the UK who managed to catch it. McClelland condensed and pared down the novel for the radio version even more than he had for the stage – down to only 62 pages from the stage version's 105.⁷¹ As such, his radio adaptation is a majorly streamlined version of *Ulysses* that focuses on telling the story in as straightforward a manner as possible while still retaining Joyce's language. The audience report's summary of responses indicates that some nevertheless found the radio play confusing and difficult to follow, citing especially its episodic plot structure and the similarity of the Irish voices emanating from their boxes. Listeners already familiar with the particulars of *Ulysses*'s plot felt it would have been difficult to follow had they not already

⁶⁹ "BLOOMSDAY," *BBC Genome*, accessed May 22, 2021, <https://genome.ch.bbc.co.uk/7b539f0e03cf4c65a9175aaecd961736>; "Bloomsday," *BBC Genome*, accessed May 22, 2021, <https://genome.ch.bbc.co.uk/schedules/third/1961-06-02#at-20.00>; "Bloomsday," *BBC Genome*, accessed May 22, 2021, <https://genome.ch.bbc.co.uk/ff9034679d6244c0a2945d3a977b0fa8>; "Festival: Bloomsday," *BBC Genome*, accessed May 22, 2021, <https://genome.ch.bbc.co.uk/462cee47219c48d2a40156928de0ef33>.

⁷⁰ Audience Research Report for *Bloomsday*, May 30, 1961, BBC Written Archives.

⁷¹ Allan McClelland, *Bloomsday*, Lord Chamberlain's Plays, Archives and Manuscripts, BL, LCP 1958/45; Allan McClelland, *Bloomsday*, Radio Script, Humphrey Searle Collection, Archives and Manuscripts, BL, MS 71809.

known at least something of the story (demonstrating that, for some, their interest in listening was based on the memory of “Joyce” and/or “*Ulysses*”). Others believed that the performance helped them make sense of a novel they had attempted to read and failed to comprehend.⁷²

A select few listeners that the BBC interviewed brought up the issue of the novel/performance’s obscenity. For some “cleaning up” the text weakened it, while a select few still found it “coarse and vulgar.” One called it, “one of these sordid, miserable figments of the brains that have nothing of beauty or hope.” Another said, “I do not like to dig for pearls in a morass, and if someone wishes to tell me something vital, they have got to do it in a civilized way.”⁷³ That the issue came up at all points to the degree to which “Joyce” and “*Ulysses*” and the attendant memories of censorship still informed interpretations of Joyce’s works over two decades after the ban on *Ulysses* came down. Both of these responses pit what the listeners perceived of as objectionable or offensive content against lofty notions of beauty, vitality, and civilization. The sideways references to the figure behind the play (“someone” and “brains”) suggests a vague awareness of Joyce and his reputation, implicitly linking it with their response. Although only obliquely present in the archive as evidence, if this is what happened, it means that the memory had the capacity to reify the very categories that made censorship possible in the first place. The memory of censorship can contribute to a reductive interpretation that perpetuates the violent logics that justify censorship.

⁷² Audience Research Report for *Bloomsday*, May 30, 1961, BBC Written Archives. In particular, the use of *sotto voce*, quiet or whispered speech, hindered comprehensibility. McClelland’s radio script maintains Joyce’s use of internal monologues, and it is likely that the actors used *sotto voce* to convey when their character was thinking as opposed to speaking out loud to another character. Others felt that clarity was needed between episodes, such as narration, to help them follow the characters’ movements through Dublin, establish settings, etc.

⁷³ Audience Research Report for *Bloomsday*, May 30, 1961, BBC Written Archives. There is much more I hope to someday say about this performance. The BBC helped me locate a copy of the performance on an antiquated form of electric tape. I was planning to go to London to listen to the performance (which can only be heard on-site at the British Library) when the pandemic shut down travel. There remains a lot of evidence to examine, but I just have not had access to those materials.

It is likely that the success of the radio *Bloomsday* (together with the BBC's other Joyce offerings) helped pave the way for McClelland's stage version to return to Dublin.⁷⁴ Ryan and her co-producer – the short-lived Envoy Productions – might have been worried about the play because of its role in the 1958 DITF.⁷⁵ Phyllis Ryan very often communicated with the authors of the plays she produced ahead of their production about their contents, history, and any other thoughts they had. McClelland was still known in Dublin by major players like Brendan Behan (with whom he was friends) and DITF producer Brendan Smith, so it would have been easy for Ryan to get in touch with McClelland. If she had been culturally concerned with the play, *Bloomsday*'s accessibility to Ireland as a radio piece could have put her at ease. The play's success on the (trans)national radio could also have given the theatre producer some assurance of its financial potential considering she only had 237 possible seats each night, and the radio *Bloomsday* appealed to tens of thousands at a single go. Further, the production's transnational reach likely helped carve out a place for "Joyce" and "*Ulysses*" in the Irish cultural imaginary.

The international success of stage adaptations of Joyce's work helped to bring his work back to Ireland and begin a radical recalibration of "Joyce's" reception there. Perhaps the earliest of these was Mary Manning's adaptation of Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* (1939), called *The Voice of Shem*, which premiered at the Poets' Theatre in Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1955 under

⁷⁴ The surveyed audience for the 1964 television version received it with far less enthusiasm than the radio play, with only about 25% of the audience approving of the choice and grading it far below the average score for its program and time slot. Most found the teleplay incomprehensible, but felt the actors, particularly Milo O'Shea as Bloom and June Tobin as Molly, were outstanding. I am not going to give this performance more space in this analysis as it took place long after the Dublin premiere in 1962, but I do want to flag that the audience report demonstrates broadly varying responses to *Bloomsday* across mediums. That, in itself, deserves attention elsewhere. Audience Research Report for *Festival: BLOOMSDAY*, June 10, 1964, BBC Written Archives.

⁷⁵ Curiously, Ryan doesn't mention *Bloomsday* or her company's role in producing it in her memoir at all. She does note that, when she produced the premiere of Hugh Leonard's *Stephen D.* – an adaptation of Joyce's *Stephen Hero* and *Portrait* – for the 1963 Dublin Theatre Festival, Brendan Smith was incredibly worried about Church objections over the play, but Ryan seems unsure why. She does not mention the 1958 collapse of the DITF, either. Writing over three decades later, this does not mean that she didn't know about the '58 DITF or the play's history at the time. She was thoroughly engrossed in Dublin's theatre and had been for years. Ryan, 173.

Manning's direction.⁷⁶ *The Voice of Shem* went on to perform at the Questors Theatre in Ailing, a suburb west of London, in September 1958. Two months later, the Lyric Theatre in Belfast produced Manning's adaptation. Radio performances followed these stage productions, including two broadcasts from the BBC's Third Programme in 1959.⁷⁷ The Protestant and unionist-sympathetic *Irish Times* announced the BBC *Shem* ahead of its first broadcast and later printed a review. The unnamed critic admits that the program quickly put them out of their depth but that the Irish cast nevertheless pulled off some "obviously funny verbal effects," and that the actors spoke their lines in one scene "so significantly that I was almost persuaded that I caught their import."⁷⁸ This international production history again points to economic and cultural opportunities that Dublin was missing out on.

If this was the case it was in part because of Ireland's evolving attitude toward the larger world. After de Valera stepped down as taoiseach, Lemass took on the role, prioritizing and expanding the economic modernization projects he championed as minister for industry and commerce. Lemass's policies ended protectionism and sought to internationalize the Irish economy by creating a tourist market, further backing Ireland's export industries, and promoting foreign capital investment. The frequency of Joycean events in the 1960s – particularly the rapid succession of Joyce adaptations that appeared in Dublin's theatres – reflected the new Irish international economic principles at the cultural level. At once foreign and domestic, these

⁷⁶ In Massachusetts, it performed under the title *Readings from Finnegans Wake*. *The Voice of Shem* was Manning's title for what was only a moderately revised version that she published and which was subsequently performed. See Paige Reynolds, "The Avant-Garde Doyenne: Marry Manning, the Poets' Theatre, and the Staging of 'Finnegans Wake,'" *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies* 39, no. 2 (2016): 121.

⁷⁷ John Manning, "The Voice of Shem," *Irish Times*, September 18, 1961, 7. *The Voice of Shem* received marginally worse feedback in the BBC audience report than the radio *Bloomsday*. Considering that the linguistic density of *Finnegans Wake* far exceeds anything in *Ulysses*, that the two received essentially equally positive feedback speaks highly of *The Voice of Shem*. See BBC Audience Research Report for *Bloomsday*.

⁷⁸ "London Letter," *Irish Times*, March 12, 1959, 9; "Titan and Mouse," *Irish Times*, June 4, 1959, 3.

Joycean activities also conversed with the political and cultural tensions between national culture and international economics – neither of which could be so neatly bifurcated as many proponents of modernization hoped.

The Voice of Shem was among the first such events and it broke down barriers around “Joyce” through an approach that emphasized embodied effects over any other aspect. Produced by Phyllis Ryan and directed by Louis Lentin at the Eblana for the Dublin Theatre Festival in 1961, Manning’s *The Voice of Shem* won critical praise and was a standout box office smash for that year’s Festival. According to Ryan, it wasn’t even strong reviews that brought in the crowds, as the production had a strong advance sale that indicated it would quickly sell out – which it did, much to some of the actors’ concern. Ryan caught Arthur O’Sullivan (the company’s Finnegan) muttering “Jaysus, we’ll be lynched” during rehearsals.⁷⁹ There is no attempt at naturalism in *The Voice of Shem*, and the play retains Joyce’s famously dense, polysyllabic, and idiosyncratic language. Riddled with multilingual puns and innuendos in a dream-like tapestry, *Finnegans Wake* evokes specific histories, myths, and geographies as much as everyday Dublin life at the start of the twentieth century. The story (or whatever approximates a story in Joyce’s experiment) spirals outward from Finnegan’s wake. Finnegan awakens at his wake as or conjures from his death’s dream one H. C. Earwicker, a father and pub owner who is on the rise in Dublin society only to then fall on the word of a rumor involving a sexual encounter with two young women in Dublin’s Phoenix Park. The novel resists the concrete to such a degree that even the most basic plot summaries vary considerably even among Joyce scholars.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Ryan, 162–3.

⁸⁰ For a detailed and remarkably clear aide to the characters, plot, and events (for lack of better terms) in *Finnegans Wake*, see Roland McHugh, *Annotations to Finnegans Wake* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2016) x–xvi. For a taxonomical analysis of critical approaches and interpretations of *Finnegans Wake*, see Finn Fordham, *Lots of Fun at Finnegans Wake: Unravelling Universals* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 7–33. For another

Ryan took considerable risk in producing *The Voice of Shem*. While Lonergan is certainly correct when he writes that the production represented Manning's assertion that Joyce (and her own work) needed to be seen and heard in Dublin, this was surely the case for Ryan, too, whose aim of producing provocative Irish theatre largely aligned with Manning's.⁸¹ In particular, *Shem* continues an aesthetic and political project that Manning began with her work at the Gate a quarter century earlier in *Youth's the Season...?*. "Countering homogenous invented Ireland," in theatre historian Cathy Leeney's words, that play depicted an openly gay couple, the Protestant bourgeoisie, and Irish bohemians, and brought them to a shockingly nihilistic ending.⁸² Ruud van den Beuken writes that, together with her Gate Theatre collaborators like Edward and Christine Longford, Manning wrote essays for and in support of the Gate as a national theatre that expressed the heterogeneity and transitional status of Ireland's postcolonial condition. In a sharp reading, van den Beuken contends Manning adopts "Joyce" in *Youth's the Season...?* "as a token of the genuine Irish artist who renounces a mindless acceptance of monolithic identities."⁸³ Ryan's multiple production companies – which included not just Orion but Libra Productions (to mask the fact that she was producing more than one production for the 1961 Dublin Theatre Festival) and Gemini Productions (formed in partnership with Norman Rodway's old Globe Company) as well – aspired to similar aims.⁸⁴ Ryan's early productions included the Irish

helpful guide to the novel and its critical history, see Margot Norris, "Finnegans Wake," in *The Cambridge Companion to James Joyce*, ed. Derek Attridge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 149–71.

⁸¹ Lonergan, *Irish Drama*, 114.

⁸² Cathy Leeney, *Irish Women Playwrights 1900–1939: Gender and Violence on Stage* (New York: Peter Lang, 2010), 128.

⁸³ Ruud van den Beuken, *Avant-Garde Nationalism at the Dublin Gate Theatre, 1928–1940* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2021), 60–9, 164.

⁸⁴ After the collapse of the 1958 DITF, Brendan Smith worked to establish the Festival as a more independent organization and shield it from external interference. It returned in 1959 and, by 1962, reconstituted itself as the Dublin Theatre Festival, dropping the word "international" from its title. For more, see Patrick Lonergan, "'Feast and Celebration': The Theatre Festival and Modern Irish Theatre," in *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Irish Theatre*, eds. Nicholas Grene and Chris Morash (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 645–6.

premieres of sexually-charged plays like William Inge's *Picnic* (1953), Williams's *A Streetcar Named Desire* in 1959 and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* in 1960, and Hugh Leonard's *A Walk on the Water* (1960) (which included a gay character).⁸⁵ Through Manning's *The Voice of Shem*, Ryan gave Dublin a Joycean cultural product deliberately calculated to engender a plurality of interpretations and resist monolithic understandings of Irish identity and culture. Ryan's production similarly helped splinter the meaning of "Joyce" and what it could mean for her Dublin audiences.

Showcasing only select sequences from the novel, Manning's adaptation does not aim for comprehensibility but impressionism, delighting in the sonic fluid of Joyce's prose and the range of evocations that the connections between aural and visual imagery offers.⁸⁶ In her production note in the published script, Manning writes,

Versatile actors, clever and imaginative lighting, ingenious sound effects are essential to this production of *Finnegans Wake*. The words are the things indeed and the words should be sacred. Perfect audibility is required... Joyce wrote to be heard. Any production of *Finnegan* should be paced so that the audience has time to hear. If not, the subtle imagery, adroit punning, and the essential meaning will be lost in a verbal shuffle. True, we have used ballet, but here again the words dominate the dancers.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Ryan, 149–57. For the 1961 Dublin Theatre Festival, Orion Productions staged John B. Keane's *No More in Dust* (1961), Gemini produced Hugh Leonard's Irish take on Ibsen's *Peer Gynt* (1867) called *The Passion of Peter Ginty* (1961), and Libra produced *Shem*. See Ryan, 153, 161–2. It's worth noting, too, that *Streetcar* prompted theatregoers to vent their outrage to the press and the managers of the Orion's venue, the Gas Company Theatre. *Cat* resulted in those managers demanding the production close. Ryan vacated the Gas Company for the Eblana. See Ryan, 150, 155.

⁸⁶ For an analysis of Manning's adaptation and how it compares to Joyce's novel, see Lanter, 183–202.

⁸⁷ Mary Manning, *The Voice of Shem* (London: Faber and Faber, 1957), 71.

For Manning, the “essential meaning” of the show emerges from the embodied experience – the collusion between Joyce’s language from the mouths of the actors, the staging that gives physical outlet to that language, and the audience’s real-time reception of that labor.

Critical responses often similarly emphasized overall effects and feelings over story, theme, or characterization to various degrees. One reviewer could only describe the plot/story in images before falling back on emotive and qualifying language to express their pleasure (“superb and moving,” “never less than excellent,” “amusing,” “pace is fast and never flags,” “convincing theatrical unity”).⁸⁸ Another, writing on a revival of the same production in the spring of the following year (just ahead of a transfer of the play to Britain), summed up their experience:

It is a torrent of words pouring out around scattered beer-barels [*sic*] from blue-green shadows and swirling around our seats, over our heads and under our feet. Cacophonous or melodic, it is a medley of mixed verbal music: symphonic snatch leading into rounded comprehensible ballad or jerking into the patter of a ‘pop,’ fading intimately to the limpid, languid lullaby of Anna Ivia’s [*sic*] lament. It swirls, it spurts, it stops and it starts again, crackling or crooning as suits the mood of its dreaming.

With over a hundred light cues, a succession of songs, and impactful linguistic and physical performances, it is the overwhelming affective experience of the show that both impressed and stuck with the reviewer. Indeed, this critic is admittedly contrary to their colleagues, explaining that while the effects are stupendous the “torrent of words” ultimately are of “doubtful worth” despite their “tremendous theatrical validity.”⁸⁹ Not even the actors grasped exactly what it was

⁸⁸ “Eblana Theatre,” *Irish Times*, September 12, 1961, 12.

⁸⁹ “‘The Voice of Shem’s’ Dream is Never in the Mind,” *Irish Times*, March 27, 1962, 2. On the production’s lighting, see Ryan, 163. On the British transfer of Ryan’s production, see Ryan, 164–5.

they were doing onstage in the traditional sense. Ryan describes even the most Joyce-attuned members of the cast approaching their parts in an “instinctive rather than cerebral” manner.⁹⁰

Although questions of obscenity, blasphemy, and indecency are noticeably missing from almost all of the reviews of the Dublin production, they nevertheless illuminate the degree to which the critics had to navigate the controversial memory of “Joyce” in their responses. Only the critic for the *Irish Independent* commented on the play’s “touch of vulgarity” and “irreverent attitude to things many people hold holy.”⁹¹ Indeed, there are potent phrases and representations in *The Voice of Shem* that could have caused offense, including infidelity, punning references to incest, and coarse language (“Fik yew!”), as Irish cultural historian Paige Reynolds notes in her exploration of Manning’s staging of her adaptation in the US.⁹² The language of Joyce/Manning’s text helps explain why *The Voice of Shem* managed to largely sidestep notice of its more inflammatory content. For Vanderham, the obtuseness of *Finnegans Wake* is in part a response to the scandals surrounding *Ulysses* and gave Joyce a way to covertly hustle illicit material past the censors.⁹³ The production mirrored the novel/play’s linguistic experimentation, refusing naturalistic representation so that the performance provided audiences with an alternative way to respond to “Joyce” and his work than shock, outrage, or disgust, even as the text does contain things that might elicit those responses were it less abstract. Instead, the bizarre spectacle encouraged audiences to let its affects “sweep over you,” as Maurice O’Brien put it in the *Irish Press*.⁹⁴ Multiple critics explicitly promoted Ryan’s production to anyone who could get

⁹⁰ Ryan, 163.

⁹¹ “Skillful Adaptation,” *Irish Independent*, September 12, 1961, 6. For additional reviews, see “Best Production Yet,” *Irish Examiner*, September 16, 1961, 7; “Great fun at the ‘Wake,’” *Evening Herald*, September 12, 1961, 8; “Impressive lyricism of Joyce,” *Irish Press*, September 12, 1961, 5.

⁹² Manning, 54; Reynolds, 123–4.

⁹³ Vanderham, 59.

⁹⁴ Maurice O’Brien, “On Festival Stages,” *Irish Press*, September 18, 1961, 8.

a ticket – that is, not just for students and admirers of Joyce but “particularly by natives who will never read the book.”⁹⁵ The embodied experience Manning offers in Ryan’s production, virtually all of the critics argued, demand to be felt. By imagining a Joyce-averse audience, the critics position the Irish in an oppositional relationship to the author that is predicated almost exclusively on his general reputation as a smut slinger. At the same time, the critics concede that the production challenges or even repudiates the abject negativity bound up in Ireland’s memory of “Joyce” – a shift that reflects and manifests Irish culture’s ongoing transitions. *The Voice of Shem* helped make “Joyce” safe for Ireland.

Even with its largely oblique obscenities, Ryan’s production of *The Voice of Shem* covertly offered a radical politics that helped shift the meaning of “Joyce” and, by extension, how the Irish responded to Joycean culture. In her analysis of Manning’s production at the Poets’ Theatre in Massachusetts, Reynolds argues that the performance rejected the conservative values of 1950s American culture. Her strategy, Reynolds argues, was to make experimental aesthetics and socially “dangerous” material widely accessible through the use of performance styles that rendered Joyce’s “dense, alienating poetic language into theatre that was immediate and affecting for audiences.”⁹⁶ There is every reason to believe that the same holds true for the Dublin production. At a crucial moment early in the play, the dead Finnegan sprung up from his coffin during his own wake and intoned, “I don’t understand. I fail to see. I daresay you too.” He then promptly fell back into his casket, and the audience, which had been sitting in confused and stunned silence up until that point, burst into laughter. According to Ryan, this “set the tone” for an opening night that ended in a standing ovation.⁹⁷ One critic said the moment “echoes the

⁹⁵ “Eblana Theatre,” *Irish Times*; O’Brien; “Great fun,” *Evening Herald*; “Impressive lyricism,” *Irish Press*.

⁹⁶ Reynolds, 124–6.

⁹⁷ Ryan, 163–4.

audience's thoughts."⁹⁸ The play places the audience in the position of identifying with the quasi-dead and morally-suspect Finnegan. His candid admission creates a permission structure for the audience to make what they will of the play, assuring them that the confusion is part of the point. In doing so, *The Voice of Shem* relaxed its audience into a world of dubious objectivity very different from the one beyond the Eblana's walls where the state and the Church proffered certain aspects of life as immutable and absolute. Ryan's company provided an alternative, immersing a group of Dubliners together into a Joycean world and encouraged individuals to interpret as they might.

What's more, this specific production and embodiment of Irish culture – and it was taken as such, with one critic calling it a “hymn to Dublin” – gained legitimacy through economic interest.⁹⁹ American producers bid on the US touring rights of Ryan's specific production within days of its opening, demanding that they have the Dublin cast with the transfer. Irish newspapers reported on this story as it developed. Shortly thereafter, London producers entered talks with Ryan to bring the play back to Britain. Then, at the start of the following year, 1962, Ryan announced there was interest in the production from Paris as well. In the end, Ryan's production performed in Dublin again in the spring of 1962 before traveling to both Paris and, later, the London suburb of Stratford.¹⁰⁰ *The Voice of Shem* demonstrated that Irish theatre productions of Joyce adaptations could themselves be international export products. Attended by the Irish Ambassador to France – who also hosted the company for a reception at the Irish Embassy in

⁹⁸ “Great fun,” *Evening Herald*. The critic quotes the line as “I don't understand a thing.” The line doesn't appear in Manning's published text at this moment in the play.

⁹⁹ “Undisputed hit of the festival,” *Evening Herald*, September 23, 1961, 8.

¹⁰⁰ John Healy, “Sol's Man Approves,” *Evening Herald*, September 20, 1961, 7; “Joyce Play for U.S.A.,” *Irish Press*, September 20, 1961, 11; “Undisputed hit,” *Evening Herald*; Maurice O'Brien, “‘Carousel’ rolls in to brighten theatre lull,” *Irish Press*, October 2, 1961, 8; “Curtain Calls,” *Evening Herald*, January 20, 1962, 7; Sean Ward, “The Voice of Joyce,” *Irish Press*, June 11, 1962, 7; “Irish players praised in Paris,” *Evening Herald*, April 4, 1962, 5; “London Calling,” *Irish Independent*, July 26, 1962, 10.

Paris – the press and state conferred recognition and prestige upon the production as an Irish cultural product.¹⁰¹

Two dynamics are at play here. First, the economic opportunities helped Irish institutions give “Joyce” (via Manning and Ryan’s version of *Finnegans Wake*) a place at the cultural table. This is not to say that the performance merely reflected the state’s positions, but that the state had a financial interest in claiming “Joyce” through such ceremonies. Secondly, through its liberating, utopian formations, *The Voice of Shem*’s embodied cultural politics exceeded the economic politics surrounding its production and movement beyond Ireland. The production harnessed and enacted a critique of received authority: there is none. Instead, the performance gathered people together precisely to enjoin them to individually interpret intentionally dense expressions of (inter)national Irish culture. *The Voice of Shem* imagines and embodies a different kind of Irish nationalism, one united in an always incomplete and fragmented search for what it means to be Irish. Encouraging freer thinking in and about Irish culture, the production contributed to a broader reconsideration of authority, whether broadly construed as in *Shem* or Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot*, or more narrowly defined as in Brendan Behan’s attacks on the state’s use of violence in *The Quare Fellow* and *The Hostage*. The received memory of “Joyce” the “dangerous” Irish expat necessarily falls under that broad umbrella of Irish culture to be reexamined. That critics felt they needed to urge Dubliners to see the show suggests the memory of censorship tied up with “Joyce” was something to overcome, and *Shem* worked towards achieving that aim in multiple ways, including earning the tacit endorsement of the state.

On the heels of *The Voice of Shem*’s success, Joyce enthusiasts launched an ambitious project that would fix “Joyce” firmly in Dublin’s landscape and provide a way to continue

¹⁰¹ Maura Boylan, “Why are the Parisians looking sad?” *Irish Press*, April 12, 1962, 10.

building support for the study and appreciation of his works in Ireland: a Joyce Museum. The 1954 letter in the *Irish Times* that noted the lack of infrastructure for Joyce tourism (referenced above) sparked another appeal, and that, in turn, got organizers together for the establishment of a small, fledgling Dublin Joyce Society. On June 16 (the day *Ulysses* takes place), 1954, the group attracted some attention when they took a trek to the novel's main settings in an Edwardian horse-drawn carriage they rented out for the occasion.¹⁰² Years later, an expanded group of enthusiasts reconvened to discuss the possibility of turning the Martello Tower in the southern Dublin suburb of Sandycove into a museum. The Museum would include Joyce memorabilia like first editions of his works, original letters, his cane, and his death mask. They began raising funds for the Tower's restoration and renovation to outfit it with modern necessities and planned to hold an opening ceremony on June 16, 1962.¹⁰³ The opening of the Museum would come to be only one part of a larger "Joyce Week" celebration that included daily tours of prominent Dublin sites featured in Joyce's fiction, lectures from major writers and Joyce scholars, concerts of music from and inspired by Joyce's work, live and broadcast readings, and the Dublin premiere of Allan McClelland's *Bloomsday*.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² McCourt, 51–2; Brooker 202. The group picked that moment to start the group because it coincided with the fiftieth anniversary of the events of the novel. See "Irishman's Diary," *Irish Times*, June 16, 1964, 10. The group was first rather exclusive, counting among its members writers Patrick Kavanagh and Flann O'Brien, artist and censorship activist John Ryan, academic A. J. Leventhal, and Joyce's distant relative, Tom Joyce.

¹⁰³ "Martello tower to be Joyce museum," *Irish Times*, February 3, 1962, 11; "Joyce Museum at Sandycove Tower," *Irish Times*, April 9, 1962. The Martello towers are small fortresses that the British built during the French revolutionary period to defend their imperial holdings. They are round towers outfitted with canons set on castors that allow the soldiers atop the towers to defend the forts around all 360 degrees. There are a series of Martello towers along the shores of the greater Dublin area. Joyce and Oliver St. John Gogarty rented the tower in Sandycove for a period of several days, which inspired the opening scenes of *Ulysses*, which are set at the tower. The tower continues to operate as a Joyce Museum to this day (and is well worth the visit).

¹⁰⁴ "Joyce Museum," *Irish Times*; "Martello tower," *Irish Times*; "Will honour Joyce at Martello Tower," *Evening Herald*, June 15, 1962, 2. The earliest reports on Joyce Week didn't include *Bloomsday*, but a whole group of other Joycean offerings, including Marjorie Barkentin's adaptation of *Ulysses*'s "Circe" episode, *Ulysses in Nighttown* (1958), a revival of *The Voice of Shem*, Joyce's only extant drama *Exiles* (1918), and adaptations by Mairin O'Farrell and Jim O'Connor of the stories "Grace," "Ivy Day in the Committee Room," and "The Dead" from *Dubliners*. Ryan's production of *Shem* was due in London about the same time and so very likely fell through for

The opening ceremony for the Museum had the financial backing of the Irish government precisely on the basis of the international thrust of its modernization philosophy. The organizers behind the Joyce festivities at the Martello Tower wanted Sylvia Beach, who first published *Ulysses* in a single volume, to preside over the opening. In April 1962, the organizers appealed to the Cultural Relations Committee in the Department of External Affairs for a grant to cover her travel expenses. A press cutting detailing the project's background, their aims, and the week's events accompanied the letter of application. The correspondence demonstrates that although there was some hesitancy within External Affairs about whether approving the grant would signal "official participation in a project involving the commemoration of Joyce," others expressed excitement. In particular, those in favor noted that the Joyceans hoped that the Museum would eventually sponsor international postgraduate student research on Irish literature. Such a project, they argued, "would be of benefit to Ireland's international reputation as a cultural centre." In the end, the Cultural Relations Committee agreed to a £50 grant.¹⁰⁵

The Irish government wouldn't have to wait until the Joyce Museum could support postgraduate study to see their investment garner international attention. The opening ceremony for the Joyce Museum alone brought out American students and professors of Joyce, foreign dignitaries from the US, UK, France, and Italy, and some 100 journalists from around the world. Film and TV cameras peppered the crowd, ready to propel the event of Joyce's memorialization

that reason. Why the others failed to materialize at that moment is unclear, although newspapers alluded to vague "technical difficulties" and financial backing issues. In the case of *Ulysses in Nighttown*, it is entirely possible that the play proved too explicit, too risky, to present. The Lord Chamberlain's Examiner of Plays reviewed the texts to both *Ulysses in Nighttown* and *Bloomsday* within a month of each other, with the former garnering 85 objections to the latter's 25. See "Will establish Joyce museum in Martello tower," *Irish Press*, February 3, 1962, 7; Maurice O'Brien, "Stories from James Joyce for Stage Presentation," *Irish Press*, November 6, 1961, 9; Sean Ward, "Bolt play comes to Dublin tonight," *Irish Press*, May 28, 1962, 9; Examiner's Report for *Bloomsday* by Allan McClelland, BL, LCP CORR 1958/1376. On *Ulysses in Nighttown*, see Laniers, 76–81.

¹⁰⁵ Correspondence file, Department of Foreign Affairs, National Archives of Ireland, DFA/338/840. See, especially, the letter of May 1, 1962 contained therein. The article included in the file is "Will establish," *Irish Press*.

in Dublin around the globe.¹⁰⁶ Indeed, an article published in the popular Italian newspaper *Corriere della Sera* announced that Ireland was at long last honoring “her national writer,” Joyce, “a man of considerable genius.” A translation of this article can be found in the archival correspondence relating to the grant for Beach’s travel, suggesting that the move was taken as a success within the Department for External Affairs.¹⁰⁷

Reports like those from the *Corriere della Sera* painted not just the opening of the Joyce Museum but all of Joyce Week with an air of triumphalism due to the proximity of “Joyce” to memories of censorship. *Bloomsday* was a part of that local memory. Accounts of the Museum’s opening both before and after it happened name *Bloomsday* as a part of the celebrations. In her speech at the opening, Beach recounted the banning of *Ulysses* from the English-speaking world and emphasized how it was “now in the hands of thousands of delighted readers, and is the subject in all the universities of the world.”¹⁰⁸ The *Corriere* article further explains to its Italian audience what must have been understood and wafting in Sandycove’s sea breeze: that *Bloomsday*, to be presented that evening, was a part of the history that the Dubliners were now setting right after the archbishop of Dublin “vetoed” the performance in 1958.¹⁰⁹

The Joyce Week festivities attempted to revise the memories of “Joyce” and “*Ulysses*.” Rather than ignore their connection to the memory of censorship, the events (and at least some of the reporting on them) cast them as a feature of the past that they were now performatively setting right. In Chapter Two I theorized that the memory of censorship in the performance of O’Casey’s *The Drums of Father Ned* enabled the American audience to compare themselves to

¹⁰⁶ “Will honour,” *Evening Herald*; “Publisher of ‘Ulysses’ Opens Reception,” *Irish Times*, June 18, 1962, 6.

¹⁰⁷ NAI, DFA/338/840. *Corriere della Sera* published the article on June 17, 1962.

¹⁰⁸ “Publisher of ‘Ulysses,’” *Irish Times*. For more on Beach’s speech, see John Gale, “Joyce was Easily Shocked,” *Observer*, June 17, 1962.

¹⁰⁹ NAI, DFA/338/840.

Ireland. The framework emphasized cultural differences by way of geopolitical differences: Ireland was constructed as an other to Indiana/the USA. For Joyce Week and *Bloomsday*, the emphasis is instead on temporal difference. Dublin was part of the national and transnational suppression of Joyce's works, but Beach and the Dublin Joyce Society/Joyce Tower Committee's implicit argument was that that was then and this is now. Times had changed.

Yet, it's simply not the case that these reparative efforts completely transformed Ireland's attitudes toward Joyce. Although some Irish expressed simple indifference to Joyce, as Joyce Week went on, protest and displeasure surfaced in the press. In these cases, the memory of censorship attached to "Joyce" overdetermined their reactions and produced a discourse remarkably similar to that captured in the BBC Audience Research Reports cited earlier. For example, one Irish émigré on holiday in Ireland during Joyce Week wrote that he was "amazed and shocked... to find so much publicity accorded to the James Joyce gimmick." He went on to elaborate that all of the Irish in the US collectively forsook Joyce, recognizing him as an "apostate religionist and defeatist nationalist" who has "written the foulest material imaginable." He concludes by suggesting that if a museum to Joyce had been opened in the years just after independence, "the organized Republican soldiers would have had more to say in a more practical way."¹¹⁰ Another commentator similarly saw a connection between Joyce, economic "gimmicks," and the threat to Irish culture, claiming, "There is always some reason for resurrecting evil, and in the case of the Joyce celebrations in Dublin, it is evident that the business tycoons are out for their kill, even at the expense of Faith and Fatherland."¹¹¹ Similar conversations took place outside of Dublin, with one arguing against the use of taxpayer funds to

¹¹⁰ "Shocked by 'James Joyce gimmick,'" *Evening Herald*, June 19, 1962, 6. On indifference to Joyce, see McCourt, 57–8.

¹¹¹ "Joyce week is under fire," *Evening Herald*, June 20, 1962, 8.

promote “the image of Ireland projected to the world by Behan, Joyce and O’Casey.”¹¹² At the end of the decade, Irish continued to bemoan the influence of Joyce’s books and especially *Ulysses* as “a vile production” of “page-to-page blasphemies” that emerged from Joyce’s “sex-crazed... mind.” These complaints also continued to extend to the market, castigating “the annual welter of adulation” that occurred every June by “people in search of the bizarre (or filth) [who] praise it to the skies as a great work of art.”¹¹³ These anecdotes evince a persistent resistance not only to “Joyce” and “*Ulysses*” but to the economic changes that in part enabled their presence in Ireland in the 1960s. There were still fears about the threat these policies and “Joyce” posed to the stability of Irish culture and the institutions that maintained them.

Still hotly contested figures, “Joyce” and “*Ulysses*” continued to raise questions about Ireland’s national cultural identity, past and present, within and beyond the Republic. How did the performance of *Bloomsday* navigate that terrain? How did the memories of censorship surrounding its production impact it, and how did the performance impact those memories? In brief, what cultural labor did the memories of censorship, “Joyce,” “*Ulysses*,” and *Bloomsday* undertake in performance as they moved through time and space?

5.3 Sex, Gender, Modernity, and Temporal Politics in *Bloomsday*

Unlike *The Voice of Shem*, *Bloomsday* is a fairly conventional play. It has an identifiable, linear plot with a clear beginning, middle, and end. While Manning’s take on *Finnegans Wake* showcases Joyce’s linguistic experimentation and carries that focus into its abstract staging,

¹¹² “Our Readers’ Views,” *Southern Star* (Cork), September 22, 1962, 6.

¹¹³ Qtd. in McCourt, 58–9.

McClelland emphasized *Ulysses*'s story over its experimental form, seeking to tell as much of the story as he could and including at least a part of each of the novel's 18 episodes. McClelland mostly retains Joyce's stylized language but does not attempt to translate its literary experimentation into theatrical terms, placing the stylized language into the mouths of characters who otherwise inhabit a world resembling the naturalist stage. Because of *Bloomsday*'s clarity of action, McClelland had to approach sensitive issues very carefully.

If *The Voice of Shem*'s obscurity helped to make "Joyce" safe for Ireland, the text of McClelland's *Bloomsday* worked to make "*Ulysses*" all-but totally safe, too. However, it did so to the detriment of some of Joyce's more controversial moments in the book. On the whole, the cultural politics of McClelland's *Bloomsday* are significantly more conservative than Joyce's original. At least on paper, McClelland's script is not nearly so explicit or provocative, especially in its treatment of the Nighttown sequence and the interaction between Gerty MacDowell and Bloom – that is to say, in its treatment of gender and sexuality. On the other hand, the Molly of *Bloomsday*, especially as she was performed in the 1962 production, expresses profoundly challenging cultural critiques of contemporary Irish culture, history, and the links between them. Taken together, the production's performance of gender and sexuality was contradictory, and, as such, communicated varieties of cultural change rather than a unified message.

Multiple memories of censorship worked at the same time in the performance, influencing the meaning of gender and sexuality performed onstage. Again, in addition to the scandalous reputation of "Joyce" and "*Ulysses*" – those mnemonic shorthands containing transnational censorship histories – the more local incidents behind the 1958 DITF haunted *Bloomsday*'s Irish premiere. An *Evening Herald* article just ahead of the opening rejoiced that "One of the two controversial Irish plays that resulted in the hasty cancellation of the Dublin

Theatre Festival of 1958 is at last to be seen in Dublin,” and noted that it had already received two London productions, one of which “London critics praised... for its vivid qualities and its pungency.”¹¹⁴ The journalist’s tone speaks to their impression that Ireland continued to lag behind Britain in particular, even when it comes to what they saw as Irish plays and playwrights. Looping the London productions into the conversation ties such cultural issues to perceived modern economic opportunities even as the reporter’s reference to critics’ symbolic olfactory response evokes hints of lingering danger in the Joycean property. These memories of censorship signaled changes from the past that fixed Ireland within a reimagined, modern transnational geography and that *Bloomsday*, itself, might still be more dangerous than even proponents were willing to admit. At the same time, Anna Manahan’s performance of Serafina in the Pike’s infamous *The Rose Tattoo* production haunted her performance of Molly Bloom at the Eblana. Manahan’s body held the potential to doubly amplify these dual narratives of change and danger. Taken together, these parallel memories of censorship could combine to confirm or complicate attitudes towards and the meaning of Ireland’s modernity.

For example, the “Nausicaa” episode in which Bloom and Gerty MacDowell flirt from afar more closely resembles the romanticism that Joyce ironized in his prose.¹¹⁵ This was the

¹¹⁴ J. J. Finegan, “Ulysses’ coming,” *Evening Herald*, May 26, 1962, 7.

¹¹⁵ A note on the texts I use as the basis of my analysis is here necessary. *Bloomsday* has never been published in English. There are at least three extant versions housed in archives, but McClelland wrote each one for a different medium (theatre, radio, and television). It is clear that he revised each one for the medium. It is also clear from theatre programs and reviews that he continued to revise the theatre script at least through 1960. The biggest of the changes was the erasure of a character called “The Reader” who acted as a narrator, framing the play as a reduction of a “world famous novel,” and sometimes voicing the characters’ internal monologues. “The Reader” exists in the extant archival copy of the theatre script in the Lord Chamberlain’s Plays collection at the British Library, dating to 1958 when the Oxford players submitted it to the Lord Chamberlain’s office for a performance license. For its second production at the Unity Theatre in London, reviews tell us that McClelland cut the narrator. There is also no “Reader” character named in the program for the Eblana production and they are not mentioned in any review I found. It is highly likely that McClelland retained this change. The 1964 revival at the Gate Theatre also did not feature “The Reader.” Neither do the BBC Radio or TV scripts include the character, either. Dating from 1961 and 1964, respectively, these scripts suggest that McClelland redistributed many of the “Reader’s” lines elsewhere. As such, in certain respects, the radio and TV scripts possibly reflect changes McClelland may have made to his theatre

episode that brought the force of the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice against the novel. Set on a Dublin beach, young Gerty MacDowell enters the stage, retreating from children who are playing ball with her. Likely carrying a paperback or magazine with her, she begins to speak aloud to the audience about herself in the third person in an elevated style akin to the book she carries: “Her very soul is in her eyes and she would give worlds to be in the privacy of her own familiar chamber, where, giving way to tears, she could have a good cry and relieve her pentup feelings.”¹¹⁶ Eventually, Bloom enters, and music “swells” as the pair spy each other. Gerty comments on this “most casual” glance that “met her gaze there in the twilight, wan and strangely drawn, seemed to her the saddest she had ever seen.” As she courtesies to him, she excitedly reveals, “Yes, it was her he was looking at. Her heart went pitapat. He was looking at her and there was meaning in his eyes and look. His eyes burned into her as though they would search her through and through, read her very soul.”¹¹⁷ Gerty imagines the circumstances of his life, his faith, whether or not he’s a foreigner, and if he’s married or widowed. She sees “Whitehot passion” in Bloom’s face, confirming, “It is for you Gertrude MacDowell, and you

script between the 1958 draft and the 1962 production at the Eblana. This is all to say that there is a certain degree of uncertainty about all of the passages from the play that I cite in this chapter. I have compared and contrasted all three versions and note variations and ambiguities as they appear. The only published version of *Bloomsday* was (strangely enough) a Dutch translation called *Bloomsdag*. It is not clear how or even why this version came to be. I have not been able to find any indication that McClelland’s play was performed in the Netherlands or anywhere else on Europe’s continental mainland. This version was published in 1965 and is, thus, the last of the versions I am aware of. It is an exceedingly rare book and I have been unable to access it. Lanter bases his formal analysis of *Bloomsday* as an adaptation of *Ulysses* upon this text. Based on the information he provides, there does not appear to be any monumental differences besides the elimination of “The Reader” and the transferal of many of their lines elsewhere. See Lanter, 130–52, 131n2, 151n17; Allan McClelland, *Bloomsday*, Theatre Script, Allan McClelland, *Bloomsday*, Camera Script, BBC Written Archives; Program for the Gemini-Envoy Productions’ presentation of *Bloomsday* at the Eblana Theatre, Dublin, June 16, 1962, Papers of Séamus De Búrca (James Bourke), National Library of Ireland, MS 39,199/10; Program for Envoy Productions’ presentation of *Bloomsday* at the Gate Theatre, June 16, 1964, Anna Manahan Papers, Irish Theatre Archive at Dublin City Library, ITA/282/1/6.

¹¹⁶ McClelland, *Bloomsday*, Theatre, II-32. In both the TV and radio scripts, Gerty has a book and it is implied that she begins reading only to muse about herself and her surroundings. In the theatre script, “The Reader” begins describing her and then she continues in what essentially amounts to a single monologue voiced by two different actors. It is most likely that in the absence of “The Reader” that she alone voiced the monologue as in the TV and radio scripts. McClelland, *Bloomsday*, Radio, 40; McClelland, *Bloomsday*, Camera, 125.

¹¹⁷ McClelland, *Bloomsday*, Theatre, II-33.

know it.” The music suddenly stops.¹¹⁸ In the tense quiet, Gerty reaches out “her snowy slender arms to his to come.” Just then, there are offstage sounds of “OOOOOOOOOH! As a firework shoots into the sky.” Gerty gives Bloom one last look and then exits. As Bloom watches her leave, he sees she walks with a limp: “Tight boote? No. She’s lame! O! Poor girl that’s why she’s left on the shelf and the others did a sprint. Jilted beauty... Did me good all the same... (he yawns) O! exhausted that female has made me. Will she come here tomorrow? Murderers do.” He picks up a stick to write a message in the sand before conceding the effort is futile. “Chance,” he says, “We’ll never meet again. But it was lovely. Goodbye, dear. Made me feel so young.”¹¹⁹

While the scene retains some of Joyce’s provocative, sexualized language and symbols (especially the exploding firework and the sounds of the crowd), the scene is far less sexual than the novel.¹²⁰ McClelland cuts much of the material that made the sequence so shocking to obscenity hawks: Bloom’s voyeuristic commentary about Gerty’s exposed flesh; observations like “His hands and face were working and a tremour went over her;” that “she revealed all her graceful beautifully shaped legs;” that “she seemed to hear the panting of his heart, his hoarse breathing;” and the implication that she knows exactly what it was that Bloom was doing. Further, Joyce’s language in the novel is also more graphic: “And then a rocket sprang and bang shot blind blank and O! then the Roman candle burst and it was like a sigh of O! and everyone cried O! O! in raptures and it gushed out of it a stream of rain gold hair threads and they shed an ah!”¹²¹ Gone, too, is Bloom’s guilty tone following the fireworks: “What a brute he had been! At

¹¹⁸ McClelland, *Bloomsday, Theatre*, II-34.

¹¹⁹ McClelland, *Bloomsday, Theatre*, II-35–6.

¹²⁰ Some critics have argued that Bloom doesn’t actually masturbate and that the switching of prose styles and syntax points to the suggestion that the act is only the projection of Bloom’s imagination. For more on this line of thinking, see Lawrence Rainey, *Modernism: An Anthology* (Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell, 2005), 526–7.

¹²¹ Joyce, *Ulysses*, 299–300.

it again? A fair unsullied soul had called to him and, wretch that he was, how had he answered? An utter cad he had been!”¹²² Although not *entirely* impossible, it is incredibly unlikely that the actor playing Bloom would have mimicked masturbating onstage in a public performance in 1962 Ireland (and reviews certainly would have mentioned it). Placing Bloom onstage with Gerty also likely limited the potential of imagining Bloom masturbating out of the audience’s sight. His presence onstage, simply standing and gazing at her, avoided any suggestion that there was anything other than “sparks” between the two of them.¹²³ Rendered rather romantically, it is likely that the Eblana actors simply played the scene earnestly.

In Andrew Gibson’s reading of the novel, Gerty “is poised on modernity’s edge” although her “prospects would have been starkly and depressingly limited.” As Gibson points out, her perception of the world is deeply embedded in an imported (colonial) popular print culture that enables the imagining of alternative cultural formations while simultaneously restricting them. She’s happy to pursue Bloom even if he’s a Protestant or Methodist. She’s far more sexually aware and liberated than women were expected to be and often were. The very fact that Gerty acts to achieve aspirations that are above her socially approved station (ones constructed in part through the very literature she replicates in her narration) signal her progressiveness relative to her time. Gerty nevertheless paradoxically resists and even subverts

¹²² Joyce, *Ulysses*, 300.

¹²³ Both the radio and television adaptations, though, leave precisely this possibility open. Of course, radio is entirely dependent on voices and sounds and so listeners could more easily make more out of Gerty’s monologue and the fireworks. The television version is also more suggestive, as the camera notes indicate that the shots focus almost entirely on Gerty, leaving Bloom and whatever he’s doing out of the frame. Both the radio and TV versions include more of Joyce’s graphic language as well. The effect of the stage script is clearly different than the radio and television ones. McClelland, *Bloomsday*, Radio, 40–3; McClelland, *Bloomsday*, Camera, 125–9.

this culture through a recourse to Irish idioms and “improper” behaviors. She engages in a rather sophisticated way with the international, imperial culture without adopting it whole cloth.¹²⁴

Yet Allan McClelland’s 1962 take on Joyce’s picture of turn-of-the-century Irish womanhood was rather farther away from modernity’s edge, especially as it relates to sex. In the stage *Bloomsday*, there is virtually no sexual expression beyond the brief and highly romanticized fireworks. Only those already familiar with the novel would likely have read much more into it than that, especially if Bloom was as physically static as the script implies, only moving to throw the ball back to the children and perhaps to wind his watch (which Gerty describes). In the novel, the way Gerty wields her sexuality both resists the bind of colonial ideological formations that would subjugate her and acts toward overcoming the class, ethnic, and bodily disadvantages that those same formations construct and police. This is not to ignore that in both versions Bloom uses Gerty as an object for his own gratification, one that he regrets all the more once he sees she walks with a limp. But in McClelland’s take, nothing physically happens beyond a prolonged glance, robbing her of her sexual agency that challenges the imperial discursive formations that Joyce targets in his critique. As I’ve noted elsewhere in this dissertation, Irish constitutional, legislative, and cultural institutions largely continued to limit women’s social and bodily autonomy after Britain turned over the keys to Dublin Castle. By 1962, Irish attitudes towards gender and sexuality were beginning to take their first few steps toward change, with more men, for instance, seeing themselves as co-equal marriage partners than earlier periods of Irish history, the winnowing of the marital age gap, more women working

¹²⁴ Andrew Gibson, *Joyce’s Revenge: History, Politics, and Aesthetics in Ulysses* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 142–9.

in the industrial and professional sectors, and an expanding conversation around birth control.¹²⁵ The staging of “Nausicaa” at the Eblana instead reduced Gerty’s agency and reinforced more restrictive, conservative values.

In this regard, “Nausicaa” in the Eblana *Bloomsday* ran counter to the narrative of progressive change that attended the performance through the memory of “Joyce” and his censorship. Again, by dint of the play’s very presence in Dublin, the memory of censorship signaled a rupture with the proceeding four decades of Irish political, social, and cultural life – since at least the post-Civil War politics that imagined and worked to curate a singular Irish national identity. The scene’s performance allows for a reading of the past that fixes gender and sex roles as largely unchanged for an additional two decades, overturning or at least complicating the symbolic potential of the memory’s narrative. True, some version of “Joyce” and “*Ulysses*” lived and breathed in Dublin, but aspects of the performance that gave form to those memories undercut Joyce’s radical critiques. For Gibson, Joyce’s central theme in *Ulysses* is the resistance to colonial English culture, and this extends into critiques of Irish nationalism that risked reproducing “another version” of the colonial structures they sought to dismantle.¹²⁶ As Declan Kiberd argues, “The colony had been so comprehensively penetrated that the new rulers could be trusted to employ all the old categories upon themselves.”¹²⁷ By aligning an imagined version of sex and gender in 1904 with the status quo of Irish nationalist discourse in

¹²⁵ See Caitríona Clear, “‘Too Fond of Going’: Female Emigration and Change for Women in Ireland, 1946–1961,” in *Ireland in the 1950s: The Lost Decade*, eds. Dermot Keogh, Finbarr O’Shea, and Carmel Quinlan (Dublin: Mercier Press, 2004), 135–46; Daly, 141–6; Carole Holohan, *Reframing Irish Youth in the Sixties* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press), 82–8.

¹²⁶ Gibson, *Joyce’s Revenge*, 13–16.

¹²⁷ Declan Kiberd, *After Ireland: Writing the Nation from Beckett to the Present* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018), 8–11, quote at 10.

1962, “Nausicaa” at the Eblana created an imagined sense of cultural continuity and community across time and reified ideological structures that Joyce worked to subvert.¹²⁸

That *Bloomsday*’s “Nausicaa” was sexually conservative doesn’t wholly divorce Gerty from functioning as an index of modernity, though. She still performed what Richard Kearney calls “the transitional crisis in Irish culture” – that is, the attempt “to narrate the problematic relationship between tradition and modernity.”¹²⁹ Although the production sentimentalized the scene as a passing feeling of romance that tilts the performance’s politics towards conservatism, Gerty’s attraction to what she perceives of as Bloom’s foreignness shirks the xenophobia and sectarianism of Irish nationalism as it had come to dominate Irish politics. “She could see at once by his dark eyes and his pale and intellectual face that he was a foreigner,” Gerty reveals, later adding, “Even if he were a Protestant or Methodist she could convert him easily if he truly loved her.”¹³⁰ Bloom’s Jewish heritage is outside of the scope of her imagination, here, but as she imagines the two of them embracing and compares Bloom’s looks to an English matinee idol, her desires and fantasies transcend sectarian and (perceived) national divides.¹³¹ Marriages between Catholics and Protestants were still very taboo in 1961, and it was only with the 1964 Second Vatican Council’s decree that Catholics ought to celebrate what unites Christian denominations that hostilities in this regard even began to relax.¹³² Gerty’s daydream involves conversion, but that, too, was a dramatic step for either faith group.

¹²⁸ Ironically enough, erasing the controversial material from the scene no doubt made *Ulysses* and “Joyce” more acceptable and thereby also promoted the original novel in the process.

¹²⁹ Richard Kearney, *Transitions: Narratives in Modern Irish Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 9–18.

¹³⁰ McClelland, *Bloomsday*, Theatre, II-34. In the stage script manuscript, “The Reader” delivers the first of these lines, but McClelland gives it to Gerty in later versions.

¹³¹ The idol Gerty names is Martin Harvey, an English performer who toured Ireland at the turn of the century. The reference points to another way in which English imperial culture shapes Gerty’s world view.

¹³² Daly 204–5.

In this way the narrative of “change” wrapped around the production’s memory of censorship did align – at least somewhat. Class, marital, national, religious, sexual, and gender boundaries all remain intact at the end of the scene. However, even if sex, gender, and marital boundaries remain either unexplored or non-starters, the potential to cross some divisions of class, nation, and religion remain on the edge of possibility. In a world where Gerty’s future is intimately tied to the fortunes and status of a prospective spouse (if she can secure a husband at all) – a view the imported paperbacks and magazines she reads confirm and help construct – she has a material interest in doing so. This linkage between economics and international identity politics creates complications. On the one hand, it suggests that such a metaphoric coupling is desirable and will lead to an uncomplicated prosperity. On the other, though, it’s little more than a fantasy that doesn’t come to fruition, at least not with Bloom and not at this moment. Still, as in the case with the novel’s depiction of her sexuality, that Gerty seriously entertains such reveries once again positions her firmly within the discourse that figured modernity’s international dimension as a material benefit. *Bloomsday*’s “Nausicaa” thus binds its gender politics with its capitalist philosophy of national accumulation, finding remarkable sympathy with the politics of Lemass’s modernization project and traditional Irish cultural nationalism.

If the memory of censorship helped to mark the production as a performance of change in Ireland, in this scene that change is the pronounced reconsideration of Ireland’s relationship to the foreign or “non-Irish” in the hegemonic view. The temporal politics are important here. By maintaining Joyce’s references to foreignness and sectarian divisions but essentially erasing the episode’s sexual content, the production’s “Nausicaa” established a continuity with the Irish past that imagined a rather stable identity for young Irishwomen in terms of gender and sexuality *and* a tradition of international economic politics that would materially improve the Irish lives. Here,

the rupture the memory of censorship performed was with de Valera's isolationist and protectionist policies, not Ireland's repressive gender politics. The scene promotes plurality over a singular and insulated Irish national expression. This pluralism is, in Kearney's words, "something to be celebrated rather than censored" – but the scene only values pluralism insofar as it can help secure capital. It rather assumes that the non-Irish will totally assimilate into hegemonic national life through conversion and marriage. By creating a sense of continuity with the past for such thinking, the performance of "Nausicaa" validates it and recruits "Joyce" as a legitimizing force for imagining a tradition of international economic politics. The scene's gender politics are part and parcel with the way it homogenizes difference, and the marriage of these discourses reproduced the violent and hierarchical ideologies Joyce critiqued.

Thanks to the memory of "Joyce" and censorship, the production could claim to be a part of ongoing "changes" in Ireland even when specific moments performed continuity with the past. The power of the reductive narratives that the memories supported was that they could paper over important and vital temporal political distinctions – that is, over history – that perpetuates harmful hierarchies and arbitrary rules-based morality while claiming progress. "Nausicaa" was not the sole instance of this dynamic, but neither did other episodes argue for its particular articulation of Irish cultural modernity, either. The politics "Nausicaa" performed were not consistent across the performance. *Bloomsday's* performance suggested many possible expressions of Irishness without necessarily privileging or condoning any one vision. Ambivalence typified *Bloomsday's* politics in the 1962 production, particularly its sexual politics which, as "Nausicaa" demonstrates, McClelland sometimes censored from his adaptation.

Apart from "Nausicaa," this self-censorship was perhaps nowhere as evident as in McClelland's adaptation of the "Circe" episode. In Joyce's chapter, Stephen and a friend venture

into Nighttown, Dublin's red-light district. Bloom follows them in order to keep an eye on drunk young Dedalus. Accidentally calling Stephen "Rudy" (the name of Bloom's son who died in infancy), Bloom's fatherly protection of Stephen comes to the fore here. A prostitute brings Bloom into the brothel where Stephen is socializing with other prostitutes, and Stephen pays on behalf of all three men for the women's company and attention. Bloom replaces Stephen's money with his own and takes Stephen's wallet into his care. Written as a drama complete with stage directions, Joyce stages Stephen's and Bloom's phantasmagoric daydreams, nightmarish wonderings, and drunken hallucinations, most of which manifest the pair's guilty consciences in ghostly and violent accusations. For instance, Bloom imagines receiving a scolding from his Hungarian grandfather about his sexual immorality, seeing Molly and Boylan having sex, being put on trial as a bigamist and cuckold, and becoming a woman and giving births to octuplets. While Stephen dances with the sex workers, he sees the ghost of his mother and he violently strikes a real-life chandelier with his walking stick while trying to exorcise her. One prostitute calls for the police, and Stephen flies from the brothel. Bloom pays the women, and hunts down Stephen, whom he finds confronting a British soldier about imperialism. Stephen's friend abandons him, the soldier punches Stephen, and Bloom helps Stephen to safety.¹³³

Once again, McClelland sidesteps sexuality. Only two fantasies occur in the stage version. In the first, Bloom's parents, Molly, and Boylan, all briefly affront Bloom before joining the ghost of Rudy and then disappearing together. In the second, Stephen hears the voice of his mother saying, "Love's bitter mystery, Stephen," and then Buck Mulligan's hurtful words recalled earlier in the play, "She's beastly dead, Dedalus. Dead. Dead. Dead." Stephen lashes out, smashing the chandelier and "huge vivid flames leap up and darkness follows" as Stephen

¹³³ Joyce, *Ulysses*, 350–497.

escapes and the brothel calls the police. McClelland consigns the sex workers who spur both Stephen's and Bloom's imaginations in the novel to the periphery of the stage, hiding them in shadows. They have only passive roles in the play. They are little more than set decorations, and their only dialogue is indicated as a collective group of "Voices" that may not even step onstage.¹³⁴ Although narration names the scene's location in Nighttown, the stage directions try to obscure that the women are sex workers by having Stephen pay them when they bring him bottles, passing them off as waitresses. This is their sole action in the script.¹³⁵

For Marshik, the prostitutes' actions and the musing they evoke in Bloom and Stephen frustrate the binary distinctions between morality and vice, suggesting, for instance, that the categories of virgin, whore, and wife, were not mutually exclusive. Further, by placing them so explicitly in Dublin, Joyce challenged perceived notions of obscene geographies or spaces based in nationalist discourse, "unsettl[ing] the very distinctions that make policing literature, like the policing of bodies, possible."¹³⁶ All but totally lifting the characters from the sequence, McClelland's drama removes the cultural challenge the sequence could have issued. Barely recognizing the sex workers also buries their history in Ireland and their quite literal marginalization largely reinforces the moral policing of sex and bodies Joyce's work troubles. Keeping them in the shadows of the Eblana stage reflects their continued ostracized place in the Dublin of 1962 as much as their imagined place in the Dublin of 1904. Unlike the scenario with Gerty where her exploration of the possibility of accepting difference supposed the potential for

¹³⁴ McClelland, *Bloomsday*, Theatre, III-3-5. Unfortunately, the Nighttown sequence in the television script is illegible because the type is too light. From what I can glean, it contains just same two fantasies. The radio version has the same two fantasies. The radio version does use more of the sex workers' dialogue (for example, "How's your middle leg?"), but disturbingly names them only as "Whore 1, 2, and 3," despite the fact that they had names in Joyce's book (Zoe Higgins, Bella Cohen, Kitty, and Florry). McClelland, *Bloomsday*, Camera, 134-7; McClelland, *Bloomsday*, Radio, 45-7.

¹³⁵ McClelland, *Bloomsday*, Theatre, III-3-5; Joyce, *Ulysses*, 453-5.

¹³⁶ Marshik, 149-57, quote at 157.

alternative social relations, Bloom's moralizing speech to Dedalus following their retreat from the brothel merely admits the past and present consignment of sex workers to the periphery. Describing them as "barely permissible [*sic*] once in a while... for young fellows of your age," for Bloom, the sex worker is an outlet for young men, who nevertheless only seem to lose money, time, health, and character as a result.¹³⁷ To Bloom, sex workers' bare permissibility is akin to their continued abjection to the periphery. They are only objects to be used for young Irish men to use in their early constitution and nothing more. Stephen's and Bloom's responses to the sex workers amounts to little more than an "incomplete rebellion against dominant ideologies," as Marshik astutely argues (and McClelland's version makes this all the more true by stripping the workers of their character and agency) – their acknowledgements of the sex workers doesn't relinquish the moral and cultural codes that casts them aside.¹³⁸ *Bloomsday's* "Nausicaa" performed a rather traditional femininity that was nevertheless imbued with more modern economics. Its "Circe," on the other hand, is steadfastly, rigidly conservative.

That said, interpreting the play through the memory of censorship, the performance of "Circe" could project change without taking part in it – could *seem* like it was taking part in cultural change when, again, its progressive representations were quite limited. Together with the narrative of progressive change that the memory of censorship provided, "Joyce's" close association with the breaking of sexual mores, and the play's appearance after the archbishop's de-facto ban may have created the impression that *Bloomsday* marked cultural change in Ireland even where it didn't. Prostitutes had, after all, been present on the Irish stage since at least Rosie Redmond in O'Casey's *The Plough and the Stars* in 1926, and Behan's *The Hostage*

¹³⁷ McClelland, *Bloomsday*, Theatre, III-6.

¹³⁸ Marshik, 156–7.

prominently featured a straight female sex worker and gay male sex workers on Dublin's Olympia stage as recently as 1960. The sex workers in these plays also serve much more complicated dramaturgical and political purposes than *Bloomsday's* nameless figures.¹³⁹ If Marshik is right that materials that remind audiences of a work's past censorship can "foreclose other ways of reading" them, then it is certainly possible to imagine audiences at the Eblana responding to *Bloomsday's* "Circe" as if it was performing greater cultural labor than it was – that the mere presence of the marginalized sex workers, like the mere presence of *Bloomsday* as a whole, was significant.¹⁴⁰ Here, the memory of censorship held the potential to collapse important distinctions around questions of visibility, presence, and representation and subsume them in the name of progress. This is what I mean when I argue the performance furnished many possible ways of promulgating the narrative of change, and that audiences likely came away with many different meanings (for the positive or the negative) according to their own proclivities.

McClelland's approach to Molly Bloom is less reserved. This is likely due to the role her extramarital affair with Boylan plays in the plot as Bloom's central motivation for spending his whole day wandering the city. It is an all-but unavoidable aspect of the story, and so McClelland could not shy away from it. McClelland re-writes Molly's stream of conscious monologue that concludes both the novel and the characters' day in such a way so that it takes place throughout the day and the play. This allows McClelland to help cue his audience into what's going on with greater clarity and do so from Molly's perspective as much as Bloom's. For instance, in their first scene, as Bloom cooks breakfast, Molly muses in bed over a letter from her lover that she

¹³⁹ This is also not to say, though, that these representations are wholly positive. For explications of these characters, see Ann Marie Adams, "The Sense of an Ending: The Representation of Homosexuality in Brendan Behan's *The Hostage*," in *Modern Drama* 40, no. 3 (September 1997): 414–21; Susan Canon Harris, *Gender and Modern Irish Drama* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 124, 206–15.

¹⁴⁰ Marshik, 165.

hides under her pillow, “I hope he’ll come as he said at four: I hate people who come at all hours... we’re to go to Belfast – just as well Poldy has to go to Ennis his father’s anniversary the 27th – its [*sic*] all very well a husband but you can’t fool a lover... Well, Boylan could buy me a nice present up in Belfast on the concert tour... but they’d think we’re married: O let them all go and smother themselves for the fat lot I care.”¹⁴¹ Later, after “Poldy” brings her breakfast and tea, she continues, “You’re looking blooming Josie used to say after I married him: suppose I divorced him I wouldn’t go mad about Mrs. Boylan either.”¹⁴² Changing Joyce’s future-oriented “I hope he’ll come on Monday at the same time at four” to the more immediate “I hope he’ll come as he said at four” means that Molly gets to introduce her relationship with Boylan herself, rather than filter it through Bloom.¹⁴³

This alteration unambiguously frames Molly from the start against her infidelity and blasé views on sex and marriage. The play is far more explicit about her indiscretions and the play wants audiences to see her through that lens, even vis-à-vis other characters. For example, when Bloom meets M’Coy on the streets and the two exchange pleasantries, M’Coy comes to ask Bloom who is staging Molly’s next concert, asking, “Who’s getting it up?” Bloom’s inner monologue tells the audience, “Molly,” before telling M’Coy that there’s a committee planning the event.¹⁴⁴ Bloom’s crude innuendo reminds the audience about Molly’s pending rendezvous, his awareness of it, and his rather radically benign approach of avoidance.

Manahan brought additional power to Molly and the critique she voices, though, that was totally separate from McClelland’s text: her performance in the infamous *The Rose Tattoo*

¹⁴¹ McClelland, *Bloomsday*, Theatre, I-11–12.

¹⁴² McClelland, *Bloomsday*, Theatre, I-16.

¹⁴³ Joyce, *Ulysses*, 615.

¹⁴⁴ McClelland, *Bloomsday*, Theatre, I-30.

scandal haunted *Bloomsday* at the Eblana. There can be no doubt that Irish theatregoers associated Manahan with the *Rose Tattoo*'s censorious history and that it was on the minds of at least some audience members. Beginning May 28, 1962, just a little more than two weeks before *Bloomsday* opened, Manahan starred in an Orion "Evening of Tennessee Williams" at the Eblana, including two long scenes from *The Rose Tattoo* with Manahan reprising her role. Publicity ahead of the performance reminded readers that the last time Manahan performed the role the production faced legal charges.¹⁴⁵ Ryan probably used the production to test the waters for a full revival of *The Rose Tattoo*, which she ultimately produced as her follow-up to *Bloomsday*. In fact, newspapers announced Manahan would star in the revival – under the direction of the original Dublin producers, Alan Simpson and Carolyn Swift, no less – while *Bloomsday* was still running, which also served as another reminder for attendees of the connection between the two.¹⁴⁶ Ryan, herself, felt a need to vindicate the Pike Theatre, and claimed Simpson also knew the memory of the scandal would continue to boil until a larger audience than the Pike's could judge the work for themselves. Their revival, which sought to re-stage the Pike production, sold out the Eblana for three months – but the infamous condom-dropping sequence continued to inspire gasps, whether provoked by the object itself (now represented with a piece of paper) or the memory of censorship.¹⁴⁷

Manahan's body acted as a unique carrier for the memory of *The Rose Tattoo*'s 1957 censorship and redoubled the narrative of change that the memory of "Joyce" brought to the production. As in the case of "Joyce" and "*Ulysses*," the memory of censorship that emanated

¹⁴⁵ Finegan, *Evening Herald*; Ward, "Bolt." The evening also included performances of Williams's one-act plays *Portrait of a Madonna* (1953) and *The Last of My Solid Gold Watches* (1953).

¹⁴⁶ Sean Ward, "All-star cast for musical," *Irish Press*, June 25, 1962, 9.

¹⁴⁷ Ryan, 167–9.

from Manahan failed to tell the whole story of the *Rose Tattoo* case. By this point, the scandal was largely reduced to Williams and his play as at least provocative if not obscene, the infamous condom, the state's (ultimately failed) prosecution of the Pike, and the debate over the play's compatibility with idealized Irish national values. Manahan's participation in *Bloomsday*, a play based upon the similarly controversial *Ulysses*, empowered her embodiment of an even more radical gender and sexual politics than *The Rose Tattoo*'s Serafina had five years earlier and intensified the narrative that the production signaled change. It wasn't just that "Joyce" could have a place in the Irish cultural imagination other than one of abjection, but that the production was in the process of overturning a larger censorious culture on the Eblana stage. Through Manahan's performance and the broad congruence between *The Rose Tattoo* and *Bloomsday* that (despite their not insignificant differences) advocated for less confining sexual and gender roles, memories of censorship traveled through time and asserted their combined presence. Manahan's Molly was imbued with multiple histories that exceeded what either McClelland or Joyce had embedded in the character that was her own. She wields both of these female characters who were created by men and pushed their political potential in different directions.

The additional memory of *The Rose Tattoo*'s censorship also acted as a temporal marker of recent history that gave greater credence to the narrative within the memory of "Joyce's" censorship that the production signaled change. To wit: the lingering aura of *The Rose Tattoo* and its politics (recently re-performed in excerpted form and about to be totally revived in the same theatre) created another particular point in history against which audiences could compare their own time. Separated by only five years (1957 to 1962), and contemporary to the 1958 DITF memory that was contained within the broader and more general memory of "Joyce's"

censorship, the memories Manahan's body brought forth most likely joined the DITF memory to reinforce the notion that Ireland had come a long way in a short period of time.

As I argued in Chapter One, *The Rose Tattoo* performed a slightly heterodox version of gender and sexuality that differed just enough from the reproductive futurism that undergirded hegemonic Irish national ideologies to render it culturally dangerous. Serafina, the character Manahan played in *The Rose Tattoo*, sleeps with Alvaro and believes that she has conceived and will marry him. However likely that imagined future might be, the play does not confirm it. Serafina's daughter, Rosa, also leaves at the end of the play to go meet her sailor boyfriend to have sex before he leaves for his tour. Similarly, although she wears her wedding dress, there is nothing to confirm they will, in fact, marry. The play is ultimately ambiguous. Testimony at court claimed the whole play and not just the mimed condom tended toward sexual deviance. Even though Judge O'Flynn dismissed the case, some circles clearly saw the play as a challenge to Irish orthodoxy. The politics *Bloomsday's* Molly and Bloom articulate are less ambiguous and more fraught than those of *The Rose Tattoo*, and Manahan's presence in *Bloomsday* brought the politics of the two plays into a productive tension and facilitated temporal comparison.

As she is written in McClelland's script, Molly counters the conservative sexual politics that *Bloomsday's* "Circe" and "Nausicaa" perform. Further, the multiple layers of censorship memories highlight Molly's radical politics in comparison to several different moments in Ireland's past, increasing the number of ways change could be marked. To begin, she expresses desires for other men, past, present, and future, wondering, for instance, about going down to the quays to "pick up a sailor off the sea" as another lover. In the next breath, she admits that she has no clue whether Bloom has violated their marriage, implies her indifference, and then argues

women should govern the world, claiming that killing and slaughter would cease.¹⁴⁸ The train of Molly's thoughts imply that institutions like marriage are more harmful than good and that its men who keep them up. In a marked difference from *The Rose Tattoo* where the prospect of permanent heterosexual coupling motivated the female characters, Molly's logic amounts to a gendered critique of hegemonic power structures as they existed in colonial Ireland under British rule. In the context of performance, though, and aided by memories of censorship that heralded and highlighted change, Molly's thinking also held a powerful critique of the politics of independent Ireland that rigidified such structures.

What's more, under the temporal map provided by the memory of censorship, Molly's critique illuminates a continuous politics from colonial to contemporary Ireland. The temporal comparisons that the memory of censorship induce upon the performance suggests that, in some respects (gender and sexuality among them), Ireland has become more oppressive than in the colonial years. Molly, with her affairs, thoughts of liaisons, and contemplations of divorce, has found a space of wider sexual liberty than what was supposed to be even imaginable in post-war Ireland. She is still caught in a social structure based on imperial notions of respectability that the Catholic Church ultimately supported, but those structures have not become so ingrained in the world of the play so as to totally limit her imaginative agency. *Bloomsday's* depiction of such a politics in 1904 is, itself, an imagined past, but it nevertheless posited a radically different past in the present of performance that allowed the Irish public to reconsider their future.

The way Molly and Leopold think about their relationship elaborates these politics. Molly wonders if Bloom has been with another woman during the evening and remembers a time she saw him flirting not long after they were married, "not that I care two straws," she reflects.

¹⁴⁸ McClelland, *Bloomsday*, Theatre, I-17.

Later, she thinks back to when they were courting and explains, “that was why I like him because I saw he understood or felt what a woman is – and I knew I could always get round him and I gave himm [sic] all the pleasure I could; leading him on till he asked me to say yes.” Although Molly does express interest in Poldy’s love life, wants to know who he is seeing (if anyone), and perhaps even shows a sliver of jealousy (calling one woman she imagines a “bitch”), she does not seem to hold it against him, acknowledging that after their son died “we were never the same.” She also mocks couples who create social drama and violence over their love affairs, and says Bloom would “never find another woman like me to put up with him the way I do.” Bloom has similar thoughts. He comments on how much he continues to admire and love Molly throughout the play, or at least an idea of her. As he wearily approaches their bed at the end of the play/day, he mumbles, “Retribution? Assassination? Two wrongs do not make one right. Duel? No. Divorce? Not now.”¹⁴⁹ Neither of them are ready or willing to do without the other, despite their discontents and suspicions. This is not to say that they “love” each other in the traditional sense or otherwise, but that they have managed to eke out a form of sociality that affords them relative freedom despite/because of their understanding of each other.

The memory of *The Rose Tattoo*’s censorship could strengthen the memory of censorship’s claim to change by reminding audiences that similarly scandalous sex and gender expressions had been at the center of a debate brought on by a legal challenge by the state only a few short years earlier. Manahan’s body brought another recent memory of Irish censorship over sex to the stage, and it haunted her performance of Molly, re-doubling the play’s capacity to signal that what was representable on the Irish stage and cultural imaginary was changing. Committed and yet not, open and yet not, loving and yet not, in this moment Molly and

¹⁴⁹ McClelland, *Bloomsday*, Theatre, III-20, III-25, III-18, III-24–5.

Leopold's relationship confounds the binaries that ought to secure family and nation or lead it to ruin according to the logic of Irish biopolitical nationalism – and neither outcome occurs. They simply go on. It's a complicated picture, but one that decidedly represents a break with respectable, hegemonic imaginings of sex and gender roles as they were idealized in de Valera's Ireland. Even if *The Rose Tattoo*'s mimed condom was the most remembered aspect of the performance itself (over the actual ambiguities of the play's ending), Molly and Bloom's relationship expresses a willingness to live, at least for the moment, precisely in a state of marital violation, with each knowing the other has erred. Whereas in *The Rose Tattoo* the possibility of marriage and reproductive futurity compel the female leads to act on their sexual desires, *Bloomsday* suggests other modes of being that are not so dependent on regulative regimes of the normal – and its memories of censorship remind them how radical it is that they are seeing such an expression play out before them in light of recent theatrical history.

Ultimately, though, it must be remembered that the play's performance of Molly sat alongside more conservative representations like those in the adaptation's version of "Nausicaa" and "Circe." Again, the performance was not unified in its sexual and gender politics but rather contradictory and it did not reconcile any of them. Rather, it created many pathways for its audience to interpret the memory's narrative of "change" to various degrees and, because of how closely associated "Joyce" and "*Ulysses*" were with sexual histories, issues related to sex stand out as particularly loaded signifiers for those narratives. They were not the only ones, however, and those other formulations provide a different angle into how *Bloomsday* participated in and performed the transitional crisis in Irish culture.

5.4 Modernity, Irish Nationalism, and the Transnational Memory of Censorship in *Bloomsday*

If Joyce Week, *Bloomsday*, and the Joyce Museum functioned as a homecoming for “Joyce” that reckoned with Ireland’s status as a kind of final frontier for the author and his works, the underlying rationale for celebration was that Ireland was “catching up” with the rest of the world. Proponents of Joyce could imagine that Ireland was gaining status on the world stage and that this, in turn, was changing Ireland for the better. The memory of censorship, after all, wasn’t just national but transnational, too, both in the sense that the memory of “Joyce’s” censorship could be found across the northern Atlantic world and that the Irish understood “Joyce” and “*Ulysses*” in part through transnational histories of censorship. This meant that the “change” narrative also had a transnational dynamic that was at work in the performance, allowing Irish audience and artists to rethink themselves and their history in transnational terms.

In what ways did *Bloomsday*’s performance help to negotiate the Irish relationship to the transnationally-oriented changes inherent in the memory that framed the play? As I argued above, *Bloomsday*’s “Nausicaa” used Gerty MacDowell to stage a metaphoric meditation on Irish fear that the modern incorporation of international capital could contaminate Irish culture unless that capital was totally divorced from cultural influence. Gerty imagines a foreign spouse who submits to total assimilation, and therefore avoids messy confrontations over religious and national values while securing her a comfortable life above her current station. In this section, I focus on three other ways that Irish nationalism confronts, overlaps with, incorporates, or otherwise encounters what the characters read as “non-Irish” people and ideas: Ireland’s colonial status, Bloom’s Judaic heritage, and Molly’s memories of her girlhood in colonial Gibraltar. Each approaches the mingling of foreign and national identities and histories differently.

Stephen's resistance to colonial domination and exploitation above all else locks him into the historical formations from which he seeks liberation. Bloom's nationalism seeks religious inclusivity. Molly's acquiescence to colonial history affirms alternative ways of being. The comparative temporal framework that the memories of censorship rupture produce "a manifold of narratives which resist the uniformity of a closed system," in Kearney's words: "There is no unitary master narrative of Irish cultural history, but a plurality of transitions between different perspectives... encouraging [the Irish] to reinvent the past as a living transmission of meaning rather than revere it as a deposit of unchangeable truth."¹⁵⁰ The performance worked both to rupture the idealized "pure Gael" nationalism of the de Valera era and connect audiences to an imagined past that offered an alternative mode of political community that affirmed an expansively inclusive nationalism. Even as the 1962 *Bloomsday* sometimes limited the imaginative potential of Joyce's gender and sexual politics, it nevertheless imagined transnational utopian possibilities.

In *Bloomsday*, Stephen broadly represents the ways in which colonial resistance gets locked into violence. Stephen's first few scenes are especially concerned with Irish colonial relations, both between Ireland and England as well as the variety of perspectives Irish and English nationals perform. The play begins, first of all, by foregrounding everywhere Ireland's colonial condition and the divisions between its inhabitants. Closely resembling the novel as it does, Gibson's insight into the nationalist discourses Joyce represents here is instructive. For Gibson, the novel's opening "pits Stephen against the English presence in Ireland" and the English presence in the Irish.¹⁵¹ The first scenes at the Martello Tower (which Stephen's friend

¹⁵⁰ Kearney, 16–17.

¹⁵¹ Gibson, *Joyce's Revenge*, 23.

Buck Mulligan is renting from the British Secretary of War, he tells us), implant the play and the characters within imperial history. From the start, too, the three characters who occupy the old fortification are annoyed with each other, testy, and irritable. Mulligan wakes Stephen up in the play's opening moment, and Stephen's first act is to prod him about how long the Englishman Haines will be staying with them, pointedly explaining, "if he stays on here I'm off."¹⁵² Mulligan's submission to Haines is the point, as Gibson points out. Mulligan does not seem to care for Haines at all but plays the part of the double-dealing comedic court jester who sees benefit in subordination. Mulligan works throughout the opening to coerce Stephen into civility, sociality, and servility with Haines.¹⁵³ The Irish Mulligan is thus irrevocably bound up with and even centers the English presence in his life.

Stephen resists them both. This includes minor actions that may just seem petty but play into a subversive anti-colonial activism and symbolism that animates Stephen. For instance, he decides against bringing Mulligan the shaving basin he forgot, conflating it with the "forgotten friendship" Mulligan abandoned for the Englishman. Stephen will not help his enemy's friend. Stephen also resists them in more materially significant ways. He contemplates taking the tower key with him as he leaves: "He wants that key. It is mine, I paid the rent. Now I eat his salt bread. Give him the key too. All. He will ask for it that was in his eyes." Stephen then pockets the key, reclaiming what he paid for (but, ironically, still cannot own), and refuses to be entrapped in an exploitive relationship that exchanges bread for lodging.¹⁵⁴ Stephen resists usurpation by the collaborative Irishman as much as the Englishman.

¹⁵² McClelland, *Bloomsday*, Theatre, I-8, I-1–2. The radio play actually begins with Bloom making breakfast and then cuts to Stephen and Mulligan. The television play begins like the theatre script and the novel, at the tower.

¹⁵³ Gibson, *Joyce's Revenge*, 30–1.

¹⁵⁴ McClelland, *Bloomsday*, Theatre, I-5, I-8–9. See also Gibson, *Joyce's Revenge*, 21–32.

To Stephen, the Englishman Haines is, himself, a conqueror and exploiter. Haines sees himself, though, as extraordinarily sympathetic to Ireland's people, culture, and history. For instance, Haines speaks Irish. When a milkmaid arrives with their daily delivery, Haines tries to speak Irish to her, but the milkmaid mistakes it for French. While Haines's deployment of Irish might endear him to some, he has mastery over a tongue not his own and which is denied to the Irish milkmaid, who exhibits, instead, fluency with British pound sterling, calculating the group's bill in a virtuosic performance of arithmetic.¹⁵⁵ Haines can afford to be fluent in the tongues his people lord over, but a native worker can only afford to know the colonizer's languages, linguistic and economic. Stephen recognizes Haines's colonizing nature and resists it. For instance, over their morning tea (an English colonial custom and which Mulligan, acting the dutiful servant, made strong specifically to satisfy Haines), Haines is impressed with Stephen's way of speaking and tells him, "I intend to make a collection of your sayings if you will let me." Stephen "aggressively" retorts, "Would I make money by it?" Mulligan jumps in to deescalate the confrontation.¹⁵⁶ Haines's colonization extends here beyond language and into Irish thought, which he at once seems to want to preserve but without context and to his own benefit. Stephen wants none of his involvement in his words or thoughts.

In the 1962 *Bloomsday*, Stephen stands as something of a warning for an Irish nationalism based on the old colonial situation. While Stephen's resistance works against wrongful imperial tyranny and colonial subjugation, it also reinscribes the colonial relation he ultimately seeks to overthrow. The play paints this relationship (in Stephen's scenes anyway) as one obsessed with the past, with history, and figures of domination. Over tea, he tells Haines that

¹⁵⁵ McClelland, *Bloomsday*, Theatre, I-6.

¹⁵⁶ McClelland, *Bloomsday*, Theatre, I-7.

he is “the servant of two masters; the Imperial British state and the holy Roman catholic and apostolic church – (bitterly) and there’s a third who wants me for odd jobs. Cathleen Ni Houlihan.”¹⁵⁷ As Gibson argues, “Stephen’s condition is one of painful belonging rather than alienation. This is a predicament for him because it constantly draws him backwards into old hostilities, rages, frustrations, despairs.”¹⁵⁸ Here, that includes the mythical Irish past, the British Empire, and the Roman Catholic Church, all of which, to Stephen, oppress their subjects and help to constitute each other. Cathleen Ni Houlihan needs the British Empire to fight against, as the British Empire needs the Church to collaborate on its civilizing and moralizing mission, as Cathleen Ni Houlihan (at least in some nationalist circles) needs the Church to help define Irish difference, and so forth. “History is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake,” Stephen later tells his proud unionist employer, Mr. Deasy (who stands in as yet another Irish viewpoint).¹⁵⁹ It is a problem Stephen is never able to reconcile and it locks him into a persistent and violent unhappiness – a constant rebellion from which there can be no real freedom. Even if the Empire were to retreat, history remains. Stephen knows only to struggle.

The play’s memories of censorship held the potential to flip sympathies with Stephen’s revolutionary politics on its head. While Irish audiences would no doubt have felt something like patriotic solidarity with Stephen’s resistance, it nevertheless plays to rather conventional antagonisms that are not conducive to the change narrative that the memories projected. Stephen’s struggle is closer to the constant struggle against “the foreign” and especially the British that typified the politics of the de Valera era. This is not to say that Stephen’s politics

¹⁵⁷ McClelland, *Bloomsday*, Theatre, I-8. Cathleen Ni Houlihan is a mythical figure from Irish nationalist lore most famous for her appearance in the eponymous play by Yeats and Lady Gregory. She is an old woman who personifies Ireland’s subjugation under colonial rule and who has urged young men for centuries to go and fight for her.

¹⁵⁸ Gibson, *Joyce’s Revenge*, 39.

¹⁵⁹ McClelland, *Bloomsday*, Theatre, I-22.

were de Valera's. Far from it, especially in relation to religion and sexuality, among other particular issues. But it is to say that the politics of de Valera's Ireland from the 1930s through 1950s and Stephen's political imagination both leave Ireland's inhabitants in impossibly polarized positions that they, themselves, can neither overcome nor adhere to. Stephen ponders how to overcome it, looking for solutions. He will not find them, but the play does offer alternatives through other characters. The play posits the politics of Irish coloniality and its residue as the central problem it will explore. Defining "change" becomes the performance's answer, and that change entails altering the conditions of Irish belonging and grappling with differences that already existed in pre-revolutionary Ireland.

Stephen begins to see this for himself in his conversation with the Protestant unionist, Mr. Deasy, who claims England is dying by "the hands of the jews," who are "already at their work of destruction." Stephen pushes back against Deasy's anti-Semitism, but Deasy insists that Jewish people are cursed to wander the world because of their sin against Christ. Stephen retorts, "Who has not?"¹⁶⁰ Stephen empathizes with the persecuted Jews, seeing in their struggle a parallel one to his own as a colonized subject robbed of home, language, and culture. Deasy imagines Irish solidarity and pride between himself and Stephen despite their differing attitudes towards Britain and religion, but Stephen is clearly repulsed by Deasy's unionist posturing, aligned as it is with English interests and xenophobia. Stephen rather implicitly supports Irish and Jewish solidarity against unionist/English bigotry. Again, though, Stephen's imagination ultimately returns to the colonial relation and struggle. Still, it is significant that Stephen's nationalism is capable of containing plural Irish identities: Catholic and Jewish, at least.

¹⁶⁰ McClelland, *Bloomsday*, Theatre, I-21–2.

The memories of censorship could have mediated the tensions between Deasy and Stephen for the contemporary Irish audience. As Stephen leaves his office, Deasy sets up a joke:

MR. DEASY: Ireland, they say, has the honour of being the only country which has never persecuted the jews. Do you know that? No. And do you know why?

STEPHEN: (beginning to smile) Why, sir?

MR. DEASY: (solemnly) Because she never let them in. (...a coughball of laughter leaps from his throat) She never let them in!¹⁶¹

The scene abruptly concludes there, shifting immediately back to the play's primary Jewish figure, Bloom. In an almost Brecht-like bit of dramaturgy, Bloom's appearance contradicts the truth claim in Deasy's joke but also heightens its anti-Semitic impact by giving it a material human target within a nationalist framework. To Deasy, anti-Semitism is Ireland's unique "honour." If the memory of censorship served to help audiences navigate their own national identities within a modernity/tradition continuum, and if that memory emphasized temporal change – that what was once was unthinkable, dangerous, and foreign, could and now should be considered within Irish culture – it begs the question: did the Eblana audience agree with Deasy?

Between Joyce's Dublin represented onstage and the time from which the audience watched stood the horror of the Holocaust and Ireland's utterly insufficient response to that crisis. Between independence and the start of the Second World War, the Irish state enacted immigration policies that kept Jews out of the country, blaming Jews that were already there for unwelcome social and cultural changes that the hegemony saw as a threat to the purity of Irish culture. The old conspiracy theories thrived, painting Jews (Irish and non-Irish) to the control of

¹⁶¹ McClelland, *Bloomsday*, Theatre, I-22–3.

the press, global finance, and cinema. Catholic Ireland, broadly speaking, saw Jews as enemies of the church (much like communists, to whom they were also linked), disseminating anti-Semitic propaganda and sometimes even supporting fascistic groups like Maria Duce (founded in 1954 in Limerick, which was once the site of a Catholic-instigated pogrom against the Jews in 1904). The Free State's Aliens Act of 1935 gave the state the power to discriminate against Jewish refugees seeking asylum in Ireland, an international crisis that only grew from the time of Hitler's ascent to power in 1933. Although de Valera protected the religious rights of Jews in the 1937 Constitution for the Republic, throughout the war his government rejected visa applications through a policy that dictated the Jewish population should not increase. Exceptions were made for Jewish converts to Catholicism, but the state limited them, too. Ireland's poor economy became an excuse to justify xenophobic policies. These policies continued until 1956 when Ireland ratified the Geneva Convention (which passed the UN five years earlier and thus had a long wait to pass in Éire). Dublin's "Little Jerusalem" neighborhood, which had existed since at least the late Victorian period, vanished by the 1960s. Sociological studies in the 1970s illustrated that anti-Semitic views remained firmly entrenched in Ireland. For instance, many Irish believed that Jews were responsible for Christ's death, and that they held outsized control of global finance. These surveys did not ask any questions about the Holocaust, which remained out largely absent from postwar Irish discourse until the early 1990s.¹⁶²

Sadly, suffice it to say that audiences at the Eblana may have been all too comfortable with Deasy's joke, even post-Holocaust. Irish attitudes were largely divided and prejudiced along

¹⁶² Bryan Fanning, *Racism and Social Change in the Republic of Ireland* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 59–86; Dermot Keogh, "Ireland," in *The World Reacts to the Holocaust*, ed. David S. Wyman (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 642–69; Dermot Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth-Century Ireland: Refugees, Anti-Semitism and the Holocaust* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1998), 18–19, 26–53, 88–99, 105–7, 115–241.

religious lines and would be for the coming decades. Still, whether or not they knowingly chuckled with the anti-Semite, the performance would work to challenge sectarianism that cast Irish nationhood in such narrow terms – narrower, even, than the unionist Deasy espoused, and it would do so in part by advocating for change through transnational memories of censorship. The temporal comparisons that the memory helped to facilitate between 1904 Dublin, the censorious politics of the de Valera era, and the transitional present of 1962 tasked audiences to think about the future as well, especially in instances like this where oppression still reigned. Bloom's appearance immediately following Deasy's joke asserts the lingering inadequacies of sectarian Irish nationalism and implicitly argues that not only must it be reconsidered but that the foreign-coded Bloom can undertake that challenge. Transnational acceptance of what was once censored could help accommodate and imagine a more inclusive nationalism within Ireland.

The most explicit instance of that challenge comes in the play's rendition of the "Cyclops" episode. It is late in the afternoon, and Bloom sits in a pub avoiding his wife's liaison. An English sailor toasts England, provoking a character called "The Citizen" to answer with some lines from the nationalist tune "God Save Ireland." As the Citizen leads the pub to sing another nationalist anthem, "A Nation Once Again," Bloom mumbles to himself, "Persecution, all the history of the world is full of it. Perpetuating national hatred among nations."¹⁶³ Bloom recognizes the interlocking violence that the imperial/nationalist struggle produces, seeing in the pub's expression of Irish nationalism a persecution of non-Irish folks and perspectives. Bloom then pipes up and makes his thought about persecution known to the Citizen and others in the

¹⁶³ McClelland, *Bloomsday*, Television, 111–12. Both the television and radio scripts have Bloom's line following some Irish national song. In the theatre script, Bloom's line begins the scene and so is not a comment on anything in particular. The later scripts changed this, so it seems likely that the script the Gemini-Envoy production used probably more closely resembled them. McClelland, *Bloomsday*, Radio, 35; McClelland, *Bloomsday*, Theatre, II-26.

pub. They attempt to undermine his argument by demonstrating its own national biases, but Bloom claims Ireland as his nation, telling them he was born Irish and goes on to simultaneously claim his Judaic heritage:

BLOOM: I belong to a race too, that is hated and persecuted. This very moment. This very instant. Robbed. Plundered. Insulted. Persecuted. Taking what belongs to us by right. At this very moment. Sold by auction off in Morocco like slaves or cattle.

THE CITIZEN: Are you talking about the new Jerusalem?

BLOOM: I'm talking about injustice.

JOHN WYSE: Right. Stand up to it then with force like men.

BLOOM: But it's no use. Force, hatred, history, all that. That's not life for men and women, insult and hatred. And everybody knows that it's the very opposite of that that is really life.

ALF: What?

BLOOM: Love. I mean the opposite of hatred. I must go now.¹⁶⁴

As if to prove his point, the pub patrons make anti-Semitic assumptions about Bloom, supposing he leaves to collect dues from orphans and widows they imagine he swindles, or to check on horseracing bets. "He's a bloody dark horse himself," one says, changing the conversation to anti-Semitic stereotypes about Jewish national and religious loyalty: "A wolf in sheep's

¹⁶⁴ McClelland, *Bloomsday*, Radio, 35–6. Each version of this sequence is somewhat different. The television adaptation, for instance, does not contain the lines where Bloom makes clear his Irish birth. Since the order of the conversation makes the most dramaturgical sense in the radio version, but is still fairly close to the theatre script, so I have deferred to those ones, here.

clothing,” decries the Citizen. Another pointedly asks, “is he a Jew or a gentile or a holy Roman or a swaddler or what the hell is he? ...No offence... to the Orangemen or Presbyterians.”¹⁶⁵

Bloom is, in fact, a Catholic convert from Judaism who also translated his Hungarian last name of Virag into English. Despite the effort Bloom has made to assimilate, he stands both within and outside of the national community, making him ambiguous or unreadable and therefore suspicious to the community, as Gibson argues.¹⁶⁶ The Citizen reads Bloom’s foreignness as poison to national purity, declaring, “Saint Patrick would want to land again at Ballykinlar and convert us after allowing things like that to contaminate our shores.”¹⁶⁷ Bloom recognizes, though, that the prejudice he experiences as both Jew and Catholic share a common culture based on colonial distinctions – distinctions that Irish nationalist and religious discourse constructed in racialized terms. Bloom’s insider/outsider status allows him to see the colonial complicity of Irish Catholic nationalism with imperial ideologies which exclude him (and others, like the Ulstermen and Protestants) from taking full part in the life of the nation – from belonging.

The memory of censorship would have worked to orient its audience towards a future of more inclusive politics. The exclusionary politics Bloom critiques are analogous to the exclusionary politics of Church and state censorship that the production sought to overcome, both of which reinforced colonial ideological formations. The memory of “Joyce” and “*Ulysses*’s” censorship introduces notions of the foreign to Irish cultural production under the modernizing narrative of “change.” The criticisms Bloom leverages would have still been true in 1962. This continuity surely clashed with the memory’s narrative of change. Such a clash could have espoused two responses. The first ultimately rejects Bloom’s argument and returns, like

¹⁶⁵ McClelland, *Bloomsday*, Radio, 37–8.

¹⁶⁶ Gibson, *Joyce’s Revenge*, 56.

¹⁶⁷ McClelland, *Bloomsday*, Radio, 38.

Stephen, to a futile struggle against history. The other option recognizes the work still to be done, the change that is still to come. The memories of “Joyce” and “*Ulysses*” gave imaginative possibility to what those changes could be. “Joyce,” like Bloom, was both within and outside of Irish nationalism – an Irish national who lived in self-exile and who was remembered until very recently with distinctly un-Irish proclivities and expressions, including his metropolitanism and modernity. Now, the memory of censorship suggests, allowing Irish culture to comingle with the foreign, as the production of *Bloomsday* was itself demonstrating, could breakdown, blur, critique, and maybe even undo the politics of exclusion, which could help bring Ireland out of international isolation and intranational struggle. The transnational memory of “Joyce’s” censorship pressed its political and cultural efficacy as a case in point, advocating for audiences to continue wrestling with the performance’s provocations, its implicit call for secularization, its explicit breakdown of national origin (a nation, Bloom explains, “is the same people living in the same place... Or else living in different places,”), and utopian imagining of a progressive collective future.¹⁶⁸

Bloom’s approach remains theoretical, though, at least until the end of the play, which differs in remarkable ways from *Ulysses*. Namely, it links Bloom and Molly together to model a kind of collaborative arrangement of community that exceeds what Joyce approached in his novel. McClelland’s dramatic adaptation is decidedly more optimistic and utopian than Joyce was in any of his works, and the live theatrical experience of the play offered a collective, embodied outlet for its utopian aspirations.

As with Stephen and Leopold, imperial culture similarly formed Molly’s consciousness and is a vital context for her actions. Molly grew up as an Irish Catholic living in the British

¹⁶⁸ McClelland, *Bloomsday*, Radio, 36.

garrison of Gibraltar on the southern tip of Spain, a symbol of Anglo-Protestant military might in a center of the Catholic world. McClelland has Bloom mention that the bedframe he and Molly sleep in came with her “all the way from Gibraltar [*sic*]” in their first scene near the start of the play, introducing her within a colonial context. In her first monologue which follows, she reveals her father was in the British military there, bringing to light Irish participation in British imperialism and her complicity in that project.¹⁶⁹

Unlike Stephen, the Molly of *Bloomsday* does not struggle to overcome the imperial matrix of power. McClelland doesn't bring Molly's memories of Gibraltar back into her monologues until the very end of the play, but in limiting her remembrances he is able to focus them. Just after she explains why she agreed to marry Bloom, she recalls his proposal and how she thought back on her life in Gibraltar as he waited for her answer. She thought of Spanish girls, Greeks and Jews and Arabs in the marketplace, on “handsome Moors all in white and turbans,” of the watchman she kissed. The memories of the proposal in Ireland and of Gibraltar begin to overlap:

Gibraltar as a girl – where I was a flower of the mountain – yes – when I put the rose in my hair like the Andalusian girls used – or shall I wear a red – yes – and how he kissed me under the Moorish wall and I thought well – as well as him as another – yes – and then he asked me would I say yes – to say yes – my mountain flower – and first I put my arms around him – yes – and drew him down to me so he could feel my breasts all perfume – yes – and his heart was going like mad and yes I said yes I will – yes.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁹ McClelland, *Bloomsday*, Theatre, I-10.

¹⁷⁰ McClelland, *Bloomsday*, Television, 186.

These memories of both Ireland and Gibraltar utterly avoid colonial antagonisms, but do not – indeed, cannot – avoid the signs of imperial contact. Gibraltar’s diversity shines – not as a meeting place of imperial power but rather in quotidian shopping experiences and romantic encounters. At the same time, as Gibson argues, “Joyce underlines an ineradicable, Irish involvement in the systems of value and structures of thought and feeling intrinsic to the colonizer’s culture.” Noting Joyce’s own admission that Molly’s repeated “yeses” evoked for him cession, “the end of all resistance,” Gibson argues Molly is “saying yes to the enemy.” No one can “cleanse” Ireland of Englishness. Molly simply does not fight the past, but “sustains and relinquishes the terms of a ferocious, polar opposition.”¹⁷¹

This is all very well, but in the theatre it remains perilously abstract and even obtuse as a strategy for rethinking collective national belonging against specific histories and questions of change. While Joyce’s novel ends with Molly’s words quoted above, McClelland’s play does not. After Molly’s lines, Bloom enters their bedroom, holding a candle. He sits down on the bed and looks at Molly and quietly intones, “Each one imagines himself to be the first, whereas, he is always the last term of a preceding series. Even if the first term of a succeeding one. Each imagining himself to be first, last only and alone. Whereas, he is neither first nor last nor only nor alone in a series originating and repeated to infinity.” Molly stirs in her sleep and seems to agree with him, mumbling once more, “Y ... yyy ... sss”¹⁷² Lifted out of context from the penultimate “Ithaca” chapter, McClelland puts the quote to work to reestablish community and continuity between Bloom and Molly. Bloom’s short speech and Molly’s final affirmation links

¹⁷¹ Gibson, *Joyce’s Revenge*, 270, 269n90, 271.

¹⁷² McClelland, *Bloomsday*, Television, 186–7. All three versions give Bloom these lines after Molly’s Gibraltar/proposal monologue (the theatre version divides them up between Bloom and “the Reader.” Molly’s final “yes” only appears in the radio and television versions. As with the “Cyclops” sequence, it seems likely that the 1962 version would follow the later versions.

the couple together again, casts them as one part of an all-encompassing humanity that extends backwards and forwards into infinity. Removing the quote from its context and placing it at the very end of the play gives the passage a universalizing effect that extends and connects to the audience, sitting both as individuals and a collective, alone and only but also together.

It is here that McClelland breaks most radically with Joyce and the memory of “Joyce’s” censorship and its narrative of change could have pointed towards a deterritorialized modernity. Joyce relaxes the terms of Irish nationalism and coloniality without relinquishing them. McClelland and the memory of censorship work towards the evaporation of those terms, looking forward to a communal, liberated, and utopian future. The play’s final words continue looking back to the past, but it’s a past without particularity and, as such, it is a future without it, too: the collapse of history. If the memory of censorship advocated for change, for the incorporation of “foreign” ideas, for Ireland to in some ways meet the standards of the transnational community where Joyce’s works were increasingly visible and celebrated, is not the extreme end to such a politics the collapse of political distinctions? Put another way, the imperatives to change as suggested by the performance and the progressive politics of the memory of censorship are utopian in the literal sense of impossibility. Such is the shortcoming of such a broad and reductive narrative. Nevertheless, by positioning the audience in relation to this imagined past, such a radical modernity may seem approachable if not attainable, a dream perhaps worth striving for.

6.0 Conclusion

When I began my research into Archbishop McQuaid's protest against Seán O'Casey and James Joyce, I was struck by just how profoundly entangled Irish censorship was with thoughts about other places. This was especially the case while I studied in McQuaid's archives in Dublin. McQuaid received reports all the time from his network of spies and informants, cueing him into the sinful goings-on in Dublin. From the movements of suspected communists and communist sympathizers, to the availability of dirty books, to the performance of shocking plays, these reports catalogue a litany of cultural and political anxieties. One such letter recounts to the Archbishop's House the shame one Dubliner felt when the American musical *Guys and Dolls* (1950) played at the Olympia in 1956. Although he didn't see the performance, himself, this informant heard about the "cross-channel" plays performed at the Olympia in "shocking" terms from his workmates, adding that he would spare his reader the "horror" of what was performed in *Guys and Dolls*. The writer laments that such a play "could be put over the citizens of this city without complaint. But in Birmingham [UK], the citizens there, picketed the play."¹ The comparison between Britain and Ireland is telling. It evinces an anxiety not just about the play's performance in Ireland but what Ireland's welcome of the play projects to the wider world, and especially in comparison to the resistance against it mounted in England, Ireland's old enemy.

Similarly, McQuaid's protest against O'Casey and Joyce was also situated within an international context: An Tóstal and its curation of a global Irish brand. Throughout his correspondence, McQuaid directs his objections against An Tóstal, not just the DITF. McQuaid

¹ Joseph J. Cooney to Christopher Mangan, May 10, 1956, McQuaid Papers, DDA/AB8/78/5/18–19.

was acutely aware of the message it would send if he, as the Roman Catholic Church's top representative in the city and leader of the Dublin archdiocese, even only implicitly condoned the plays with a service blessing *An Tóstal*. McQuaid's attempt to cultivate and influence the projection of Irish identity through censorship was outward-directed as much as inward-directed.

In this dissertation, though, I have striven to show not just how Irish censorship took shape in part as a response to the global connectivity Irish modernity enabled, but how censorship traveled about the world in turn. In each of my case studies, Irish censorship had the effect of moving through and inspiring Irish cultural production elsewhere in time and/or space and continued to work in that place. Irish censorship itself can be understood as a transnational phenomenon in the age of modernity, which ensured that censorship's political and cultural effects could continue to circulate elsewhere.

Censorship moves. In the process of moving through Irish cultural productions, censorship held the potential to reinscribe or challenge identities, understandings of history, and people's relationships to and feelings about contentious subjects. But as I have argued in this dissertation's individual case studies, the politics that these transnational Irish performances produced were ambivalent at best and complicit with violence and repression at worst. Even *Bloomsday*, which arguably had the most politically progressive production of the group I studied, concludes in an ambiguous manner and is riddled throughout with political contradictions. The Beckett plays actively censored censorship's memory, largely entrenching the status quo even as they quivered with disruptive potential. The confused politics of the LLT's *Father Ned* likely inspired little more than complacency.

The political ambivalence that mobile censorship produced in these transnational Irish performances was not an element I expected to find or looked for as I researched. It continually

surprised me, and it was not until very late in my writing process that I even recognized it as a trend. I think this is partly because I assumed – not unlike those who staged *Bloomsday* in 1962 – that to a certain extent staging a banned play, making it visible, and giving it life seems like a rather progressive act. But my supposition failed to account for the depictions contained within the performances, their embedment within and conversations with local cultural contexts, and the way censorship could continue to work through time and space in these transnational Irish performances. These politics are also what trouble me, now. How else might censorship move? What other performances might it move through, and what cultural and political work does it undertake in its movement? Censorship has not gone away. I have analyzed some of the ways in which it historically moved in a particular context, but there is surely more to learn. We risk misunderstanding censorship and ignoring the multiplicity of its effects if we don't try.

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