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**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON**

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

English

**“WHY DOES ITS LOCK FIT MY KEY?” THE SPATIAL REPRESENTATIONS  
OF HOME IN BRIAN FRIEL’S DRAMA**

by

**Amaal J. Al-Kroy**

Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

October 2017



UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

## **ABSTRACT**

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### **“WHY DOES ITS LOCK FIT MY KEY?” THE SPATIAL REPRESENTATIONS OF HOME IN BRIAN FRIEL’S DRAMA**

Amaal Jassim Al-Kroy

This thesis is a geo-critical study that combines spatial and post-colonial approaches to read the concept of home in Brian Friel’s drama. The thesis focuses on how the dramatic treatment of space and place shapes the representations, understandings and experience of home in his drama. The study attempts to resolve the questions of whether Brian Friel partakes in the de-familiarisation of the nationalistic discourse on space through his representation of home and thus creates discourses of resistance that challenge dominant assumptions about home space, or whether he in fact asserts this discourse on space despite his postcolonial position. In light of the complex and contradictory thematic of home in Brian Friel’s dramatic work, the study endeavours to elucidate four main aims. Firstly, it aims to consider how home is produced, negotiated, and represented dramatically in a partitioned state and the ways in which home might be considered a (post) colonial space under these conditions. Secondly, it plans to challenge dominant readings of home in Friel’s drama that have primarily been shaped by the concerns of nationalism and other 'public' discourses, focusing instead on the interplay between home as a space of life’s intimate human spatiality and home as a space of political negotiations. Thirdly, this thesis attempts to elucidate the paradoxical undertones in representing home as a political space, reinforcing colonial powers. Finally, I wish to contribute a

productive theorisation of the value of home that synthesises its spatial and postcolonial critiques. Initially, the study is interested in the playwright's response within his plays to the political, social, religious and cultural milieu in Ireland since the nineteen twenties and how this affects his awareness of the trauma of home. The project demonstrates conclusively how Brian Friel's tendency to situate his dramatic plays within the domains of home reveals his critical engagement with the concept of home in the (post)colonial Irish context, and how this also is crucial for an understanding of the relationship between drama and political engagement of other texts produced in other postcolonial contexts.

# Table of Contents

<b>Table of Contents</b> .....	<b>i</b>
<b>DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP</b> .....	<b>v</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>vii</b>
<b>Chapter 1: Research Context</b> .....	<b>9</b>
1.1 Chapter Overview .....	9
1.2 The Scope of the Study .....	9
1.3 The Early Representations of Home in Irish Drama .....	14
1.4 Brian Friel: “We must learn where we live” .....	16
1.4.1 Home and Brian Friel .....	21
<b>Chapter 2: Research Theoretical framework</b> .....	<b>24</b>
2.1 Chapter Overview .....	24
2.2 Home: Thesis-Working Definition .....	24
2.3 What makes Geo-criticism.....	26
2.3.1 Gaston Bachelard: Reading Intimate Spaces.....	28
2.3.2 The Social Conceptualisation of Space .....	31
2.3.3 Outline the Research Topic in Context of literature Reviewed .....	37
2.3.4 Friel’s Concept of Home: Nationalistic Reading .....	37
2.3.5 Friel’s concept of Home: Postcolonial Readings .....	46
2.4 Concluding Remarks.....	49
<b>Chapter 3: Images of Psychic Home as a Political Space</b> .....	<b>51</b>
3.1 Introduction .....	51
3.2 Psychic Homelands: Imagination of Space and place in <i>The Enemy Within</i> .....	51
3.2.1 The Context of the Play .....	51
3.2.2 Staging the Spatiality of Home .....	53
3.2.3 Home as a post-colonial space .....	55
3.2.4 The Problematic of Home and Identity .....	58
3.2.5 The Problematic of Home and Origin .....	61

3.3	The Loves of Cass McGuire: Returning home: Gender, Domestic space.....	63
3.3.1	The Context of the play.....	63
3.3.2	The Staging the Spatiality of Home.....	65
3.3.3	The Domestic Space of Home.....	66
3.3.4	The Staging of Imagined space of Home.....	70
3.4	Molly Sweeney: Staging Body and Home .....	74
3.4.1	Home and Body .....	74
3.4.2	Staging the Spatiality of Home .....	75
3.4.3	Staging Body as a Contested Space.....	78
3.5	Conclusion.....	82
 <b>Chapter 4: The Representations of Domestic Space in <i>Philadelphia, Here I Come!</i>, <i>The Gentle Island</i> and <i>Dancing at Lughnasa</i></b>		
4.1	Chapter Overview.....	85
4.2	<i>Philadelphia Here I Come</i> : Unhomely Home .....	86
4.2.1	Introduction.....	86
4.2.2	Home on Stage .....	86
4.2.3	Father-Son Relationship.....	91
4.2.4	(Un) homely Motherland.....	96
4.3	<i>The Gentle Island</i> : Uncanny Presence .....	99
4.3.1	Introduction.....	99
4.3.2	Home on Stage .....	102
4.3.3	Home as a Chaotic Space: The Role of Patriarchy .....	105
4.3.4	Strangers at Home .....	108
4.4	“The whole thing is so fragile it can’t be held together much longer” Failed Domesticity in <i>Dancing at Lughnasa</i> .....	110
4.4.1	Introduction.....	110
4.4.2	Home on Stage .....	111
4.4.3	The Internal Space of the Mundy House.....	116
4.4.4	The External spaces of the Mundy House.....	119
4.4.5	Conclusion .....	124

<b>Chapter 5: Spatial Representations of Homeland in <i>Aristocrats</i>, <i>Translations</i> and <i>The Home place</i>.....</b>	<b>127</b>
5.1 Chapter Overview .....	127
5.2 A Postcolonial Treatment of the Big House in <i>Aristocrats</i> .....	127
5.2.1 The Tradition of the Big House .....	128
5.2.2 The Spatial Representations of the Big House.....	132
5.3 Re- Mapping Home: Brain Friel's <i>Translations</i> .....	133
5.3.1 <i>Translations</i> : Text Background .....	134
5.3.2 Blurring the Boundaries: The Home and The Nation.....	137
5.3.3 Re-mapping the home Space.....	142
5.3.4 Interlopers in the Home .....	144
5.4 <i>The Home Place</i> : Why Home Matters .....	150
5.4.1 Big House: Colonial Fantasy of Space .....	151
5.4.2 Nationalistic or Colonial Home.....	152
5.4.3 Home as a Hybrid Space .....	154
<b>Chapter 6: Conclusion.....</b>	<b>158</b>
<b>List of References .....</b>	<b>161</b>
Primary Sources .....	161
Secondary References .....	161



# DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I, Amaal J Al-Kroy, declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

“WHY DOES ITS LOCK FIT MY KEY?” THE SPATIAL REPRESENTATIONS OF HOME IN  
BRIAN FRIEL’S DRAMA

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
7. [Delete as appropriate] None of this work has been published before submission [or] Parts of this work have been published as: [please list references below]:

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# **Chapter 1: Research Context**

## **1.1 Chapter Overview**

This chapter presents the context of the study. It consists of three sections. The first section lays out the scope and the range of the study. The second section aims to locate Brian Friel's representation of home within the wider context of Irish drama that presents similar places. I would maintain that Brian Friel's interest in representing home originates from the tendency of the Irish theatre to present these spaces as both theme and setting. The third section attempts to show how Brian Friel's response in his dramatic work to the political, social, religious and cultural milieu in Ireland since the nineteen twenties and how this effects his awareness of the concept of home.

## **1.2 The Scope of the Study**

In one of his advertisement series to campaign for an end to the U.S.A war in Iraq, Mike McGavick, a Republican candidate for the US Senate seat held by Maria Cantwell in the 2006 election, announces: "Partition the country if we have to and get our troops home in victory" (October :2006). Such a statement might be compared to the logic that led to the 1921 partition of Ireland (or of Palestine or India in 1947). For a variety of reasons, partition might be seen as one of the political strategies to avoid civil war or to claim a new route to what McGavick calls "victory." However, partition itself is deeply problematic. In his observation of partitioned communities such as Northern Irish Catholics, Israeli Arabs or Indian Muslims, Joe Cleary has suggested that: "the actual settlements [of these communities] have provided potent material for ongoing conflict" (22:2009). In particular, this conflict problematizes the meanings and significances of home. As a concept, home is at once very familiar and embedded in everyday dialogues, yet simultaneously problematic if it becomes a contested space. Those who write on the topic of 'home' have described the multi-layered nature of the concept and the multiple and sometimes contradictory aspects of its dimensions of existence (Staeheli and Nagel 2006). Home may be a location for feelings of safety and belonging or in some circumstances a site of violence and alienation. It may be geographically fixed and rooted in place, but can incorporate a more abstract and emotional sense of attachment and belonging that is not necessarily bounded in this way (Lahelma and Gordon 2003, Sirriyeh 2010). In this thesis, these

intricacies of 'home' will be examined and problematized. This study sets out to examine one specific example of the ways in which partition renders ideas of home complex by taking the works of a contemporary Irish dramatist, Brian Friel (1929-2015), who lived and wrote in an Ireland that is partitioned.

The focus of this thesis is to analyse how the dramatic treatment of space and place shapes the representations, understandings and experience of home in Brian Friel's drama. This study attempts to settle the questions of whether Brian Friel participates in the demystification of the nationalistic discourse on space through his representation of home and thus creates discourses of resistance that challenge dominant nationalistic assumptions about home space, or whether he in fact asserts this discourse on space despite his postcolonial position. The practice of social production of space in the (post)colonial context is conceived to be a dialectical relationship in which both the coloniser and the colonised generate narratives and counter-narratives that hide their socially constructed relationship. This is explained by Albert Memmi in his work on the deconstruction of the coloniser's "enigmatic" attitudes towards the colonised as maintained by a colonial system and its promulgation of colonial discourse on the colonised (Memmi cited in Hornung, et.al. 1996). If one transposes this definition to the spatial production of home in an Irish dramatic context, it is feasible to suggest that Brian Friel's representation of home participates in the social production of space, whilst at the same time, it fulfils an important aesthetic and dramatic function and plays an important role in the collective imagination of a nation through the production of drama on the space of the nation.

Critical debates about the extent to which Ireland might be considered 'post-colonial' in the aftermath of centuries of colonial domination are of paramount importance for my approach to the concept of home in this thesis. To further clarify how precisely this thesis intervenes in such debates, a brief critical survey of some of the key critical discussions is in order. According to McGrath (1999:4), most postcolonial theory does not adequately explain Ireland's singular colonial predicament. Unlike the situations more characteristically discussed in relation to third world countries, Ireland, geographically and racially, is located within the western world. As a result, its culture is constructed in terms of first and third world affinities. It has been described as a first-world country with a third-world memory (Gibbons,1998:1). Further, due to its partition, Ireland has endured colonial status until at least the complete implementation of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998, and arguably beyond that point. Two different phases of

national consciousness are discernible: the Nationalists (Republicans) and the Unionists (Protestants), as explained in (1.4). Both David Lloyd's *Anomalous States: Irish Writing and the Post-Colonial Moment* (1993), and Victor Merriman's *Because We are Poor: Irish Theatre in the 1990s* (2011) offer a systematic postcolonial analysis of this Irish situation. Influenced by Fanon, Deleuze, and Guattari, in addition to Gramsci, Lloyd endeavours to clarify the intricate "dynamic of the interaction between subaltern groups and the state formation" (1993, 8). Whereas nationalist hegemony and identity politics substitute one hegemonic master narrative for another, Lloyd favours the "historical narrative" which is open to "undeveloped possibilities" (1993, 10). For him, the politics of Irish nationalism and identity represent a new kind of hegemonic order that copies the hegemonic structures of the earlier imperial power. In other words, Lloyd believes that nationalism produces a "monologic voice" to oppose the imperial power. After the Independence of Ireland, the monologic voice remains and duplicates what is inherited from the former imperial state by continuing to marginalise other voices within the new nation. In a context such as that, diverse subaltern figures such as refugees, the rural poor and urban sub-proletariat, who have been excluded from the benefits of neoliberalism, and until recently sexual minorities, cannot speak. Thus, Lloyd's reading of the history of independent Ireland reveals the marginalisation of the anti-colonial vision by the state's concern, and 'fulfils Fanon's angry prognosis in *The Wretched of the Earth* that the future of the bourgeois post-colony was to become the conduit of the neo-colonial capital" (49). Lloyd offers a number of alternatives, including refusing "to commit Ireland's future to continuing capitalist colonialism," and opting "not to disdain but to take seriously the still-persistent recalcitrance of Irish cultural practices to the rhythms and social practices of capitalist modernity" (2005,380).

While the unprecedented economic progress of Ireland's 1990s "Celtic Tiger" might be seen as an unquestionable sign of postcolonial success, Victor Merriman instead maintains that at the close of the twentieth century, Ireland more precisely resembles "The Land of the Spree". Independence is retrospectively revealed not as a destination in itself, still less as the inauguration of an ethical project of decolonization but as the ante-room of a global economic order" (2011,32). According to him, the local leaders of Independent Ireland have thoroughly thwarted decolonization, and have developed a neo-colonial state that has failed both nationalist and republican ambition. This, according to Merriman, embodies "Postponed decolonization" which represents the ways in which Independent Ireland has built an economic wealth while failing to build an

impartial and liberated society—remaining “poor” in all the ways that really matter as the fruits of the economic booms distributed only to “elites, and those whose support they required in building a consensus which legitimizes their hold on power” (36). Merriman’s analysis of the Irish postcolonial state is essential to his argument about contemporary Irish theatre because, as he clarifies, they are “intertwining systems of representation and interpretation” of Ireland itself (10). Merriman uses a postcolonial frame of reference to “[ponder] what role, if any, theatre might play in enabling a ‘second republic’” (2-3). Influenced by Awam Ampka’s concept of drama and “postcolonial desires,” or theatre that imagines “a social reality based on democracy, cultural pluralism, and social justice” (Ngugi xii), Merriman investigates how a diversity of plays staged from 1983 to 1998 show the need for cultural change in a society subject to negligent or exploitative economic and public policies. Merriman traces the “neo-colonial/postcolonial dynamic” as the main feature of Irish drama (5); that is, he conceives theatre responding to both neo-colonial conditions and a postcolonial consciousness.

Having these arguments in mind, I suggest that the study of spatiality in the (post)colonial Irish context is crucial not only for an understanding of the concept of home in that context, but also for an understanding of the relationship between drama and political engagement in other texts produced in other postcolonial contexts.

In this thesis, it is suggested that the conceptualisation of home in the postcolonial Irish context is closely linked not only to how space and place are experienced, represented and conceptualised, but also to show how stereotypical concepts about home (whether nostalgic or national) are re-conceptualised. These socially produced views on space influence the way in which not only space but also home space are represented, treated and experienced in dramatic work. Therefore, the critical social process of showing the hidden relationship between home space, social relations and power should also have consequences for the way in which the spatiality of home is represented. Here, it seems necessary to stress that one main point of originality of this thesis is that it will systematically and critically evaluate the concepts and theories of space and place in human geography and apply these to the study of home representations as space and place in the postcolonial Irish text. Using a geo-critical analysis, the thesis conducted here attemptt to show that a systematic analysis of the dramatic treatment of home space and place in Brian Friel dramatic texts will offer an original contribution to understanding to the production of (post)colonial space in

Ireland.

In light of the of the complex and contradictory thematic of home in Brian Friel's dramatic work and the complexity of home as a theoretical concept, I will thematically divide the main body of the thesis into three parts according to a spatial movement from micro-spatiality to macro-spatiality so that each focuses on different understandings or representations of home. In each part, the texts under analysis will be chronologically arranged so that each text shows how Friel's interest changes and develops. The first part of the thesis will discuss the spatiality of home as a psychic and poetic space and how these spaces are informed by external social spaces in relation to exile and homecoming as envisaged in *The Enemy Within* (1962), *The Loves of Cass McGuire* (1966) and *Molly Sweeney* (1994). In the second part of the thesis, the representation of home is explored through the lenses of domesticity and the interplay of the family, place and gender in *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* (1964) *The Gentle Island* (1971) and *Dancing at Lughnasa* (1990). The third part will link the representation of home to homeland as a conflicting space of belonging and becoming as staged in *Aristocrats* (1979), *Translations* (1980) and *The Home Place* (2005). The structure of each part is built on a movement between spaces which is both metaphorical and material from inside (the psyche/the room/house/) to outside (the body/the village/the homeland) and vice versa. Indeed, the exploration of these spatial relations are a defining factor in my selection of the texts for analysis which is not an arbitrary process. As far as the spatiality of home is concerned, I argue that the plays under analysis represent a key-text in their presentations of home because they dramatically use home space in different ways so putting them in a thematic and chronological order will illuminate each other.

Thus, there are four primary aims to this thesis. Firstly, I aim to consider how home is produced, negotiated, and represented dramatically in a partitioned state and the ways in which home might be considered a (post) colonial space under these conditions. Secondly, I want to challenge dominant readings of home in Friel's drama that have primarily been shaped by the concerns of nationalism and other 'public' discourses, focusing instead on the interplay between home as a space of life's intimate human spatiality and home as a space of political negotiations. Thirdly, I aim to elucidate the paradoxical undertones in staging the physical structure of home as a political space, reinforcing colonial powers and yet, ironically staged as apolitical space. Finally, I wish to contribute a productive

theorisation of the value of home that synthesises its spatial and postcolonial critiques. In order to properly address these aims, it is essential to place the dramatic texts analysed in this thesis within their wider socio-cultural discursive contexts, which requires an engagement with spatial and postcolonial concerns and methodological approaches.

### 1.3 The Early Representations of Home in Irish Drama

At the turn of the twentieth century, the early representations of home in Irish drama signify a set of cultural and nationalistic connotations that associate the notions of belonging and identity with an emotional attachment to the land. This dramatic practice is discernible among the 'Gaelicizing' founders of the National Theatre. Such figures include William Butler Yeats, Lady Gregory, John Millington Synge and many others.

Due to Ireland's long history of struggle as a colonized nation, the question of the land prominently figures in Irish life. In particular, this question culminated in post-famine Ireland that led to the Land war (1870s-1890s) which was a period of agrarian agitation in rural Ireland. The agitation was led by the Irish National Land League and was dedicated through Home Rule to end landlordism, to prevent evictions, to resist 'rack-rents', to attain civil justice and ultimately to redistribute the land to tenants. In Irish writing, the immediate impact of these economic and political concerns is to create an obsession, using Seamus Deane's words, "a fascination with the regional landscape [...] loyalty that particular region [...] local attachment" (Deane: 1985, 13). In a similar vein, in "Plays Peasant and Un-peasant," Brian Friel notes that this generic passion for land which informs Irish life also inspires Irish drama in the epoch of the Irish Literary Theatre (1972:51). For Friel, Irish drama had no history before the opening night in May 1899 of the Irish Literary Theatre with the presentation of W.B. Yeats's *The Countess Cathleen*. This night was a turning point in the history of Irish drama as "plays written in Irish /or English on Irish subject and performed by Irishmen" (ibid.) came into being. Friel's remark in this context is significant because it shows how the proponents of the Irish Literary Theatre, which later led to the Irish National Theatre Society and the Abbey Theatre, celebrated their Irish cultural identity. Against the modern industrial and commercial British spirit, the Irish Revivalists, like W.B. Yeats, Lady Gregory, Edward Martyn and J. M. Synge, set out to prove that, in Gregory's polemical words, "Ireland is not the home of buffoonery and of easy sentiment, as it has been represented, but the home of an

ancient idealism" (Gregory, 204). In doing so, they tend to shape their sense of place in terms of asserting their own rootedness and their "natural" attachment to the land.

In their efforts to bring native Irish culture and folklore to the attention of the world, the Abbey playwrights foreground the peasant kitchen as an icon of a nation. As Nicholas Grene has concluded that: "the peasant country cottage [...] for the Dublin-centred Gallicising nationalists was that place of origin which in its pristine simplicity typified their imagined community' (1999:76). They represent it in such a way as to reflect an actual Irish peasant cottage where people (family members, regular neighbours and frequent visitors) come together on daily basis. In most of the early Abbey plays, the setting of the kitchen appears to be simple, and domestic with one entrance, one window, and the turf or the fireplace that is central and dominant. Symbolically, the centrality of this setting signifies the 'hearth,' the warmth, the family, the community, the centre and the home. Staging peasant country cottages as images of the national life, for example, is a remarkable setting in Yeats's and Lady Gregory's *Cathleen ni Houlihan* (1903) Synge's *The Shadow of the Glen* (1904), Padraic Colum's *The Land* (1905) and many other plays. As an example, I will refer to *Cathleen ni Houlihan* Yeats and Lady Gregory poeticises the country kitchen in this play. They make it an "anchor" that attaches the character to their land and by extension to their homeland. The play is set against the backdrop of Ireland's long fight for independence. *Cathleen ni Houlihan* opens on the interior of the kitchen where a peasant family preparing to celebrate the wedding of their son. The family's attachment to the land is clearly shown through their delight at being able to purchase ten acres of land through the dowry money. This domestic situation is disrupted by the entrance of an Old Woman, Cathleen ni Houlihan. She symbolises Ireland herself, desperately needing her young men to leave their duties and comforts in their Cottages behind and sacrificing themselves for her. The old woman's predicaments is that there are "too many strangers in the house" (53), pointing to the presence of English which has taken "[m]y four beautiful green fields" (53), the four provinces of Ireland that have become subjugated by a foreign dominion. Here, Yeats and Lady Gregory use the country kitchen as 'the hearth' or the site of nationalistic ideal by linking it to the 'four green fields,' symbolising Ireland.

In a nutshell, this representation of home is, then an indicator of the tendency of Irish drama to stage these spaces as both theme and setting. Throughout the development of Irish drama, these point to an origin from which everything else

is valued and measured and a sense of place that metonymically connects the notions of 'home', 'family,' and the individuals with the nation. Brian Friel inherits this tradition that he has significantly developed and re-shaped to reflect his critique to the traditional concept of home.

## 1.4 Brian Friel: "We must learn where we live"

Previewing the Name-Book in which the new anglicised place names for Irish places is written near the end of *Translations*, Hugh, the hedge-school master, ponders on his situation: "We must learn where we live [...] We must make them our new home" (Friel, *Translation*: 88). This line foregrounds one of the consistent formulations of home space in Brian Friel's drama as a kind of space that is constructed by human spatiality.

A cursory glance at Brian Friel's life would illustrate that home always appears to be a problematic space. His romanticised sense of home is exacerbated by the fact that he is, as he defines himself, a "member of the Catholic minority living in the North." According to Richard Kearney, "the festering wound of the North" is not a thing to be overlooked in approaching Brian Friel as a man and as an Irish artist. In Friel's case, the geographical designation of the North functions as "a constant reminder [...] that the body politic of the nation is deeply haemorrhaged" (Kearney, 1988:125). So, in a context like that, it is useful to consider home as a critical element in public political discourses that seek to lay claim to space, to identity, and to power for certain groups and to exclude others. With this in mind, I tend to stress that this geographical idiosyncrasy of the North has an effect on Brian Friel's concepts of home. In what follows, I attempt to show how Northern Ireland as a geographical space affects Brian Friel's perspective of home.

"Perhaps I'm twins", Brian Friel ironically observes when he contemplates the fact that he has two birth certificates with two different names and birthdays. One shows that his birthday is on January 9th, the other that it is on January 10th in 1929 in Killyclogher near Omagh, County Tyrone, thus considered amongst the first generations to be born into a partitioned Ireland. However, the problem of naming presents a real strain for Friel that typifies his dilemma of being a "member of a Catholic minority living in the North" (Friel, 1983: 78). In Ireland, both Church and state register births, but in many cases, their records are different. While in the Knockmoyle parish, Friel is registered as Brian Patrick O'Friel with a birth date January 9 and his baptism on January 10, the general

Register Office in Belfast lists his birth date as January 10 and Anglicizes his name to Bernard Patrick Friel. "At the time of Friel's birth," Richard Pine says, "the Protestant bureaucracy discouraged the registration of 'Gaelic' names" (1990:15). It is clear in Friel's situation that the parish registry has a preference for "Gaelicized" forms of its parishioners' names. Ulf Dantanus explains that the name 'Friel' is a variation of 'Farrell', and it is rare and uncommon outside Donegal and its borderlands. It is derived from the Irish 'Firghil' which means "man of valour". (1988, 31). Friel has always celebrated his birthday on January 9. It is significant to note that in his self-identification, Brian Friel adopts a hybrid version of name that combines his Christian name on the parish register, which inscribes him within a Gaelic heritage, and the surname of the Belfast public register, which inscribes him within a Northern context. Symbolically, the record of Friel's self-identification, then, could be seen as a fictional production from conflicting spatial discourses.

This sense of duality in Friel's personal backdrop and its association with place and authority is deeply rooted in his consciousness and clearly expressed in his sense of place and its imaginative projections of home in his dramatic work. It takes its hue from the problematic position of west Ulster as a divided place after the partition of Ireland in the 1920s and its effect on formulating his sense of identity. Two discrete places prominently figure out in the geography of Friel's personal and familial history, namely that of Derry and Donegal. His father was originally from Derry in Northern Ireland from which his father's parents who were unlettered and Irish speaking, had migrated from Donegal. His mother came from Glenties in the south-west of Donegal. In this section, I would maintain that Friel's formative childhood experiences of place and home are shaped by these two places where the contradictions of Unionism and Nationalism, Catholicism and Protestantism and British and Irish identities are highly discernible. Since terms such as Northern Ireland, Ulster and their associations of Unionism and Nationalism will recur throughout much of what follows, it seems necessary to provide a brief outline of the larger socio-political background in which Friel grew up.

Following the 1916 Easter Uprising in Dublin and increasing pressure for 'Home Rule' in Ireland, Ireland was partitioned in 1921 into two separate political units: Southern Ireland (known today as the Republic of Ireland) and Northern Ireland. This partition has its tragic consequences, in particular, in the historical province of Ulster. As a whole, Ulster was divided by the creation of the land

boundaries into two territories. The first, including the six counties of Antrim, Down, Fermanagh, Derry and Tyrone became Northern Ireland (later to be incorporated into the United Kingdom) whilst the second, comprising of the remaining three Cavan, Donegal and Monaghan, were included in the Republic of Ireland. The partition made Donegal a Border Region from the twenty-six other counties which make up the republic of Ireland, from which it is attached only in a thread of land (See the map which shows the four provinces of Ireland, the border separating them). Donegal was not included in the North because of the scarcity of its natural resources and its high proportion of Catholics. The border was drawn just to the left of Derry, securing the economically important port to the north. Thus Derry unexpectedly became a 'border city', separated from much of its traditional economic hinterland in County Donegal. This 'bilocation' that people experience is due to the actual border which physically separates north and south and keeps "Britain's Ireland from Ireland's Ireland!" (Heaney, 1995:188).

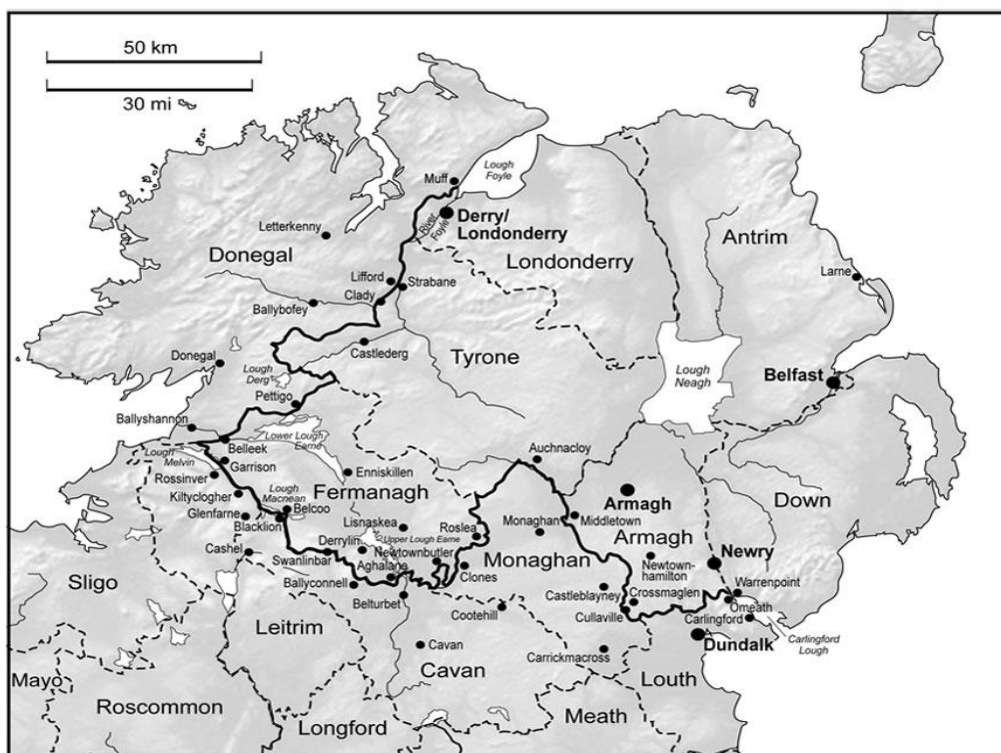


Figure 1: The Map of Ireland after Partition

In the context of the Northern Ireland, everything on each side of the land is, as Richard Pine argues, disputed and seen in terms of 'other' (163). In this sense, place becomes a contested territory rather than a shared place. This is attributed to the conflicting claims of the Unionists/Protestants/British and Nationalists/Catholics to ownership and control that relate the 'meanings of

place' to the 'questions of territoriality, belonging and social power' (Kennedy-Andrews 2:2008). That is to say, each polarity physically and psychologically attempts to "define [it] self and defend [it] self" through controlling its territory, an act which leads to a bounded and divided sense of place. For instance, the Unionists (mainly Protestants) regarded Northern Ireland as their homeland that needs to be and remain a part of the United Kingdom whilst the Nationalists/Republicans looked at Northern Ireland as a location for their Catholic, Gaelic identity and favoured a unification of Northern Ireland with the Republic of Ireland. In practice, Northern Ireland, however, politically defines itself as a Protestant state, dominated by protestants and established to constitutionally preserve their Protestant, British identity. They feared for their political, religious and economic interests in case of an absorption into a mainly Catholic Ireland (Hehn, 2011:18-19). As a result, they tended to culturally and politically subordinate the Catholics to an inferior status. The Irish Catholic minority in the North was locked into an uncanny exile: experiencing widespread discrimination in the allocation of public housing, in access to the private and public employment, policing and political representation through the use of tactics such as gerrymandering. This transformed Northern Ireland at that time, using David Trimble's words, to 'a cold house for Catholics' (1998).

What, then, could be said to comprise 'real', physical spaces of un-belongingness within Friel's life? In order to explain this, a reference to Derry and Donegal in Friel's personal biography seems appropriate. The city of Derry has special importance for Friel. In 'Two Playwrights with a Single Theme' Friel registers his residence in Derry for most of the years between 1939 - when aged ten he moved with his parents to the city - and 1967, at which point he migrated across the border to Donegal. It was in Derry that the playwright developed his deepest sense of difference, division and discrimination of Ulster. "One was always conscious of discrimination," he declares, and clarifies the sense of the "tight and immovable Unionist regime" (Friel, 1971: 98). Forming the bulk of the population, the Catholics in Derry, to whom Friel belonged, are spiritually and physically dispossessed people. Literally they are living in a state of estrangement, separated from the national majority south of the border and culturally, socially and politically excluded from the Unionist protestant fellow citizens. Due to this sense of dispossession and disinheritance, Friel himself conceives the city of Derry as "frustrating and frustrated" space (Hickey and Smith, 1972: 221). As matter of historical fact, the city witnessed a high level of political tensions in the first half of the twentieth century as a result of high

percentage of unemployment, corrupted political situation, economic depression and social deprivation. In his childhood what Friel perceived from his bedroom window in Derry was “the whole drama of military life - of marching soldiers, and tanks, and artillery” (2003; 15), an image which reveals the reality of the city as a contested territory, fragmented by linguistic, cultural, religious and political divisions. Once again the problem of naming in Brian Friel’s background emerges, this time is in the name of his native city, and Derry is Londonderry to the Unionist community while it is Derry to the Nationalists. Friel’s father was active in Nationalist circles of the town, as was Friel himself for a period. The combinations of these factors have a strong alienating effect in creating Friel’s sense of being doubly exiled in the North, socially and culturally through his belonging to a Catholic minority, politically through an amputation of the North from the South that he views with affection as an integral home of the mind.

As already noted, Derry is a border city that lies a short distant from the political border which separates it from its natural hinterland, the county of Donegal, part of the Republic of Ireland. Here, the presence of the border, whether physically or metaphorically, problematizes Friel’s notion of home as it creates two places of belonging. While the first was where Friel actually lived in Derry, the second was across the border in Donegal where he intermittently spent his childhood and boyhood years in the house where his family originated. Friel describes this duality of residence, stating that he is “living in a state [he] never subscribed to, with Donegal lying just across the bay. Janus-like, [he] had one head looking to the north and one looking to the south,” (ibid: 159). As a counterpart to Derry, Donegal has captivated his attention as a place of outstanding beauty whose spirit or to use one of his own words, 'atmosphere', is expressed in both nature and people. As he has recalled, “[w]e spend a lot of our time in the west of Donegal. It is the wildest, most beautiful, and most barren part of Ireland.” The nature of Donegal is basically pastoral. This allows Friel to feel its ‘peasantry personality’ of unspoiled Ireland. This is, in particular, represented by its people who “are almost completely untouched by present-day hysteria and hypocrisy” (Friel, 2003:81). Although having the same economic conditions of Derry, Donegal gives Friel a sense of security of being closer to his ancestral origin or to a hearth or to a centre or to a community.

Having allowed himself to be named, as ‘the man from God knows where,’ Friel has been personally involved in constant crossing the borders in his adult years. He believes that his ‘truest reality’ is neither in the Republic nor the North,

It is in the moment when he is crossing the borders, using his words, “that is when I feel most alive, most myself” (ibid). His constant crossing the borders also entails his attempts to locate a space that he might meaningfully call home. Hovering between two political entities, neither of which he felt comfortable with and never truly at home, he consequently chose to reside on the fault lines, in 1969, he moved from Derry to Muff, Co. Donegal (in the Republic) and in 1982 he moved even further up Lough Foyle to Greencastle in County Donegal, close to being the northernmost point in the island of Ireland. Considering himself neither allied to the North nor to the south, from his home there at this particular place on the Irish map enables him to keep a close eye on developments in both Irelands.

#### 1.4.1 Home and Brian Friel

The dichotomies of landscape are fully effective in the collective life of Northern Ireland and deeply internalised within an Ulster individual, creating a fractured sense of home space. Concomitantly, this implies that the land that traditionally underpinned senses of spatial belonging, as already shown, have been undermined by the partition. In his enquiry of the sense of place and displacement in Northern Ireland writers, Seamus Heaney analyses the spatial power of the ruptured socio-political landscape of Northern Ireland and its variable effects on an individual’s sense of home. He argues that an Ulsterman simultaneously lives in a kind of ‘bilocation’ with a feeling of dispossession and lack, while one location is in the actual present, the other propels him to foreground a vision of imaginary spaces of affiliation, creating a vision of an Ulster of the mind. Though “the fountainhead of the Unionist’s myth springs in the Crown of England”, “he has to hold his own in the island of Ireland” (Heaney, 2002:115). Similarly, “the fountainhead of the Nationalists myth” lies in the idea of an integral Ireland, but he too lives in an exile from his ideal place. I would maintain here that the dilemma is fundamentally a spatial one as every resident whether he is a Nationalist or a Unionist grapples with the problem of belonging to a place “that is patently riven [...] to other places” (ibid.). Thus, to be in Southern Ireland in one’s mind and yet in Northern Ireland in one’s body or vice versa is a constituent of the ‘bifurcation’ or schizophrenia of the Irish mind. Richard Pine argues that this “ability to be in two places at one time to hold two contradictory thoughts in congruence” give rise to two ways of perceiving reality: subjective and objective in symbiotic captivity (1999:105). Home in this formulation appears to be both material and imagined.

Put in the terms introduced above, I would argue that Friel experiences similar feelings of disorientation and a lack of a definite sense of home. Being from a Catholic and nationalist background, Brian Friel, like Seamus Heaney, is preoccupied by the reality of not-being-at home. According to Friel, this sense of exile and dislocation is a source of anxiety as home is dominated by the estranging effect of being “a place of great stress and great alienation.” When asked, in an interview in 1982, about this sense of place, and how a number of his characters lack that sense or being dislocated, Friel affirms that: “there is [...] a sense of rootlessness and impermanence” that alter his perceptions of home. Here, it seems that there is a great deal of justification to see how the emotional structure of the home as being familiar, habitual and homelike is replaced by a feeling of displacement, exclusion and even dislocation from somewhere else. Speaking from this position, Friel states:

You can't deposit fealty to a situation like the Northern situation that you don't believe in. Then you look south of the border and that enterprise is in so many ways distasteful. And yet both places are your home, so you are an exile in your home (1999: 60).

In his case, Friel's acute sense of exile is internal and imaginative rather than physical. Furthermore, Friel mistrusts the traditional and received concepts of home as a site of rootedness, or a source for a conservative and nostalgic idea of the nation. This is discernible in his negation of the existence of home and all its connotations: “there is no home [...] no hearth [...] I acknowledge no community” (Friel, 1999:13). Building on this, I argue that the driving force of Friel's spatial thinking is a desire to sidestep the traditional meanings of home and to redirect the question of belonging away from the abstract idea of nation and towards a concept of the 'parochial' and the regional. In his autobiographical essay “Self-Portrait” (1972), Friel borrows Seamus Heaney's analogy between the writer and the diviner in Heaney's poem ‘The Diviner’ to argue how he draws inspiration from his local environment: “[t]here are only certain stretches of ground over which the writer's divining rod will come to life”(1972: 20). Friel develops his concept of home from his spatial allegiance to the local, the 'parochial,' the regional and its association with time and society. As Friel himself has put it in ‘The Future of Irish Drama’:

I would like to write a play that would capture the peculiar spiritual and indeed material, flux that this country is in at the moment. This has got to be done, for me anyway, and I think it has got to be done at a *local, parochial* level, [my italics] and hopefully this will have meaning for other people in other countries (1970:12).

This extract has especial relevance as it describes the complexities of Friel's analysis of the implications of the spatial renderings of home. He is thinking critically about space and place in relation to political and social changes across time. He uses the parochial in order to examine how social relations function in relation to a changing spatial and temporal framework in ways that carry a meaning beyond their geographical or topographical backgrounds. What Friel implies, here, is to stage a 'plural' home space that is simultaneously a political space of allegiance.

In many ways, Friel tends to represent home by linking the geography of the real with the geography of the imagined in a way that enables him to explore the universal possibilities beyond such representation. In most of his plays, Friel locates his drama in the fictional location of Ballybeg. While Ballybeg is mapped as an imagined space, its settings are drawn from the real spaces of the city of Derry and its natural hinterland in Donegal. The name itself comes from the Irish 'Baile Beag.' While most of Friel's scholars (to name few, A. Roche, 1994: 85; R. R. Russell, 2014: 165 or S. Boltwood, 2007: 39) echo each other in agreeing that the meaning of Baile Beag is a small town, I use the second meaning of 'Baile' because it is relevant to my study. Ballybeg firstly appears in *Philadelphia Here I Come* as 'a small village in County Donegal', in *Living Quarter*, it is in a 'remote part of county Donegal' and also in 'the wilds of county Donegal'. In *Aristocrats*, it is 'a remote Donegal village.' In *Translations*, it is clear that Ballybeg is on or close to the coast, twenty miles from Glenties. This lack of spatial locus makes it a symbol of Ireland. Ballybeg is introduced as a space that is effected by external, social or historical, factors that effects how home is represented. In this context, what becomes apparent in the home discourse is the dominance of the real and imagined space-which undoubtedly affects the way home is presented. Hence, the thesis is set out to consider the following concerns: how Brian Friel's representation of home shapes the audience's understanding of the material spaces in a certain historical period in modern Irish history; how material spaces are imagined and how imagined home space relates to real spaces.

## Chapter 2: Research Theoretical framework

### 2.1 Chapter Overview

Using a geo-critical approach as a theoretical foundation for examining how the spatiality of home functions in Brian Friel's drama, and drawing on theorists such as Gaston Bachelard, Henri Lefebvre and Edward D. Soja, the aim of this chapter is twofold. First, it defines how the term 'home' is used in the thesis. Second, it outlines the theoretical perspectives that will inform the textual analyses in the later chapters of my thesis by presenting the relevance of the notion of space and place to the reading of home: how are they conceptualised, and how are space and place related to representations of home? To this end, I start out with brief meta-critical reflections on spatiality and geo-criticism and their implications for the present study. Then, I will take each scholar in turn and summarise their key spatial theories and concepts, while discussing how they might help us 'read' and interpret the spatiality of the home.

### 2.2 Home: Thesis-Working Definition

In this section, my discussion will pursue a potential definition of home as a preparation for a key thematic focus of this study. As a theoretical concept, home is a complicated term and its myriad articulations can be confusing. For purposes of clarity, I find it useful to define the elements of home in relation to the nexus between place and space; the material and the imagined. These elements are not mutually exclusive but overlap. I believe it is worthwhile, nonetheless, to start with these elements individually, and bring them together in my treatment of the representation of home in Brian Friel's drama.

Writing in 1986, Witold Rybczynski, in a work entitled *Home: A Short History of an Idea*, proposes that throughout history, the presentation of 'home' is associated with the meanings of house and household, "of dwelling and of refuge, of ownership and of affection". Since its conception, Rybczynski explains, the notion of "'home'" refer to the house but also everything that was in it and around it, as well as the people and the sense of satisfaction and contentment that all these conveyed' (Rybczynski 1986: 62). In fact, Rybczynski's work adds greater depth to the discussion of home by advising that the notion of 'home' can

usefully be both historically and culturally specific. Rybczynski's remark is helpful to show the complexity of the concept of home within an Irish context where a house is not necessarily or routinely a home as Rybczynski argues.

This is evident in the lexical meaning of the term home in Gaelic language. Unlike many other European languages and most like English language, Irish language attaches a particular significance to the word 'baile'. "Baile, i.e. home" and "teach, i.e. house" are not identical words in the Irish language. This difference, I argue, places particular significance on both words, suggesting that not all houses are homes, just as not all homes are houses. As Fintan O'Toole suggests, home in Irish culture is much more than a name to be given to a dwelling place. It represents "whole set of connections and affections, the web of mutual recognition that we spin around ourselves and that gives us a place in the world" (1997:136). Therefore, he defines home as "a feeling of belonging that is buried deep within the word's meaning" (ibid). For him, the equivalence of the Gaelic phrases 'sa mbaile' and 'sa bhaile' to the English phrase 'at home' would imply that meaning.

In a related vein but from a different angle, Roberta Rubenstein (2001: 1) argues that home is more than a place or a site in which we live; it is a space that is permeated with feelings. She conceptualises home as "the most emotionally complex and resonant concepts in our psychic vocabularies." She defines home not in terms of physicality and location, but she views it as a psychic space that is located in memory and imagination. Finally, Blunt and Varley (2004: 3) views home as both a site and set of emotions and meaning. They argue that home is defined not only in through the feelings of belonging, desire and intimacy (as, for instance, in the phrase 'feeling at home'), but can also through the feelings of fear, violence and alienation (Blunt and Varley 2004: 3).

Following these authors, I examine how home as a material form is spatialised as an imagined space imbued with feelings and meanings. To explain that, I argue that home consists of two forms: the material and the imagined. Both of these forms are tied rather than discrete or separate. In other words, the material and imagined forms of home are relational: the material form of home is reliant on what home is imagined to be, and the imagined home is subject to the physical forms and experiences of dwelling. Taking this into consideration, my definition of home in this thesis is that home is neither the material nor the imagined, but the relation between the two. Moreover, this project is based on the notion that social spaces, like home, do not merely exist in culture, but

infused as they are with its beliefs, experiences, values, fears, and whims, essentially define it. According to Inge Maria Daniels (2001: 205) 'the material culture of the home is expressive of the changing social relationships of its inhabitants [and illustrates] the complexities, conflicts and compromises involved in creating a home.' By the same token, I suggest that home in a Friel play does not simply exist as a neutral background to the dramatic action but it is a process of producing, making and understanding forms of dwelling and belonging. In mapping home in Friel's drama, I maintain that this process is both material and imaginative. An enquiry such as this, then, entails thinking about space, and the dramatic space of the home in particular, in rather more complex ways than as solely a mimetic backdrop or an empty stage upon which characters are put.

Unlike, Nicholas Grene's *Home on the Stage: Domestic Spaces in Modern Drama* (2015), this thesis is underpinned by both spatial and postcolonial theories. By adopting a geo-critical approach, I have assembled a conceptual framework and a spatial vocabulary that enables the critical engagement with the dramatic representation of home in Irish drama in relation to Brian Friel's work. Furthermore, Grene has traced the various manifestations of domestic space on the stage in nine modern plays and playwrights from Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* through to Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire* and to Parks in *Topdog/Underdog*; however, he has excluded contemporary Irish dramatists from his approach to home. Differently from Grene, my approach examines how the concept of home is figured in the corpus of one contemporary Irish dramatist: Brian Friel. Such an approach is particularly valuable because it allows me to address the spatial dynamics that are particular to the postcolonial and neo-colonial context of Northern Ireland.

## **2.3 What makes Geo-criticism**

Before defining what geo-criticism means, it is initially important to sketch out two basic concepts found in geographical and spatial theories to take my methodology forward: space and place. As basic components of the everyday practice, these two concepts are interchangeably used. In most cases, they synonymously refer to such terms as location, region, or landscape. Arguably, their interchangeability makes them two of the most 'fuzzy concepts', obscuring more than revealing (Hubbard 2005:41). In an attempt to untangle their references, perhaps, then, it seems useful to refer to how geographical and spatial studies define them.

From a geographical point of view, place implies a static sense of location, of being, or of dwelling. 'Place' is grounded, and often refers to the material or immutable elements of a location: geographical co-ordinates, a fixed address, bricks and mortar, etcetera. However, cultural geographers, like Mike Crang, go beyond those definitions of place by maintaining that that place is more than a bounded location. According to him, place is a kind of cultural manifestations that define people's identities: "the place says something not only about where you live or come from but who you are" (1998:103). He suggests that a sense of place emerges from a lived experience that binds people and places together. This sense of place allows people to define themselves in a form of social interaction to form communities. From a spatial perspective, on the other hand, space is understood as metaphorically and materially. It indicates a sense of movement, of becoming, and often implies creative, plural, malleable, imaginative, symbolic, or perceived experience and representations. As they are used in this thesis, these key concepts of space and place are defined as dynamic, relational concepts; they are to be understood in the way geo-critical theorists, Gaston Bachelard, Henri Lefebvre and Edward Soja, conceptualise and understand them, as is discussed in detail in the second part of this chapter.

Within the existing history of critical spatial analysis, the term geo-criticism is a comparatively recent one, emerging from the work of Bertrand Westphal (2007) and Robert T. Tally Jr. (2011 and 2014). According to Tally, geo-criticism is a literary-critical methodological "framework that focuses on the spatial representations within [literary] texts" (2008:4) through examining the dimensions of the real and the imagined between the referent and the representation. This approach derives its tools of analysis from a wide variety of spatial thinkers and critics like Gaston Bachelard, Henri Lefebvre, Edward Soja, Michel Foucault, Doreen Massey and many others. Central to a geo-critical approach is how to use space as an analytical tool to examine the poetics and production of space, along with the spatial analytics of power and the examination of gender and spatiality.

While no totalising account is acceptable, I will attempt to apply a geo-critical approach to analyse and explore how home is foregrounded, thematised and canvassed as a kind of an oxymoronic representation of all things that relate to spatial awareness and the relationship between space and the characters in Brian Friel's drama. In what follows, I anatomise, centrally, the nature of space and

place by considering how space affects the private and social life, what space is made up of, and how it functions as a concept in its own right.

### 2.3.1 Gaston Bachelard: Reading Intimate Spaces

The act of reading space as a text firstly emerges from Gaston Bachelard's socio-psycho-poetic model of spatiality and its poetic associations. Bachelard's *La poétique de l'espace* (1957, English translation 1964, reissued in 1994) is a quirky yet stimulating composite of phenomenology and psychoanalysis that aims to uncover the primary importance of spaces in which human beings live. In a telling way, he defines these spaces as our "vital space [where] we take root, day after day, in a corner of the world"(1994:4) and which satisfy essential human needs for intimacy and solitude. Bachelard has clearly played a major role in laying out some important foundations upon which the analysis of space within literary studies could be built. As Margaret Higonnet asserts, "since Gaston Bachelard's almost mystical reverie on the *Poétique de l'espace* (1957), with his suggestive meditations on the 'feminine' spaces of the round tower, the closet, and the nest, the literary representation of space has received widespread critical attentions" (Higonnet 1994: 194). Having elevated setting to its rightful place alongside character and plot, he offers readers a new vision that can reshape any literary or artistic understandings of space (Stilgoe, 1994: x).

As the title of his work, *The Poetics of Space* suggests, Bachelard is primarily interested in showing how poetic space or the space of imagination intersects with real or inhabited spaces. Firstly, he directs a significant bulk of his epistemological analysis to discuss the manner in which readers can grasp the poetic image in its reality when it would seem that only the poet has access to the actual experience of the image. As Bachelard puts it, "the reader of poems is asked to consider an image not as an object and even less as the substitute for an object, but to seize its specific reality" (1969: xv). Due to this, he suggests phenomenology and not rationality or psychology as a way of reading the daydreaming, intuitive experience of the poetic image. He then deftly relates this reading of poetic images to his spatial enquiry of real or inhabited space. Initially, he specifies that the main concern of his spatial research is to investigate the spaces of intimacy or the spaces in which the "psychic weight is dominant" (12) in relation to individual imaginative response to the experience of those spaces (Tally, 2012: 115).

To put this differently, Bachelard is interested in space on two levels: firstly, as a geometrical or built space like a house and as an imaginary space; secondly, he proceeds to ponder on “the impact of human habitation on geometrical form, and the impact of the form upon human inhabitants” (Stilgoe, 1994: X). To illustrate this mutual impact of spatiality, he takes the house as a representation of human “first universe, a real cosmos in every sense of the word” (1994, 4). He explains that house is a geometrical space of various planes and right angles as manifested by its interior spatial fragments of garret, nooks or corridors. However, at the same time, he invites his reader to think over how such material façade of the house carries human subjectivity, idiosyncrasy, a sense of protection and experiences of ‘the humblest dwelling.’ In this sense, the house adapts itself to its inhabitants. As he explains, “[a] house that has been experienced is not an inert box” (45). In this way, a lived experience ‘transcends’ geometrical space to inhabited space full with beauty. Rather than mere descriptions of these spaces, Bachelard wishes to map the intimate and lived images of the house space as a “topography of our intimate being” (xxxvi). In doing so he proposes a form of ‘topoanalysis’ enquiry to study “the sites of our intimate lives” (ibid.8) systematically and psychologically. His analysis focuses on those “quite simple images of felicitous space” which he referred to as a “topophilia” that have been turned into spaces of belonging, to the transformation of a house into a home where attics, garrets, corridors or rooms articulate the dynamics of human psyche.

In addition, here, perhaps, we reach the kernel of Bachelard’s argument that is relevant to my study. Rather than viewing house and home as separate entities, Bachelard contends that “all really inhabited space bears the essence of the notion of home” (ibid. 4-5). This means that house represents home because such a particular home/house space carries with it “the various dwelling-places in our lives” and a “community of memory and image” (ibid). He writes that the spaces of our intimate lives – houses, rooms, drawers, corners, chests, and wardrobes – become “shells” that hold memories and emotions. “A house”, he writes, “constitutes a body of images that give mankind proofs or illusions of stability” (17). Hence, the value of home lies in giving us a sense of attachment to ‘the house’ through which we can root ourselves into a specific place in the cosmic. This house-attachment is essential to human existence as being without a house, Bachelard explains:

man would be a dispersed being. It maintains him through the storms of the heavens and through those of life. It is body and soul. It is the human being's first world. Before he is "cast into the world" (ibid).

This shows Bachelard conviction in the strength of a person's symbolic or affective investment in 'la maison', and the importance of this in forging a stable and rooted identity. For Bachelard, the notion of home involves an imagined sense of security, the construction of a room around oneself. This construction of home is a process that requires creative action by the individual, and interaction between the individual and his or her physical space.

Bachelard has also paid particular attentions to the power of daydreaming in shaping the house space as a home. He claims that the essence of inhabiting the space of the home is not only a matter of empirical living, but also a matter of feeling, remembering and imagining. In discussing "the poetic depth of the space of the house," Bachelard maintains that "the chief benefit of the house" is that "the house shelters day-dreaming, the house protects the dreamer, the house allows one to dream in peace"(6). Building on this, Bachelard constructs his concept of an 'oneiric house', i. e., the house of dream-memory. He explains that this house space is constructed of "a body of images" that can "give mankind proofs or illusions of stability." Hence, the reality of the house is born out of an act of imagination. To reduce this house to its imaginative constituent elements is to explore "the soul of the house" (ibid) which can be a way of understanding its inhabitants. For this to happen, he suggests a complex framework of vertical and horizontal spatial axes to analyse this space. Whilst the vertical being of the house is imagined through the polarity of cellar and attic basement which denote, for Bachelard, irrationality and rationality respectively, the horizontal being is viewed through the rooms of the house which denote centrality and simplicity. Both of these axes open up perceptions for a "phenomenology of the imagination." He then proceeds to assert: "in the theatre of the past that is constituted by memory, the stage setting maintains the characters in their dominant roles" (ibid). This means that memories of the house and its various spatial fragments are not fleeting moments to be remembered but rather something that is entwined with the present, a part of our ongoing current experience. Here, he has given a priority to space over time. In his spatial treatise, Bachelard does not conceive time in terms of a "fluvial metaphor". As David Harvey suggests in his assessment of Bachelard's argument, "history must indeed give way to poetry, time to space, as the fundamental material of social expression" (1990:218).

Briefly, in Gaston Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space*, houses and their spatial parts are elevated from their status of everyday entities to become externalised manifestations of home space and connected to human and cosmic space (Bachelard, 1969: xxiv). In *The Production of Space*, Lefebvre refers to Bachelard's reading of the house:

The House is as much cosmic as it is human. From cellar to attic, from foundations to roof, it has a density at once dreamy and rational, earthly and celestial. The relationship between Home and Ego, meanwhile, borders on identity. The shell, a secret and directly experienced space, for Bachelard epitomizes the virtues of human 'space' (191:121).

While recognising this individual and universal identity lodged in the shell-like house, Lefebvre wants to reassert a notion of the collective subject through social space and to promote this over both private and public spaces. This will be explained in the following section.

### 2.3.2 The Social Conceptualisation of Space

As will be demonstrated in the course of this thesis, the conceptualisation of the terms place and space (and the debate on the interrelationship of the local and universal) is crucial to rendering a nuanced interpretation of Brian Friel's representation of home. In this section, I set out a theoretical framework that first considers Lefebvre's understanding of spaces as socially constructed in different ways. I then move on to assess how Soja reworks Lefebvre to produce his own concept of "thirdspace" as a combination of both the real of the everyday and the imagined.

Henri Lefebvre's conceptualisation of space in *The Production of Space* (1994; originally published in 1974) is of particular relevance for analysing the concept of home in Brian Friel's drama. Historically speaking, Lefebvre's seminal work on the social production of space has been fundamental to the definition of the notions of space and place. Developing his theory on the social production of space from his investigation of the "cultural construction of stereotypical notions of cities, of nature and of regions" and "his critique of alienation as being obscured by the mystifications of consumerism", Lefebvre's thinking on space as a (social) product influenced many contemporary intellectual debates on spatial thinking (Hubbard, & Kitchin, 2011: 279-285).

In *The Production of Space*, Lefebvre suggests that social space is constructed and made. His thesis, "(social) space is a (social) product," outlines how

individuals create spaces which they inhabit through social practices (Lefebvre, 1974:4). Contrary to the historical understanding of space as an empty area or vacuum merely containing objects and practices, Lefebvre sees space as semantic signifiers of its 'produced' or 'constructed' nature. '[S]pace is never empty', he writes, "it always embodies a meaning" (ibid.3). It is this particular understanding of space as a text to be deciphered is the main aim of this research. This will be conducted by investigating how the dramatic treatment of space and place informs and shapes the representations, understandings and experience of home in a selected number of Friel's plays. In what follows, I will briefly analyse what aspects of his spatial approach will be employed in this thesis.

Lefebvre believes that space is not 'outside' social relations. It is a continuous production from a constant 'working out' of social relations. This implies that the social relations only take on a material form that is beyond the verbal language when they transform a space, and become embodied in a space. That is, social relations hold an 'ontological weight' to the extent that they are spatial:

[W]hat exactly is the mode of existence of social relationships. Are they substantial? Natural? Or formally abstract? The study of space offers an answer according to which social relations of production have a social relation to the extent that they have a spatial existence; they project themselves onto a space, becoming inscribed there, and in the process producing these space itself. Failing this, these relations would remain in the realm of "pure" abstraction - that is to say, in the realm of representations and hence of ideology: the realm of verbalism, verbiage and empty word (Lefebvre, 1991:129).

Lefebvre's exploration here is vibrant and succinct. He essentially suggests a dialectical nexus between space and society in what Edward Soja describes a 'socio-spatial' dialectics. The society shapes spaces according to its needs, but equally, space plays a formative role in the construction of social life. Social relations become a part of everyday social experience to the extent that they are spatially inscribed in the social production of space.

Since space is socially marked, produced, reproduced and defined by human practices, then "every society—and hence every mode of production with its sub categories, i.e. all those societies which exemplify the general concept, produces a space, its own space" (Lefebvre, 1994:31). That is to say, every mode of social entity produces spatial practices and environments because of its social relations. By producing a space according to its own terms and reality, a society not only materializes into distinctive built forms, but also reproduces itself. In this context, the idea that space is produced significantly points to what Giddens calls

the "duality of structure." That is, space can be defined as both a medium of social relations and a material product that can affect social relations. When thinking about Friel's dramatic representation (or construction) of home, the spatialization of the material space of home is a product of social relations and practices. I will use Lefebvre's theory of social space to explore the relation between characters and home. Following Lefebvre, I argue that Friel represents home not as a 'passive locus' for social relations. Instead, I suggest that he endows home with possibilities for social empowerment and for the inversion of traditional social hierarchies. Therefore, when approaching the spatiality of home in Friel's plays, my analysis aims to explore how characters internalize their 'real' experience of place, how they imagine space and how they represent space through their verbal and nonverbal languages and dramatic action. In this respect, the distinctive claim of this thesis is to offer an understanding of character, not just in, but also through home space. As Una Chaudhuri has argued: "who one is and who one can be are a function of where one is and how one can experience that place" (1997: xii). The aim of this thesis is to show how home constructs characters, and why, therefore, its representation, via dramatic structure, is particularly complex.

A significant characteristic of Lefebvre's conceptualisation of social space is that it is fundamentally complex and multifaceted, combining varied spaces together in one physical location. This means that a certain site like home in a Friel play, for instance, can be analysed in terms of many different spaces with quite distinct associated meanings: an imagined space, a psychic space, a domestic space, a hearth, a centre of neighbourhood life; a meeting place; a signifier of a particular group identity (a gendered space). In line with my earlier distinction between place and space, Lefebvre sees places existing only as a specific discourse among many other existing discourses that might be used to explain the social space. On this basis, place is not to be sharply distinguished from space. Most of the plays that are discussed in this project are set in a physical space, like a traditional kitchen, a house, a Big house, a hedge-school, The Lodge or even a psychic ward, in or around the fictional town of "Ballybeg" (from the Irish Baile Beag, meaning "Small Town"). The plays are *Philadelphia*, *Here I Come!*, *The Gentle Island*, *Aristocrats*, *Translations*, *Dancing at Lughnasa*, *Molly Sweeney* and *The Home Place*. Here, the physical spaces of home in Ballybeg, for example, are apparently solid and fixed as a space. However, if analysed as social space, both the physical space of home and Ballybeg are "permeated from every direction by streams of energy which run in and out of

[them]" (Lefebvre, 1994: 93), such as emigration, modernity or signs of technologies, outsiders or new comers. Thus the dramatic picture of a physical space as "apparent solidity and immobility of the place" is replaced by "an image of a complex of motilities, a nexus of in and out conduits" (ibid). These conduits expose how the intimate space of home is always subject to the wider social, political and cultural issues and influences.

Linked with this, Lefebvre's social spaces always interlace and intermingle with each other:

Social spaces interpenetrate one another and/or superimpose themselves upon one another. They are not things, which have mutually limiting boundaries [...] Visible boundaries, such as walls or enclosures in general, give rise for their part to an appearance of separation between spaces where in fact what exists is an ambiguous continuity. The space of a room, bedroom, house or garden may be cut off in a sense from social space by barriers and walls, by all the signs of private property, yet still remain fundamentally part of that space. (PS. p. 87).

In the course of the thesis, I endeavour to show how Friel models the spatiality of home on Lefebvre's concept of 'ambiguous continuity.' The spatiality of home is shown to be a composite of the material space and imagined space in different manifestations that range from the domestic space of houses or traditional kitchens to psychic, contested, gendered or national spaces. Apparently, these spaces are distinct, yet they do not obliterate each other rather they enter into a complex set of relationships. As Lefebvre states all spaces are:

traversed by myriad currents. The hyper-complexity of social space should by now be apparent, embracing as it does individual entities and peculiarities, relatively fixed points, movements, and flows and waves - some interpenetrating, others in conflict, and so on. (PS, p. 88).

Following Andrew Thacker's claim that "any 'fragment of space' under analysis will reveal not one but many social relations", I attempt to show how these discrete spaces of home are converging and diverging with or against each other, rather than focusing on a specific space. Putting my thesis within this analytic framework will usefully enable me to augment Bachelard's topo-analysis of intimate spaces with Lefebvre's notion of the hyper-complexity of social space.

In his taxonomy of different social spaces, Lefebvre introduces the notion of what he calls "representational" space as a space of imagination that he also associates with symbolic and artistic practices. More importantly, however, Lefebvre views this representational space as being "space as directly lived

through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of ‘inhabitants’ and ‘users’,” and it is the realm, too, of “the dominated—and hence passively experienced—space which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate” (39, original emphasis). Lefebvre approaches the spatial as the mingling product of social practice, human perception, and the imagination. He also puts forward that the same spaces may be repeatedly reproduced, represented and experienced in different ways by different individuals, an understanding that intrinsically contests oppositional or binary notions of subjective and objective spatiality and, therefore, between the real and the imagined.

Lefebvre’s conceptualisation of this particular kind of spatiality is, perhaps, more succinctly captured by bell hooks’ statement that “[s]paces can be real and imagined” (152) which, significantly, is a practice of co-occurrence rather than a choice of either/or. According to this, the analysis of space, like that of home for example, ought to be done on “several levels” that include “the level of imaginary space and its interaction with empirical space” (320), or what might be loosely organized as the ‘real’ and the ‘imagined’ space.

It is this call for an interactive process of the real and the imagined spaces of existence that Edward Soja also argues for when he notes that the imaginary and the physical are interconnected, but that spatiality, being socially produced, is quite different. This difference exists, for Soja, even though, in the production of social space, physical and mental spaces are both “used and incorporated into the social construction of spatiality” (Postmodern 120). Importantly, what Soja sees as emerging from this process of interaction is the production of an entirely different kind of space. This different space is what Soja refers to as a ‘thirdspace’ of spatiality as he envisages in his ‘trialectic of spatiality’. However, this does not mean that Soja denies the role of the the historical and social perspectives as interpretive frameworks in understanding the world. He expands their roles by including the “thirling” effect of spatiality. This is the analytical framework that I will utilise to show how Friel manipulates the dramatic space to spatialise and produce home on stage.

In his “trialectics,” Soja reshapes Lefebvre “spatial triad” to describe a mode of dialectical cognition that is intrinsically more spatial than the dialectics of Hegel or Marx, which he considers to be rooted in temporality. The main difference between Lefebvre’s and Soja’s presentation of space lies in the fact that the former’s theory presents spatial dialectics while the later’s refers to spatial trialectics. Lefebvre theorises space as physical, discursive and lived. The lived

space takes place because of the perceived and conceived space. Lefebvre dialectically refers to this as 'spatialization,' i.e., space is simultaneously created by social action and creates social action. By re-contextualising Lefebvre's thesis of spatial production, what Soja sees, is a space that creatively re-combines and extends both the "'real' material world" and the "'imagined' representations of spatiality" (Thirdspace 6). In re-contextualizing this, Soja renames Lefebvre's categories: Firstspace, Secondspace, and Thirdspace.

For Soja, 'firstspace' stands for Lefebvre's 'perceived space'. It is the real space with physicality and materiality. It is, therefore, 'mappable', explainable and measurable by human attempts to garner the spatial information through sensory observation. This space, which Soja considers as the traditional geographical understanding of space, has been set in a binary opposition to Secondspace. 'Secondspace' (or Conceived space) is more entrenched in subjectivity and imagination because it deals with images, representations or thoughts of spatiality. According to Soja, this space is not totally materialised on perceivable spaces, but it can be realised by cognitive, ideal, conceptual and symbolic worlds. So the existing firstspace, then, can be conceived, or imagined and created by the second.

'Thirdspace' (or lived space) points to the fullness of lived experience of a space that is not wholly imaginary as a contrast (or even an equivalent) to consensus reality, but one that is not entirely bound to that reality either. As Soja has stressed: this space "can be mapped but never captured in conventional cartographies; it can be creatively imagined but obtains meaning only when practiced and fully lived." (1999:14). According to Soja, 'Thirdspace' is a spatial consciousness that is "an investigation into a multiplicity of 'real-and-imagined places'" (ibid 6). It is a space that belongs, at the same time, to both, or neither, categories of the real or unreal, the mental and the physical, but it is a space where, says Soja, the actions of an individual in relation to the spatial are "both space-forming and space contingent." It is therefore, simultaneously "oppressive and liberating, passionate and routine, knowable and unknowable, real-and-imagined at the edge and at the centre" Thirdspace is nuanced, personal and individuals: Soja writes that this lived space has yet to be fully defined.

At this point, it is useful to consider how Lefebvre and Soja's understandings of social space might relate to the representation of home in Brian Friel's drama. As shown above, their approach revolves around constructing the spaces individuals inhabit. It does not deny the existence of a place; rather, it argues for social

practices to create different spaces that people (characters) can subjectively occupy. Such spaces will be replete with metaphorical meanings but, at the same time, they are still located within a material space. This perspective gives me a framework to analyse home not as a one-dimensional, but rather as a multifarious 'structure' in its own right.

### **2.3.3 Outline the Research Topic in Context of literature Reviewed**

Brian Friel's treatment of home in the context of Irish studies has not yet been systematically studied. However, the discussions of 'home' in much of the scholarship on Brian Friel have taken two broad trends. While the first trend adopts a nationalistic explanation of home as a place to be understood in terms of rootedness and attachment to the land, the second tends to explain the concept of home in terms of post-colonial perspectives.

### **2.3.4 Friel's Concept of Home: Nationalistic Reading**

There has been a tendency in a number of critical studies on Brian Friel's concept of place to conflate ideas of home with those of homeland and nation. This conflation brings forth the close connexion of the German words: 'Heim' and 'Heimat', i.e. home and homeland, respectively. Eric Hobsbawm differentiates between these two terms, pointing out that "Heim [...] is essentially private. Home in the wider sense, Heimat, is essentially public" (1992: 63). While the first one is private, sheltering the nuclear family, the second one is communal, signifying the territory of anonymous individuals who establish the national big 'family'. Both encompass an account which is mythical or fictional so that they construct personal and/or communal identity and establish the discursive right to a space a house, a community or a country (Bammer, 1992). However, what is noticeable in Brian Friel's critical studies is the emphasis on home as a public and national place makes a priority of Heimat over Heim. The discussions of Friel's career in the 1970s, 1980s, 1990s and 2000s by D. E. S. Maxwell, U. Dantanus, A. O'Malley-Younger and N. Grene, for example, all suggested that the playwright espoused a relatively un-problematized Irish nationalism. Maxwell places Friel firmly in "his own region, the north-western counties of Ireland," stressing the attachment of the writer to a recognizable physical locality (1973:12). For Maxwell, the world that Friel creates in his narrative and dramatic work is that of Ireland as a homeland, stretching from Kincasslagh in the west of Donegal through Strabane, Derry City, and Coleraine to Omagh and County Tyrone. This

emphasis on the landscape reflects Friel's tendency to shape his sense of place in terms of asserting his own rootedness and his 'natural' attachment to the land (ibid).

Similarly, Dantanus defines Friel as an Irish writer within the tradition of Joyce, Synge or O'Casey in their interest in portraying "the habitat, heritage and history of Ireland" (1988: 20). Dantanus views Friel's insistence on a chosen locality as a conscious constituent in his career. For Dantanus, Friel tends to write "about places he knows or has known closely, but his aim is not to be true to the geographical and the physical characteristic of a place but to capture the atmosphere of a place or a person" (ibid. 24). For this reason, Dantanus sees the fictional locality of Ballybeg as having a kind of 'established presence' in the sense that it reflects the spirit of place of any actual Irish townland or village. Like Maxwell, Dantanus relates the meaning of home in Friel's work to the homeland. He does so by linking the peasant quality of Ireland in Friel's work with his sense of feeling 'at-home' in rural Ireland. In this way, Friel's work embodies what Dantanus called the 'three great forces' of Irish mind: "a passion for the land; locality to the most authoritarian church in the world and a devotion to a romantic ideal we call Kathleen" (ibid, 45).

In 2006, Alison O'Malley-Younger examines the concept of home in Brian Friel's play *Home Place* (2005) in relation to the ideas of nation, race, and Heimat. According to O'Malley-Younger, Friel foregrounds a way of representing home in which the public concerns of the nation and empire overshadows the private concerns of the individual (2006:199). Thus, O'Malley-Younger centres her critical framework on the concept of nostalgia. In this essay, O'Malley-Younger views home as a place of origin. Relying on the Greek word 'nostos,' used in English as nostalgia, or homeward journey, she argues that the main character in the play, Christopher Gore, an Anglo-Irish one, has painful longings for an absent homeland. This 'dream of belonging' (Bauman, 1995: 97) is created and sustained by Romantic ideologies of the homeland (O'Malley-Younger: 2006:205). In a similar vein, but from a different perspective, N. Grene significantly contributes in 1999 and 2014 to this trend of identifying home with homeland. He regards the domestic space of home (the country cottage) rather than the land as an image of the nation and community, with all its accompanying dialectics of resident/guest (or resident/intruder), family/stranger, and its tropes of open doors and bolted locks (1999). The peasant cottage represents the unspoiled antithesis of the Anglicised and modernised life of the city. For Grene, this tradition has had a

remarkably prolonged life in Irish theatre from J. M. Synge to Marrin McOnagh. According to this, Grene views (2014:7) Friel's trademark setting of Ballybeg as a prism for seeing the condition of the country, whether in the then-contemporary present of *Philadelphia Here I Come* (1964) or in the retrospective memory play *Dancing at Lughnasa* (1990).

These studies foreground static concepts of home that are tied to a singular place of origin and positioning Friel as a nationalist dramatist. Conversely, both Seamus Deane (1985) and Joe Cleary (2007) critique the limitations of the political visions featured in much Northern Irish theatre during the decades of "the Troubles." In *Celtic Revivals: Essays in Modern Irish Literature 1880-1980*, Deane argues that the theatrical patterns presented by Northern Irish dramatists, following O'Casey's commitments with Irish (even world) politics, did not adequately express the anxieties of the current situation in the North. For Deane, the chief drawback of O'Casey's works is that it separates the nationalist or the socialist politics from the private lives of "ordinary" people. In other words, O'Casey's drama privileges domestic space over public space. Deane suggests that O'Casey's drama echoes two themes: the "dehumanizing effects" of visionary dreaming, particularly when it assumes a political practice which is discernible in the male characters and the "humanizing effects" of presenting people rather than ideologies which is articulated in the yearning for domestic sanctuary and the desire for deep human feelings which characterize his female characters.

On the other hand, Joe Cleary in *Outrageous Fortune: Capital and Culture in Modern Ireland* believes that the major defect in Northern Irish drama lies not in privileging the private over the public, but in depoliticizing domestic space. Through his readings of the conflict in Northern Ireland in terms of the concept of domestic tragedy in St. John Ervine's *Mixed Marriage* (1911), Sam Thompson's *Over the Bridge* (1960), and Tom Paulin's *The Riot Act: A Version of Sophocles' Antigone* (1984), Cleary considers the domestic tragedy a radical form that rectifies the "bread and butter" practices of economic and socialist politics in Northern Ireland. According to Cleary, these practices tend to sidestep the secondary or 'emotional matters' which are religious or national identity, state commitment, gender, mixed marriage or residential segregation because they may enhance 'intra-class divisions' (236). For him, the elements of domestic tragedy which are typically understood as a hindrance to the social and historical issues may, paradoxically, demonstrate important economic, social, or political interests. In a contested place, like that of Northern Ireland, domestic tragedy

would usefully be a corrective genre to signify how the attempts to separate the public from the private or vice versa usually work against 'the interests of the oppressed' (ibid.)

While in discussing Brian Friel's life, one cannot avoid his nationalistic orientations, there is a definite break from nationalism in his work. Coming from a traditional Catholic nationalist background in Northern Ireland, Friel often felt "the frustration and the resentment of a Catholic in the North of Ireland" (Delaney 2000:49). Prior to the civil rights movement in Northern Ireland he had joined the Nationalist Party, but found that venture moribund and futile (Friel 1999b :110 – 11). The civil rights movement in the North, however, rekindled nationalism for many Catholics, and for Friel restored its vitality and dignity (1999b:28). While Friel's Catholicism faded somewhat over the years, his nationalism did not (Friel 1999b:26). When he visits Dublin, Friel says, he has "a twinge of emotion when I pass the Post Office, because I admire the men of 1916" (1999b:31). Although he was born and worked as a teacher in Northern Ireland, and had dual citizenship in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland, he chose to live in the Republic rather than under what he termed the "absurd" and "iniquitous" Stormont government (1999b:28). Although Friel has particular reservations about both the Republic and Northern Ireland, he nevertheless considers Ireland as a whole as his home and he has never accepted the border either "intellectually or emotionally" (1999b:28). In this sense, using F.C. McGrath's words, Friel culturally is "a thirty-two -county republican" (2010:266).

However, in much of his work (see McGrath 2010 & 1999; Boltwood 2007 & 2002), and particularly in *The Gentle Island* (1971) and *the Communication cord* (1982), Friel tends to question and sometimes to reject the traditional nationalism upon which the idealism and myths of the Republic of Ireland is based, including the republican ideals of 1916 and the de Valerean myth of frugal, Catholic, Gaelic, rural Ireland as the foundation of the state. According to Friel, "a man's relationship with his country [...] is always very tenuous and very strained" (Delaney 2000:92). And while he remains loyal to Ireland, it is the kind of loyalty one has to an elderly parent who has begun to decline (Friel 1999b:112). When asked to "say a word or two about[ ... ] this ideological crisis facing us [ ... ] as a nation" (p. 126), Friel avoids the question by replying that the artist's role is "to find out *who he is*, and *what he is* as an individual apart from his relationship to the state and nationalist ideology" (Ibid. italics in original). Friel's determination to separate the artist from the nation leads him even to denounce the Abbey

Theatre, which had premiered several of his plays by 1980, revived others, and was to launch all of his works in the nineteen nineties:

No reason for it at all, no reason for its existence. ( ... ) I'm merely saying that I don't understand what a national theatre is any more. I don't understand the need for a national theatre because it would imply that there is some kind of national voice (p. 131).

According to Scott Boltwood, there has been a general deviation from the concept of the nation as solid and firm in Friel's writings. According to Boltwood, Friel recognizes the issues that problematize the nationalism that his generation inherited from the nation builders of the Irish Renaissance; ideological problems that are 'Postcolonial' because they result from the decolonizing process within Irish society. "But rather than confront this contentious semantic argument by offering his own or his generation's definitions of 'Irishness', 'native', 'foreign' or nation" Boltwood argues, "Friel is unable to reconstruct these essential concepts for his audience" (2002: 306). Boltwood's criticism of Friel for this deviation is not in a call to a return to anticolonial or traditional nationalism, but there is the sense in which Friel's deviation from the idea of a firm, solid nation, for Boltwood, that can be fought for is at the centre of both his subversions and the problems of his plays.

What I want to suggest is that Friel's deviation from a solid nation, to which Boltwood draws our attention, is not, in fact, a defect in his politics, but rather is crucial to his re-vision of re-presenting other spatial locations rather than the nation as a fixed entity. The essence of this representation is a movement towards (postcolonial) spatiality. Thus, following Sarah Upstone (2009&2015), I maintain that this account of the nation suggests two important concepts. First, it denotes Friel's desire to engage with the political through alternative locations. Second, it reflects a political world in which power lies not in the nation itself but in other diverse spaces. As Hardt and Negri's notes "the decline in sovereignty of nation-states [...] does not mean that sovereignty as such has declined" (2009: xi). This raises an important question. If the nation is not a space of political allegiance in Brain Friel's drama, then what is the alternative?

In *Spatial politics in the postcolonial novel* (2009:60-65), Upstone has suggested, since adhering to the nation, as a single space of political significance is itself problematic, therefore; a focus on smaller scales and more diverse spaces is necessary to replace the national as sites of political implications. This, of course, does not mean that these scales and space would metaphorically reflect the national. She calls this diverse, multi-faceted notion of

political space as a postcolonial spatiality. Based on Sara Upstone's argument, I will use postcolonial spatiality to analyse how home space, not only rooted in a politics of the nation, reflects the multi-facet spaces that construct the postcolonial experience of home. For Upstone (2009:118), colonialism cannot be considered only in terms of "public" spaces, such as the nation or city, but need to be examined in relation to its structures within the private spaces of both colonizer and colonized. Thus colonial analysis frequently focuses on the home as a site of power contestation which is stemming from the principles of spatiality<sup>1</sup>. Throughout my thesis, I will adopt this view and incorporate it with Lefebvre's, Soja's and Massey's concept of spatiality.

Building on this, I argue that Friel problematizes the use of national space as a signifier of political negotiation through creating alternative home scales and spaces. In other words, Friel endorses discriminating versions of home/home-country, which refutes the notion of a monolithic and immutable nation. To ignore this, and to accept a singular and fixed view of place results in stasis and, as Friel asserts, 'fossilisation' (1999:25). Moreover, examining his drama within this perspective, Friel's strategy may be seen a defining feature that distinguishes his post-partition drama from earlier anticolonial Nationalistic Abbey writings, in which nationalism represents this sense of the nation as a fixed and, importantly, timeless and natural institution that would oppose the foreign invader as shown by Yeats' and Lady Gregory's plays.

Indeed, this trend to the national, the local, the everyday, the social and the personal might be viewed as part from the intellectual tendency towards small rather than large, scales of engagement. In the *Time and Space of Everyday Life* (2004), Burkitt believes that personal interactions cannot be separated from the study of institutions in social analysis. Echoing the notion of Soja's spatiality, he argues that whilst the latter attempts to fix time and space, the former offers diverse, models of social and political exchange. Equally, for Hardt and Negri, their concern for global power structures is developed through the impact of these structures on the individual (2000: 24). In relation to Mbembe's post-colony and Derek Gregory's colonial present, this necessity to engage with personal levels is similarly apparent, as "the apparatus of [the] state finds ways of getting into its subjects 'most intimate spaces'" (2001:121), and power is not produced through geopolitics and geo-economics alone [...] It is also set in motion through mundane cultural forms' (2004: 16). Lefebvre's representational spatiality "has an affective kernel or centre: Ego, bed, bedroom, dwelling, house;

or: square, church, graveyard” (1994:42) that validates life centred on personal interaction and not on national identity. Extending from this, I want to suggest that defining home in terms of national space or to associate it with ‘patriotism or nationalism’ is to reduce it to a one dimensional definition that “does not cover the nuances, principally of reassurance, fitness, belonging, association, and community, entailed in the phrase ‘at home’ or ‘in place’” (Edward Said cited in George, 1999:15).

At the everyday level of discourse, nationalism is a restrictive term as it decreases the value of social and everyday experiences of home or what is called by Edward Soja ‘life’s intimate human spatiality’ (1996:78). Thus, in contrast to the nationalistic analysis of Friel’s concept of home, this study will apply Soja’s concept of space as a signifier of life’s intimate human spatiality to Brian Friel’s drama. For Soja, life’s intimate human spatiality or “lived space” or “Thirdspace” is:

the space in which we actually live, where history grates on us and erodes our lives, a space of complete experience, of the unseen and incomprehensible as well as the tangible and everyday. It is the place where temporality and spatiality, history and biography are really written, fully lived, filling the entire geographical or spatial imagination” (Blake: 2002, 141).

Inspired by Lefebvre, Soja introduces Thirdspace as a new way of looking at our world, one that pushes beyond a simple dichotomy of perceived and conceived space. Thirdspace, or lived space (Lefebvre’s “espace vécu”), Soja writes, is complex and contradictory. It is simultaneously “oppressive and liberating, passionate and routine, knowable and unknowable, real-and-imagined, at the edge and at the centre” (1999: 276). It is precisely this malleability of lived space and individual nuance that links Soja’s discussion of space to my discussion of home in Friel’s drama.

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<sup>1</sup> In postcolonial studies, the treatment of space has been significant. A number of colonial and postcolonial discourses have approached space in all its manifestations as an integral part to the postcolonial experience. For example, Edward Said’s work is spatial, as shown in: ‘Imaginative Geography and Its Representations: Orientalizing the Oriental’, in *Orientalism* (1995:49–72), and He later writes about the relationship between empire and geography in *Culture and Imperialism* (1993). Also, these spatial concerns are summarised by his 1990 essay ‘Geography, Narrative, and Interpretation’, in which he suggests that studies of postcolonial literature needs to be located in the same ‘concrete geography’ which defines works such as Raymond Williams’ *The Country and the City* (1990:84). Said’s spatial opus has been followed by a number of scholars who are interested in the matters of place and space such as J.K. Noyes’s *Colonial Space: Spatiality in the Discourse of German South West Africa 1884–1915* (1992); Sara Mills’s *Gender and Colonial Space* (2005) or Robert P. Marzec’s *An Ecological and Postcolonial Study of Literature: From Daniel Defoe to Salman Rushdie* (2007).

The concept of spatiality that relies on the interaction between physical space and the human environment is a key notion in Henri Lefebvre's exploration of "space". Any space, Lefebvre argues, is not merely a physical, mapable thing, but is a product of social activity. In an active process Lefebvre calls "spatialization," space is simultaneously created by social action and produces social action (1994:26). Thus, the spatiality of home is both a physical and social space that is continuously created and recreated by social action. Following Lefebvre, Soja uses the "trialectics of spatiality" to study human spatiality. According to him, space can be approached from three ways. First, it is perceived, or directly experienced, mapable and physical. It can be read, explained, and described. For example, the house might be made from bricks and mortar, located at a definite place. This existing space, then, can be conceived, or imagined and created; it can be regarded as symbolic and metaphorical. Conceived space is concerned with images, representations, and thoughts. The house, through interaction with its inhabitants, becomes a sematic space that is filled with memories, images, smells and sounds associated with social communications. For Friel's protagonists, interaction with space is conscious and unconscious, real and imagined. They locate themselves simultaneously at the center and at the margins, questioning this dichotomy as they create a space of home for themselves. As explained above, Thirdspace refers to the fullness of lived experience: "It can be mapped but never captured in conventional cartographies; it can be creatively imagined but obtains meaning only when practiced and fully lived" (Soja: 276). For example, the house might become a home only through individual imagination, memory, and social interactions. Thus, Thirdspace is nuanced, personal, and individual.

Examining home as a site of intimate human spatiality does not mean treating home as a self-contained space, isolated from the external influence of the political structures of public space. I build on Doreen Massey's concept of place to focus on the interplay between home as a space of intimate human spatiality and home as a space of political negotiations. According to Massey, a sense of place is produced by linking a multiplicity of spaces in one location. "Instead, then, of thinking of places as areas with boundaries around," she writes, "they can be imagined as articulated moments in networks of social relations and understandings [...] this in turn allows a sense of place which is extroverted, which includes a consciousness of its links with the wider world, which integrates in a positive way *the global and the local*" (2005, 155, my emphasis). Massey's concept of home is constructed out of movement, communication, and social

relationships. In this thesis, I analyse the spatiality of home that is produced in Friel's drama, and identify and explore the links across real and imagined spaces that allow for a creation of home. I will also examine the malleability of the concept of home, analysing the shifts that take place in the interaction between the individual protagonist and the home spaces they perceive, conceive, and live.

At the close of the twentieth century, there has been an increasing interest in Irish drama and theatre studies to approach drama from performance-based perspectives. For Anna McMullan (1996:31), the focus on performance may provide a "new way of looking at the texts of the Irish theatre tradition, and how this tradition may be opened up, regenerated and made more inclusive." In 2000, Fintan O'Toole has identified "a particular movement in [Irish] theatre and in [Irish] society over the last thirty years and that movement is now at a close [...] The drama which has been present in [Irish] society has moved on and the theatre is moving on with it [...] If this is true, then we have to find new ways of talking about it of evaluating it, even of defining what is and is not dramatic" (48). Similarly, Christie L. Fox explains how the Irish theatrical tradition of "literary, text-bound, and privileges the author" has shifted into a "new theatre de-privileged text and emphasized physical performance" by producing a particular Irish drama, consisting of the ancient Irish performance forms such as mumming and European kinds such as the *commedia dell'arte* and French mime (2008,5). Finally, in their mapping of Irish theatre, Morash and Richards (2014) seek to create a transnational theory and local theatre work, and map the development of Irish theatre spaces of production and performance, from the foundational Werburgh Street theatre in 1635, to the deconstruction of the spatial boundaries between audience and performer in site-specific theatre.

Building on these scholarly views, my approach in this thesis is part and parcel of an ongoing "spatial turn" that seeks to emphasize the significance of space, place, and geography for postcolonial literary and cultural criticism. This is not to claim that geography has substituted history as a critical problematic, but rather to note that there is an increasingly sophisticated awareness on the part of critics that history and geography, time, and space are mutually implicated as determining factors in Irish studies.

My textual readings aim to allow for the exploration of real, imagined, and real-and-imagined qualities of the post-colonial spatiality of home; of how the psychic,

the political, the social and the spatial are inextricably realised in one another. Essential to this process is a consideration of how the spatial identity of the home arises through the characters' awareness of the power of space, and its variable effects on their identity. The power of home space is exhibited in its capacity to alter events, emotions and identities in general. I am aware, of course, that dramatists, like Friel, are not geographers, and that the dramatic representation of home space is more than just a mimetic exercise. That is, I recognise that all representations of home space will be unavoidably ekphrastic and far from cartographically exhaustive or exact since all spatio-visual details are filtered through a dramatist's aesthetic concerns and preoccupations. Nevertheless, despite the fact that writers are the literary 'planners' and 'architects' of the spaces they describe, I would like to build on these spatial/(post)/colonial insights by focusing on the dramatic depictions of the interior and the exterior; the private and the public; the physical and the immaterial; the ideal and the real spaces of home, as imaginative products to be understood in terms of its dramatic projections.

#### 2.3.5 Friel's concept of Home: Postcolonial Readings

The second critical body of Friel's scholarship on the concept of home is largely concerned with a post-colonial reading of home. Here exile is a key concern as critical works by Richard Pine (1999); Richard Rankin Russell (2013, 2014) ; Helen Lojek (2004) and Csilla Bertha (2006) deal with how Friel attempts to 'unhome' the dominant culture of the place he finds himself in, instilling it with his experience of dislocation. Both Pine and Russell adopt the view that the concept of home in Friel's work is a kind of search and journey (physical and psychological). Both of them see Friel as a spokesperson for his tribe. In *The Diviner: The Art of Brian Friel*, Richard Pine associates Friel's entire corpus with the idea of the writer as a shaman or conveyer of truths who is himself both in exile and at home (ibid). He explains:

[E]very play has a secret to be told, and every playwright has a secret to tell. And every play has one unchanging, emotional element around which the play revolves and which is found to contain the kernel of the playwright's emotions and fears (1999:13).

According to Pine, Friel's role as a writer of his society, as a provider of a critical and creative intelligence, is shamanistic and political, for Turner has written : "he who is in *communitas* is an exile or a stranger, someone who, by the very existence, calls into question the whole normative order" (Turner in Pine,

1999:17). Thus, Pine argues that Friel is conscious of his dilemma and throughout his work, he attempts to show his sense of internal exile from his culture and community and the associated responsibilities of telling the story about his home journey to his tribe (ibid.). Here, I agree with Pine's point of view that a Northern Irish writer, like Brian Friel, is as a spokesperson for his/her tribe. Indeed, for any writer addressing the matter of the North of Ireland, writing is a political act. This, as already shown in the introduction, can be attributed to the North as a partitioned state, fraught with sectarian divisions which demand a response from the writer. Even those who choose to resist direct political statement might inevitably be approached as political in allegorical, metaphorical or oblique ways and so forth. Indeed, this notion of tribal loyalties is a subject matter that Friel is aware of as he argues in an interview with Michael Sheridan in 1986:

The first difficulty (in writing about the situation in the North) is to negotiate between fealty to the tribe and responsibility to the creative imagination, between a kind of loyalty to all those beliefs and loves and enthusiasms and tradition that have helped to form us and, at the same time to be faithful to one's own personal mythos, to the secret, the private, the unspoken, the inchoate [...] That is the first difficulty to make that negotiation, because if that negotiation is not successfully accomplished, you become either a propagandist, or a megaphone for the more raucous elements of your tribe, or far worse you betray your own spirit structure that must always refuse a worldly or public subscription (19).

This extract shows Friel's insistence on a fidelity to 'one's own personal mythos,' and at the same time, his refusal to surrender the individual creative imagination to the obligations of a tribal cult mentality. Friel is neither solipsistic nor isolationist but the communal demands of nationalistic solidarity: 'fealty to the tribe' and the formative influences of tradition are questions that he cannot totally approve. Building on what Friel explains, I aim to expand Pine's argument by suggesting that Friel does not only include the political or eschew it in favour of the individual, inner psyche, but these two issues are unified into creative convergence to produce home as explained in the previous section.

In a similar way, Richard Rankin Russell (2013, 2014) discusses Friel's concept of home as a kind of search and longing for home/land. His approach is different from Pine's critical framework in that Russell uses phenomenologist Edward Casey's theory of place to explain Friel's sense of place. For Russell, Friel's drama seeks to establish place at the centre of an Irish experience by showing "how place exerts a consistent call upon us and how we, in turn, inflect particular places with our desires" (Russell, 2013:206). Following Casey, Russell sees place

as an event which is dynamic and populated, enfolding related issues of time, memory, and history while excluding space as inert and depopulated ( ibid. 207). According to this formula, Friel privileges place, Russell argues, and its natural rhythms over dislocations and exile. It is for this reason, Russell claims that Friel's characters are motivated by the desire to return home (Russell, 2014). Russell contends that Friel's characters are disturbed by the sense of uneasiness inherent in a particular period, yet they finally settle into an "ease" with a place (2014). While Russell's critical frame work is useful in the context of my study, my approach is different. I refer to the place in my analysis of home as a material manifestation of home space. As used in this thesis, the concept of space is my analytical tool to examine how home as lived and imagined in Brian Friel's plays.

Both of Helen Lojek (2004) and Csilla Bertha (2006) attempt to read home from geographical as well as postcolonial perspectives. Lojek identifies the concept of place with home. She notes that "in Ireland place always matters. Unsurprisingly, place also matters in the plays of Brian Friel" (26). Her survey of his work is a geographical one, suggesting that Friel's "twenty full-length stage plays map Ireland's divided self" (ibid). For Lojek, Friel's work maps the northwest corner of Ireland, an area of small towns and rural landscapes, sliced by the border partitioning the island. This mapping reflects Irish concerns and the internal, psychic realities of love, family, failure, and the struggle between faith and doubt. However, such a formulation neglects the trajectory in later Friel's work, anticipated in the earlier plays such as *The Enemy Within* (1962) and *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* (1964), toward mapping the divided terrain of the self, and how such selves strive to be coherent in liminal, hybrid spaces.

This line of argument is picked up again by Csilla Bertha in her essay 'Brian Friel as postcolonial playwright' (2006). Bertha links the concept of home with a cultural Identity. She maintains that Friel's characters are motivated by an ontological need to feel at home in their own place, country, and village. She identifies home with a home-country and argues that the need for home leads Friel to create an Irish home for most of his characters in the fictitious village of Baile Beag. Due to British colonization, Baile Beag becomes Ballybeg – a metonym for, or a microcosm of, Ireland. She considers Ballybeg as 'Friel's Archimedic fixed point' because it enables him to observe the world. As such, Ballybeg itself is a "multifaceted place" usually on the threshold of crucial change. In this way, Ballybeg corresponds with broad understanding of the postcolonial condition, which is positioned on the fault lines between cultures. It is a space which is at

one and the same time centre and marginal space enacting what Homi Bhabha calls the “third place,” between colonizer and colonized, old and new culture, where “an interstitial future [. . .] emerges in-between the claims of the past and the needs of the present,” this is where the “incommensurable elements – the stubborn chunks – as the basis of cultural identification” are still to be found. Following Bhabha, Bertha concludes that Friel shows these elements in an elusive, half- hidden way which is evoked in memory even if no longer in practice and sometimes, even in their absence, shows the promise of renewing spiritual life. In constantly seeking contact points between authenticity and contemporary life, Friel dramatizes that “[o]ne can never go back to the old culture, but it could extend to the present day” (2006:45).

These studies are important in their using of post-colonial methodologies to illuminate certain aspects of Irish drama in the dramatic representation of home. However, they all distance themselves from showing the physical structure of home and its colonial/political implications in representing home. Based on Anne McClintock's assertion that "imperialism cannot be understood without a theory of domestic space"(1995:17), I will use the physical structure of home (whether it is traditional kitchen, a house, a big house, a hedge-school, The Lodge or even a psychic ward) to suggest that at the centre of Friel's drama is a desire to critique home not metaphorically, but, literally. Thus, my approach is about reading more than the allegorical into dramatic representations of home-spaces, as I trace the interdependence of public and private, domestic and political, across both form and content in the plays covered in this thesis.

## 2.4 Concluding Remarks

If, as Una Chaudhuri has argued, modern drama “employs, as one of its foundational discourses a vague, culturally determined symbology of home,”(1997:xii), this thesis is set out to assess Friel's contribution to such a symbology. This chapter has argued for the validity of analysing the representation of home in Brian Friel's drama in relation to a geo-critical approach, and has charted a number of concepts drawn from a variety of thinkers to help formulate my analytic terms. From Bachelard's work, I have taken the importance of interiors and the intimate space of house. In Lefebvre's *The Production of Space*, there are a number of stimulating ideas about 'social space', primarily that of 'representational spaces' and 'spatial practices'. Lefebvre's work also introduced questions of power into the discussion of space, topics taken up

again in Soja's work. Perhaps Soja's most significant insight lies in his writings on thirdspace and his suggestion that material and metaphorical senses of space can be combined. According to these spatial understandings, I tailor a spatial framework to analyse Brian Friel's drama.

## Chapter 3: Images of Psychic Home as a Political Space

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an analysis of the spatiality of home as a psychic space and how these spaces are created by external social spaces in relation to exile and homecoming as envisaged in *The Enemy Within* (1962), *The Loves of Cass McGuire* (1966) and *Molly Sweeney* (1994).

### 3.2 Psychic Homelands: Imagination of Space and place in *The Enemy Within*

Home is a place to escape to and a place to escape from

[George 1999: 9]

#### 3.2.1 The Context of the Play

Friel's career as playwright is recognized as formally beginning with *The Enemy Within*, which premiered at the Abbey Theatre in August 1962; however, this work is actually his fourth play, following such works as *A Sort of Freedom* and *A Doubtful Paradise*. While these earlier works are rooted in the familiar life of contemporary Ulster, *The Enemy Within* focuses on the beginning of Irish history.

Set in the autumn of AD 587, the play dramatizes several weeks in the life of the medieval Irish saint Columba of Iona. Although the events emerge during the saint's sixty-sixth year (c.587), Friel portrays him as a vigorous individual who readily embraces physical labour and travels widely to the many churches under his authority (2). Although Columba and his original companions have been on the island for more than twenty years, he retains direct contact with various rulers in Ireland and Scotland. The play's first Act concerns his decision to return

to Ireland to sanction a military force led by his cousin Hugh with his personal and religious authority. Hugh triumphs in the ensuing battle and the monk returns to Iona in high spirits, but the play's third Act climaxes with Columba's denial of a similar request from his brother Eoghan. He appeals to Columba to join him in a mission to rescue his grandson from heathen Antrim, but the saint unexpectedly refuses to do that. Between these two missions, Friel portrays a starkly changed atmosphere in the monastery, for after his return Columba is devastated by the death of his closest friend, the monk Caornan. Ultimately, while Columba's rejection of Eoghan does not deliver him from this depression, the sudden reappearance of Oswald, who had been missing and feared dead, reinvigorates Columba during the play's final moments, making him confident that all can 'begin again' (72).

The conventional interpretation of *The Enemy Within* incorporates it into the Irish genre of exile narratives, which has been important to the culture's imagination since the Flight of the Earls in 1607. Columba has traditionally been regarded as one of Ireland's earliest exiles (Adomna'n, 2000: 15-16, 24), and Neil Corcoran describes the saint as "the type of the Irish exile: displaced, uneasy, failing to belong, nostalgic" (Corcoran, 2005: 16). Hence, the play's typical interpretation portrays its protagonist as one who attempts to retain a psychological integrity from the fragmentation of exilic vacillation. In the very first study of Friel's career, Maxwell describes Columba as deeply divided between two experiential poles, with the character's love for Ireland opposed to his spiritual calling on Iona (1974:56). The subsequent treatments of the play have adopted this view of a monk as struggling to subordinate his public obligations of family and dynasty, to his private "commitment to his vocation": the spiritual duties that require him to sever these personal affiliations in the service of God (Andrews, 1999: 79). Andrews' examination of the play provides a detailed analysis of the various manifestations of the tension between religion and politics that prevent Columba from achieving "unity and consistency of character" even at the play's end (84). McGrath describes this play as "the internal struggle of Columba between his allegiance to his family and his allegiance to his spiritual vocation" in which his final repudiation of Ireland remains unconvincing (McGrath, 67); similarly, Corbett succinctly describes this opposition as between "the demands of both families: his kin and his monks" (2003: 6). Finally, Boltwood (2007:48) relates the play to the ideological evolution underway in the 1960s. Following the retirement of Eamon de Valera from the active leadership of his party's government, the "special position"

granted the Catholic Church in the 1937 Constitution, which was enhanced by the successive Fianna Fail governments, experienced a public and political re-evaluation. Both the popular imagination and official ideology evolved towards a greater separation between the two institutions, viewing their interests to be increasingly divergent. These critical treatments of *The Enemy Within* adopt this ideological revisionism, accepting a fundamental incompatibility between the public/political and the private/religious, assuming that “[Columba’s] embroilment in Irish politics will disqualify him as a spiritual leader” (Andrews, 1999: 79).

In this section, I approach the idea of home in *The Enemy Within* by calling into question how these nationalist frameworks incorporate the play into an “interpretive nexus” that overlooks the meaning of home and how it is spatialized. My attempt is to read the play in a manner resonant with the interventions practiced by such writers as Edward Said, Doreen Massey, Edward Soja and Una Chaudhuri who seek not to analyse literature through the prism of nationalist ideology, but to interrogate the political and the social along with the spatial. Indeed, as Shaun Richards has demonstrated in his analysis of Friel’s later history plays, a nationalist reading technique encourages nostalgic if not sentimental views of Irish culture and history; conversely, an oppositional strategy has the ability to uncover a “reading [that] is paradoxically both more disturbing and potentially sustaining” (Richards, 1998: 61).

Thus, this section explores the idea of home as a space of sanctuary from the problems of home country through *The Enemy Within*. Taking the motif of sanctuary, I utilise Edward Said’s distinction between filiation and affiliation to examine the relations between nostalgic and nationalistic articulations and the thinking of a space as home. Then I move to show how dynamic is the space of home in affecting the protagonist’s experiences through an essential interplay of home space, origin and identity.

### 3.2.2 Staging the Spatiality of Home

Following Soja’s concept of third space, my focus will be on Columba’s chaotic experience of home in relation to his identity negotiation. Allied to this occurs in the dramaturgy of *The Enemy within* which has to do with how home space is staged. In an important article, ‘Fixed, Floating and Fluid Stages’, Stanley Vincent Longman has identified three different types of stage space according to their dramatic use. The first is the ‘fixed stage’, where the action of the play “occurs

within a closed space which remains the same throughout” (2000:20). In this type, the edges of the stage represent the limits of the immediate fictional world and do not vary from the beginning of the play to the end. The second is the fluid stage with its constant spatial movement between various time frames and locales as in *The Loves of Cass McGuire*. The third is the floating stage whose spatiality falls between the extremes of fixed and fluid to encapsulate a generalised locale and several places within it as explained in my discussion of *Molly Sweeney*.

In *The Enemy Within*, the stage is fixed; it consists of a confined and single set that never changes throughout the play. It represents an interior spatiality of Columba’s cell on the island of Iona, off the west coast of Scotland. In his stage direction, Friel specifies that this setting is:

an austere, comfortless apartment furnished with a few stools, a stone bed covered with straw, a stone pillow (right), a large wooden table (left). On the wall above the table hangs a collection of scrolls, the equivalent of a library (9).

The cell is also staged as an inhabited space by Columba, the Abbot, the monks and novices. Its spatiality is produced by the characters’ active interactions and harmonies. The opening scenes of the play up to Columba’s first evocation of home, preparing for the entry of Hugh’s messenger, are staged in such a way as to reflect the intimate and everyday spatiality of Monastery life. This is done by making Columba the master of the house. He meets the new novices like Oswald who regards him as his childhood idol. He also jokes around more other monks about their favourite old jokes:

Grillaan: Why are you working in the forge, Comgall?

Columab: BECAUSE I WAS OICKED, Finnian.

Grillaan: You’re a Christian now not a pict! Get out (4).

Thus, through these initial exchanges, Friel establishes the everyday almost homely and good-natured atmosphere of the monastic community. This atmosphere is reinforced later via the images of tending cattle, keeping the boats, sticking corn. There is no suggestion of family feuding or violence. The only thing that slightly disturbs this homely atmosphere is Columba’s incidental reading of the Scriptures and “He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me” (5). These theatrical images, mainly created through dialogues, reflect the characters experiences and their relationship to the place where they reside. Bachelard has pointed out that “all really inhabited space bears the

essence of the idea of home" (1999:50). In this sense, the Cell in the play as an inhabited space carries the familiar essence of home. Significantly, by the very end of the play and for the first time, Columba uses the word *home* to refer to Iona and his monastic community. As the spatial arrangements of the cell would suggest, Columba creates in his cell a private world that he hopes to provide him with a retreat, a withdrawal from the world to escape its claims and religiously purifies himself. The Cell that Columba resides, is confining, yet it is also protective. However, withdrawing to his cell, he is gradually but unconsciously uprooting himself from his family and his home.

Indeed, this reliance on a single set is used to frame a spatial dramatic reality. As Lojek has suggested that one result of using single sets is that the audiences in the darkened and defined space of relatively traditional theatres encounter actors in the equally defined space of single sets. While such defined spaces may initially seem restrictive, the use of stage space allows theatre to mimic modernism's shifts of attention from exterior to interior realities. It is here that the limitations of naturalism are transformed into opportunities to combine attention to external realities of home with awareness of personal, interior, psychological realities of belonging or not belonging, feeling at home or feeling at odds with homeland (2013:56). Thus, throughout the play, the idea of home becomes a space of sanctuary and retreat from the problems of domestic life. Taking the motif of sanctuary, I discuss how this play reveals the hollowness of the home and how the narratives within, destabilise nationalist discourses of home, family, and tribes.

### 3.2.3 Home as a post-colonial space

In *The World, the Text and the Critic*, E. Said develops a distinction between the two kinds of bonds that an individual can hold (1983) with place. With reference to the late nineteenth and early twentieth century writing, Said calls filiation the ties that an individual has with places and people that are based on his/her natal culture: that is ties of biology and geography. Irrespective of birth, Affiliations, on the other hand, are defined in terms of one's relation with his/her family or nation through a deliberate and conscious political effort. According to Said, the latter is a self-willed effort to rebuild and reconstitute an identity that is carved out in order to resist all forms of exclusionary politics. The transition, Said argues, is always from filiation to affiliation:

A filial relationship was held together by natural bonds and natural forms of authority-involving obedience, fear, love, respect and instinctual conflict the new affiliative relationship changes these bonds into what seem to be transpersonal forms-such as guild consciousness, consensus, collegiality, professional respect, class and hegemony of a dominant culture. The filiative scheme belongs to the realm of nature and life, whereas affiliations belongs exclusively to culture and society (617-8).

This passage might be read spatially and metaphorically in the sense that it defines the place of what could loosely be called "home" as a filiation within discourses of affiliation that define "ties" in terms of public spaces like nations. In Said's theory, it is important to maintain the distinction between the two levels of affinities; as a result, the more local "tie" is necessarily read as the more personal and private "natural" bond. Yet, if we read this passage from Said's text alongside Doreen Massey's claim that home is a place is "formed out of the particular set of social relations which interact at a particular location" (1992: 12), it is possible that these two important ideas become highly relevant to the discourse of home in *The Enemy Within*. First, both affiliation and filiation are produced, created, recalled and/ or forgotten in every day in contrast to the constraining discourses (like nationalism) which seek to fixate the meaning of 'place' in order to create singular and fixed identities. Second, the spatiality of home in the play is "formed by the juxtaposition and co-presence of the particular sets of social relations, and by the effects which that juxtaposition and co-presence produce" (Massey 1994:169).

In *The Enemy Within*, Friel creates a dramatic space that appropriates the distance between filiation (the imagined space to which Columba is born, i.e. Ireland) and affiliation (the real space in which he resides, Iona). The play suggests that if one is too filiated, the pressure of proximity crushes them, as they become 'mired in attachments' (Heaney, 1984:102). If they free themselves of filiative restrictions, they actively construct new spaces of identities, of possibilities and of belonging. The dramatic situation of the play theatricalises this move from a relationship based on filiation toward one based on affiliation. Arguably, this move indicates a transition from a failed idea of home as an affiliative space to a new kind of compensatory spatial order. Using Said's words: "this order might be anything from a party, an institution, a culture, or a set of beliefs, or even a world vision." The importance of this new order lies in providing the individuals with a new form of relationship, which Said called affiliation and a "new system" (1983, 19).

Initially, this transition is dramatized in terms of subjective and binary geographical dichotomies such as here vs. there, Filiation vs. Affiliation and imaged vs. real. Columba's dilemma arises from the fact that he is forced to choose which Columba he will be: the Irish prince or the Abbot of Iona. Here, exile is personalised as a subjective condition out of which Friel's protagonist derives the terms of his quest for self-realisation in terms of their identification with a home space. The identity formation to which Columba is committed is sharply at odds with his native land which must be surpassed. Columba experiences himself 'geo-pathologically'; when he is where he should be at home, when he is where he supposedly belongs then does he sense himself most deeply out of place. Columba exhibits the same instinctive emotions towards Gaelic Ireland but has an equal devotion to Iona. His is a choice between familial and religious love. To choose either signifies a sort of treachery to either God or tribe but it is a choice which Columba has to make by the end of the play. This is evident in the statements made by Grillaan and Brian in Act One. Brian has arrived from Ireland in order to persuade Columba to return and support his 'kin' in a forthcoming war. Grillaan attempts to stop Columba from returning to "dignify (t)his brawl with a crucifix" (35). The stage direction shows Columba as being "torn between the two" (36):

GRILLAAN: The last tie, Columba. Cut it now. Cut it. Cut it.

BRIAN: They are your people. It is your land.

GRILLAAN: A priest or a politician - which?

BRIAN: They rallied round you at Sligo and at Coleraine. All they ask is your blessing.

GRILLAAN: He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me.

BRIAN: Are they to die in their sins at the hands of their murderers?

GRILLAAN: You are a priest in voluntary exile for God - not a private chaplain to your family.

BRIAN: Son of Fedhlimidh and Eithne.

GRILLAAN: Abbot!  
(37)

It is important here to note that Brian addresses Columba in terms of his filiation, connecting him to his family and his native land while Grillaan addresses him by his present title of 'Abbot' suggesting his new affiliative association. Neither address him as Columba, the man. As Owen suggests in *Translations*, "we name a

thing and bang! It leaps into existence" (*Translations*, 38) and it is evident here that both Brian and Grillaan are attempting to make their constructions of Columba 'leap into existence'(39). However, for Columba the man, home is multi-locational, it is not necessarily to be based on family ties or strong tribal bonds. Thus, he is caught between the homes "there" and "here." On the basis of the idea of multi-locational home, Columba oscillates between the nostalgic desire for home, on the one hand, and the inescapable consciousness of his attachment to his new community, on the other. What emerges from the concept of home in *The Enemy Within* are an important wider issues: how the concept of home is problematized in terms of a spatial tension between a homing desire on the one hand and critiquing discourses of fixed origins on the other; how momentous histories of nation-states are deconstructed through private experiences, memories and narrative strategies. These issues seem to revolve around the characters' engagement with issues of origin and identity.

#### 3.2.4 The Problematic of Home and Identity

*The Enemy Within* exemplifies an enduring conflict in modern drama between a kind of poetry of progress, or of movement, of change and the magnetic power of place. In 'Home: Sweet Home', Linda Ban-Zvi describes such tension between these two powers as an "espoused escape or freedom and a desired return or fixity" (1983:222). Friel's concern in *The Enemy Within*, as he states in the preface, is with 'the private man', not the saint nor the spectacular miracle worker. For this end, Friel chooses to omit certain aspects of Columba's life such as his founding of sixty monastic communities, his miraculous powers of healing and his banishment of the Loch Ness Monster! Instead he concentrates on a man tortured by the geo- dichotomies of filiation and affiliation.

Here, I would contend that it is important to examine some of the historical 'facts' surrounding Columba the legend in order to analyse Friel's depiction of Columba the man in the play. With this in mind I have examined a number of sources in order to produce a reasonably coherent, if not entirely objective (due to the nature of the source material) narrative of the life of St. Columba. It is believed that Columba was born a prince of Clan Conail, a branch of the powerful Northern Ui Neil dynasty, who proclaimed themselves, in their legends and genealogies, high kings of Ireland since pre-Christian times. These proclamations are probably to be in a form of hyperbole on the part of the Ui Neill bards, as there was no official high king of Ireland until centuries later. It is more likely that

Columba was the son of a 'ri coicid' (king of a fifth or province). He was originally named Crimthann, (Fox) and was later given the name Columcille (Dove of the Church) while in monastic service. This name continues to be used in Ireland, particularly in Derry of which he is patron saint. More commonly he is known by the Romanised version 'Columba'. Little is said about his early life other than that he was educated in bardic philosophy and then in the new tradition of Christianity under Bishop Finian of Clonard. Accounts of the reasons for his exile on Iona vary, however certain common factors emerge. The first relates to 'Columcille's Psalter', a manuscript which Columba had allegedly copied and illustrated entirely in the dark with only his 'glowing' left hand to illuminate his efforts. Legend/history has it that he was forced by King Diarmuid to give the copy to Finian. This humiliated the 'warrior monk' to such an extent that when one of his followers was killed on Diarmuid's orders he:

seized his opportunity. God, he claimed, who protected all monks, had to be avenged. Mobilising his powerful kinsmen, he took the field against Diarmuid's forces and beat them decisively. When the clash of battle had subsided, three thousand and one lay dead, only one of them on princely Colmcille's side. The contested Psalter, which needless to say, came to Colmcille among the spoils of victory, was ever after called Catach, or Warrior [...] For a time he was excommunicated and his penance was permanent exile from his beloved Ireland... and in his exile he must save as many souls as perished in the battle he precipitated (Cahill,2004:77).

Thus we are offered a picture of a heroic and mystical man who is both highly scholarly and personally magnetic. Evidently, a leader of men Columba seems more fitted to the pre-Christian hero sagas of Celtic Ireland than to the solitary monasticism of the early Christian church. However, it is Columba's Christianity, which makes him such a potent icon in contemporary nationalist ideology and identity politics. As part of the early monastic system in Ireland, Columba's religion was that of the Catholic (universal) Church of Rome. Obviously, this preceded the Tudor ecclesiastical legislation of 1536 and 1537 which introduced Protestantism to the island. Therefore, not only did he embody the essence of Irishness in his Gaelic heritage, he was also a Catholic (Ibid) the idealised, authentic Irishman of purist, republican ideology.

In *The Enemy Within*, Friel interrogates this notion of a fixed, immutable, historically determined identity. Columba evidently represents a postcolonial identity in process. His original identity as a royal prince and a warrior in Ireland

is at odds with the dramatic situation we find him in and in which he is stuck that is as the Abbot of Iona. Indeed, Columba's present identity is antithetical to his past one in the play. As a result, his sense of self is in a rupture. In the play, Columba's crisis of identity has "schizophrenic elements" that result from his sense of bi-location, that is, to be in Ireland in his mind and yet in Iona in his body. This geo-dichotomy comprises a paradox inherent to Irish culture (see O'Toole and Pine): "the ability to be in two places at one time, to hold two contradictory thoughts in congruence, to achieve bi-location of affection" (Pine, 1999: 105). This double-vision gives rise to two ways of perceiving home as a shelter and as a prison. For if a geo-pathological character cannot move freely, surely their geo-pathology will increase if the place they are in resembles a prison. Some of the issues about the relationship between home as a prison and nation are taken up in the context of *Dancing at Lughnasa*. And vice versa, if a character constructs a shelter in their physical space, in dramatic geo-pathology this same character may have to cope with the threat that intruders pose, struggling against them.

There is no doubt that Friel's Columba has "a fluid identity that doesn't fit comfortably into any single mould". Indeed, this is the cause of much of his anguish as he attempts to annihilate traces of his homeland in order to conform absolutely to his new space of Iona. However, he is unable to do this as the 'warrior prince' of his past will not allow him the humility he requires to do the same as the other monks but no more. Columba, like many of the central characters in Friel's plays, cannot find a suitable form of self-definition, as he has no unified self. His subjectivity has been constituted in both the discourses of heroic Celticism and ascetic. Columba is caught between powerful and opposing discourses. To accept the name 'Abbot' requires a renunciation of his dynastic title and vice versa. Both parties require him to accept a singular and fixed identity which he is unable to do and it is this that causes his existential angst. In many ways his is the dilemma of the post-colonial subject as he is forced to adopt an identity which is predicated on a repudiation of the old. He must, in other words, 'Other' himself and accept a non-filiative identity by denying an inherited and learned notion of his 'Irishness' to which he has an instinctual attachment. Alternatively, he can revert to 'type' by revoking his monastic vows. Each representation of identity is non-negotiable, exclusivist and static. This presents Columba with profound ontological problems as he is irreducible to a fixed sense of self-relating to a singular concept of identity. Thus he is compelled to 'project

some kind of dual personality' described by Nancy Scheper-Hughes as 'characteristic of the Irish psyche' (2009:90).

### 3.2.5 The Problematic of Home and Origin

The question of homeland in *The Enemy Within* is presented as an imagined space that is constantly negotiated and constructed by Columba's memory. Here, the concept of an imaginary homeland is evoked only to underscore its elusiveness. The sociologist, Avtar Brah, defines the idea of "home" from a non-literary point of view stating:

Where is home? On the one hand 'home' is a mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination. In this sense it is a place of no return, even if it is possible to visit the geographical territory that is seen as the place of 'origin'. On the other hand, home is also the lived experience of a locality. Its sounds and smells, its heat and dust, balmy summer evenings, or the excitement of the first snowfall, shivering winter evenings, sombre grey skies in the middle of the day... all this, as mediated by the historically specific everyday of social relations.

(1996, 192)

When analysing *The Enemy within*, it is initially noticed that for Columba, home is not his everyday reality, that of Iona, but another reality, that of the dreams and fantasies of another world. Corbett calls the play a memory play (2002:9). To certain extent, memory is the enemy of the title. Columba is disturbed by memories of his homeland. Earlier in Act one, Columba describes a sort of a homely déjà vu in which in which he imagines himself back to his home place with the monks around him in the field:

Out at the corn there, Cormac was cutting, and I was behind him tying, and the sun was warm on my back, and I was stooped over, so that this bare, black exile was shrunk to a circle around my feet. And I was back in Tirconaill; and Cormac was Eoghan, my brother, humming to himself; and the dog that was barking was Ailbe, our sheep-dog; and there were trees at the bottom of the field as long as I did not look; and the blue sky was quick with larks as long as I did not lift my head; and the white point of Errigal mountain was behind my shoulder as long as long as I kept my eyes on the ground. And when we got to the bottom of the field, Cormac called to me, 'Look what I found! A horseshoe! That's for luck!' But I did not look up because he was still Eoghan, my brother, and the earth was still Gartan earth; and the sound of the sea was the water of Gartan Lough; and any minute Mother would come to the head of the hill and strike the iron triangle to summon us in for food. And when Cormac spoke I did not answer him because I could not leave them, Caoman. As God is above, I could not leave them (9).

This passage is not decorative lyricism or idyllic reminiscences, but it represents the persistent call of home for Columba. So space is used here to contrast, to

oppose the everyday reality, that of his Cell, his Iona which paradoxically has nothing to do with him, to what he really feels as home, which curiously enough are aspects linked to the same phenomena mentioned by Brah: smells, sounds of the sea and the warm sun. The space with which Columba identifies is an imagined space, his imaginary homeland, where he can connect more closely with himself. His inner self is "chained irrevocably to the earth, to the green wooded earth of Ireland" (21). Here, the spatiality of home is verbally produced to visualise Columba's psychic image of "homeland." For Columba, Ireland is a 'felicitous space' (Bachelard 1994: xxxv) that exists only in imagination. As an exile, living on Island, locked himself up in a Cell, he needs to claim that imaginary homeland as the source of his stability, his identity. That imaginary space gives him a feeling of rootedness. This sense of place is his being. The play echoes with the names of his upbringing: Kilmacrenan, Carndonagh, Derry, Ballymagroarty, Coleraine...etc.

However, as the action of the play develops, we find that this Ireland no longer exists (if, indeed it ever did). History has moved on; Ireland is torn with trivial fights; battles are the norm as each act of the play is punctuated by a scene in which Columba is tempted to join a relative's military expedition. This role of a leader of the soldiers does not fit him anymore. As he progresses as a founder of monasteries he feels more attached to his new community on Iona, and the appeal of the imagined spaces loses ground. He has, to adopt a term of Benedict Anderson's, constructed an 'imagined community'. The ramifications of this are profound for Columba who seeks identity in a myth of origins. If Columba's 'imagined Ireland' has changed so vastly in the course of his lifetime, how then can a return to 'the source' ever be possible in the contemporary situation? In this way, Friel differentiates between home as a nationalistic representation, fixed in space and time and home as it is lived and experienced on the everyday level of ordinary people.

The play is built on a series of verbal articulations that visualise Columba's divided soul. These articulations reach its climax at the end of the play when he denies his homeland. Columba articulates the feelings he has towards Ireland and his kinsmen in an apostrophe to Eoghan and Aedh:

Get out of my monastery! Get out of my island! out of my life! Go back to those damned mountains and seductive hills that have robbed me of my Christ! You soaked my sweat! You sucked blood! You stole my manhood, my best years! What more do you demand of me, damned Ireland? My soul? My immortal soul! Damned, damned, damned Ireland!-(His voice breaks) ... (75).

In this articulation, both the rhetoric and imagery evoke the myth of the motherland only to be rejected. Columba's alliterations of 'get out' is intensified by the reference to: 'monastery,' 'island,' and 'life' that symbolise his new spatial system on Iona. Columba sensually personalises the mountains and hills of Ireland as a damned and seductive woman with the power of blood-sucking and robbing him of his manhood. For Columba, Ireland is nothing more than femme fatale whose charms ensnare her lovers, often leading them into non-compromising, dangerous, and deadly situations. Here, Friel de-familiarises the nationalistic image of Ireland as a motherland and as "foundational myths, which would enable the orphaned child to return to the security of its maternal origins (Kearney, 1985:74). This image of Ireland as a mother who devours her children had already occurred in Joyce who referred to Ireland as "an old sow who eats her farrow" (1992:157). By refusing the temptation of home, Columba removes himself from a fixed place of home to open up new patterns of understanding and experiences. Thus, the end of the play is a beginning. Columba is one of those whose path is a beginning, as Grillaan had told him "The will and determination to begin, and then to begin again, and then to begin again, so that their whole world is a series of beginnings" (56). A fusion of real and imagined is utilised to rewrite home space, to re-privilege its role as a positive multiplicity that valorises the postcolonial experience of home.

### **3.3 The Loves of Cass McGuire: Returning home: Gender, Domestic space**

#### **3.3.1 The Context of the play**

*The Loves of Cass McGuire* (Henceforth *The Loves*) is Friel's fifth play, and the first to present an eponymous central female character. The play premiered on Broadway in 1966, with the American actress Ruth Gordon in Cass role, but closed after twenty performances. It achieved a much warmer critical reception when it was presented on the Abbey stage of the National Theatre in Dublin in 1967, directed by Tomás MacAnna, with Siobhán McKenna in the title role. Since then, the role has been interpreted by some of Ireland's leading actresses: Marie Keane (Ulster Theatre Company, Belfast 1968), Maureen Toal (Abbey, Dublin 1978), and Marie Mullen (Druid Theatre Company, Galway, 1975 and 1996).

The play is conceived as a counterpoint to *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* featuring Gar O'Donnell's return to Ireland from America after twenty years (see Murray 2014 and Roche 2011). But Friel's play evolved into the story of Cass, who has been working as a waitress among the roughest inhabitants of New York's Lower East Side for fifty-two years, and now returns to her family to find that they are in much more comfortable circumstances than she ever imagined. Cass's story questions both the myths of traditional Irish identity and the myth of the American dream. After fifty years in the United States, her social and economic status is lower than that of her family, who stayed in Ireland and profited from the economic boom of the 1960s.

Since, the spatial is, according to Massey (2004:13), in its material sense like that of the house, is socially constructed, an understanding of the spatial requires an analysis of the social relations as presented in the play. The time and place of *The Loves*, "The present in Ireland" (8), is not neutral. It is historically meaningful. *The Loves* is set in the 1960s which marks a moment of transition in Ireland. The country is intensely transformed from the economic deprivation of the 1950s through the Celtic tiger of the 1990s (economic boom). This transformation leads to the emergence of the value systems which according to Terence Brown "[were] prepared to abandon much of its past in the interest of swift growth in the context the modern British and European economies" (2004:244). The Friel Papers in the National library of Ireland include notes that Friel took while preparing *CM* in which he observes that the "new Irish" are concerned primarily with the "pursuit of material things and the treadmill of the Social Ladder" (Friel Manuscript No.345).

Thus, while Friel sets his play in Ireland's economic boom which comes through in the affluence of Harry McGuire's home, he examines the continuing impact of the conservative social and religious forces on the characters who are confined in a domestic space. These forces of control included the religious hierarchy and clergy, who had had a strong influence in De Valera's Constitution of 1937, in the economic policies of the new State, and in family and educational structures, including the definition and supervision of gender roles in accordance with Catholic and nationalist ideologies. Women were categorized as either domestic, maternal guardians of the nation's morals and traditions or as figures of sexual temptation and betrayal. To register this, the production of the spatial situation of *The Loves* is located in a 'closed community' in a post-independence Ireland. Two sets of characters are observed in the play conformist and non-

conformists. The conformists are represented by Cass's brother, Harry McGuire, a successful and traditional Catholic man, his wife Alice and their well-to-do, upper-middle-class family. All of their children have entered the professions: one son is an artist, another a priest, the daughter a doctor and the youngest, Dom; non-conformist character is represented by Cass, a returnee. Cass presents the difficulties for her family which are exacerbated by her gender. Her behaviour and her language transform her into a sociocultural misfit. In the stage direction of the play, she is described as "[u]gly is too strong a word to describe her, and plain is not nearly strong enough [...] her spirit is strong and resilient" (14). Furthermore, Cass spent over fifty-two years in America, working as a waitress in what she described as 'this joint,' a cheap sleazy dinner one block away from Skid Row, in New York's Lower East Side. Her career of 'washing, scrubbing and fixing sandwiches' for 'deadbeats, drags [and] washouts' has made her an alcoholic, and given her an repertoire of rude jokes, obscene comments. As Friel explains: "a life of hard physical work has ravished her" (ibid.) This statement is made visible not only in her language or her bold defiance, but also in her abusive relationships and her dreary job. In effect, she shocks her brother's bourgeois notions. Harry gradually begins to see her as a stranger or a foreigner who comes from the outside, threatening the respectability and the security of his middle-class family. Indeed, Cass's drama might be perceived as "the drama of the stranger" 'who come[s] from elsewhere, from "there" and not "here," and hence to be simultaneously "inside" and "outside" the situation' (Chamber, 1995:6). In her strangeness, Cass represents the uncanny other, the "unheimlich" which contrasts with the home entered.

### 3.3.2 The Staging the Spatiality of Home

The dramatic space of *The Loves* is fluid, constructed on constant spatial movements between various time frames and the two main locales of Harry McGuire's house and Eden House. The action of the play is divided between these two locations, depicting the main character's exclusion from the family home that denies her; in fact, most of the action transpires in Eden House, the Spartan retirement home where unwanted relatives are cast off from their families. The Director Hilton Edwards was concerned that the audience would know precisely where and when each scene was set. He uses his skills to address this issue through an economical use of props. In place of a complete set change, which might affect the necessary fluidity of the play, On-stage spaces are identified either by objects on the wall such as a fireplace in Harry's house is replaced by a

list of rules and regulations in Eden House or by a change of light fittings such as a crystal chandelier for Harry and a common light pendant for Eden House.

Thematically, this spatial fluidity is highly important in showing two important functions in spatializing home. Firstly, by focusing on the physical space of the house, Friel dramatizes the concept of the enclosure and how this demonstrates colonizers' views of space. Bill Ashcroft has suggested that the physical space of the home is central to the colonial settlement, and to the subsequent political control (2009:90). Following from this awareness, I connect the spatiality of home to political struggle; for Hooks the domestic space is 'a site of resistance' with 'a political dimension' (2009: 41-2). Here, I am suggesting that Friel politicises home as a force of colonisation. For this end, he manipulates the stage to visualise the concept of unhomely home. This theatrical image demonstrates the repressive and damaging domestic experience that explodes in 'uncanny' events both alienating and disturbing. Secondly, the fluidity of space allows Friel to demonstrate 'life's intimate spatiality'. Throughout *The Loves*, Friel creatively and consistently grounds this play in a location where his main character, Cass gives her voice, struggles over making sense of the new Ireland to which she returns. The following two sections explain these two functions respectively.

### 3.3.3 The Domestic Space of Home

The play opens with a "spacious, high-ceilinged room" (9), a mimetic representation of a middle-class family space, which we subsequently learn is Harry McGuire's house. The luxuries on display in Harry's house, for example, the "Indian rug" and comfortable furniture (71) suggest his financial status. Harry idealises his house by keeping it orderly and well-kept. In his appearance, occupation and manners, Harry represents a patriarchal authority: he enters, wearing a "[g]ood black coat, soft hat, carrying a paper" (13) with his "good black coat [and] soft hat" (72). He performs with his wife the conventional gender roles of the time for a middle-class professional couple. This apparent "reality" of this domestic space serves to maintain the colony's order on the scale of the individual family. Thus, Harry's house is a gendered space as it is mapped by "a hierarchy of specialized and distinct boundaries" (McClintock, 1996: 168). His house in this sense is produced by the interplay of the social norm and patriarchal regime and their impact on the residents of the house of either to be disciplined or docile bodies or to be marginalised if not conform.

As a male, Harry is responsible for maintaining political and public order and expects that women will confirm to patriarchal ideals and norms of femininity in the house. However, Cass shatters the norms of this affluent and respectable world. She is introduced before she enters the stage, through descriptions by the rest of her family: “singing at the top of her voice half the night” (12) or creating mayhem in Sweeney’s pub, where Harry had to pay for her breakages. She is specifically presented as ‘breaking in,’ as her entrance performs a rupture of the world that has been presented: “The subdued domestic atmosphere is suddenly and violently shattered by CASS’s shouts. She charges on stage (either from the wings or from the auditorium) shouting in her raucous Irish-American voice” (14). The stage directions pay particular attention to her corporal appearance and behaviour:

CASS is a tall, bulky woman of seventy. She wears a gaudy jacket (because of the cold weather) over gaudy clothes; rings; earrings; two voluminous handbags which never leave her. She smokes incessantly and talks loudly and coarsely (deliberately at times). (14)

Cass’s entrance is spatially and theatrically important. She expresses her refusal to the disciplining force of her world initially, through her excessive corporal performance, and then in her attempt to take control of her own drama and its staging. The emphasis on this particular aspect of unruly corporality entails a resistance to patriarchal objectification and definition of a woman. *In Politics of the body*, Ketu H. Katrak explains the concept of the internal exile of the female body from patriarchy in postcolonial literature. She suggests that women are exiled from their bodies. They are looking for a space to ‘re-belong’ to their bodies since the communities in which they are placed, or to which they relocate provide ‘un-nurturing’ environments for the bodies to inhabit (2006). Cass is urged by this desire to find a space that she might call home. Home, explains Richard Pine, is a destination to be pursued but is never fully reached. For Cass, coming home is a moment of crisis, which does not bridge the gap between what she is and what she was, but magnifies the unhomely. What is unfamiliar, unpleasant sinister-in its original sense far from Heim, the home. She is a stranger at home. Her desire for belonging to a family is denied. Thus, she is displaced in her own home (Corbett, 2008, 2). No home welcomes her. In this sense, the play unsettles the normative patriarchal ideas of home as a space of family, stability, security and owned dwellings, and presents it as site of dispute that is governed by what Massey calls “the power geometry of lived and imagined home spaces” that renders Cass’s experience of home unhomely and alienating.

Cass's entrance disturbs the parameters of dramatic illusion, and the narrative coherence of the play. In *Cass*, Friel was "praying to Pirandello" and his juxtaposition of different dramatic codes is integral to the play's performance of social and theatrical authority. Both Cass and Harry use the stage space in a self-conscious way. Both are attempting to assert their theatrical presence on each other. This is best clarified by the role conflict of Cass and Harry over the narration of the play. Recognising the significance of how the story to be enacted, Cass and Harry attempt to be a performer and a playwright for the play that they are trying to present. Based on his patriarchal authority, Harry believes that he could tame Cass until she becomes compliant and obedient. To do this, he insists on imposing his authority on the text of the play by presenting it in a realistic and conventional way. In this, he attempts to persuade the audience on the stage (his family) that he is the only one who has the right to tell Cass's story: ' [t]he story has begun, Cass[...] It must be shown slowly and in sequence why you went to Eden House' ( *CM* 15). Refusing to submit to his social and gender conditioning world of gentility, Cass defies her brother's authority. Upon her entrance, she insists that the story has not already begun. Cass resists by changing the direction of the narration and the chronological sequence of the events by replying:

The story begins where I say it begins, and I say it begins. With me stuck in the gawddam work house. What's this goddam play called? The Loves of Cass McGuire. Who's Who's Cass McGuire? Me! Me! And they'll see what happens in the order I want them to see it! (15-16).

With this declaration, the lights come up on Cass's bed in Eden house. Friel has situated Cass and her vision of her story in "a tightly contained in a quarantined area" of Eden House (Deane, 1985: 166) to which she has already been cast, thereby obviously transforming the first scene in Harry's home into a memory. Through the fluidity of the stage, Friel blurs the spatial boundaries between Harry's home to which Cass actually returns and the Eden house, the home of the elderly, to which she is exiled. Cass recognises her exclusion to the old people's home as a betrayal, negating Harry's declaration that she went to Eden House: "I did not go, Harry boy, I was stuck in" (15). What terrifies Cass is that Eden house is built on the site of a workhouse. In Cass's childhood memories, the place evokes all unhomely experiences of famine, mass migration and poverty. Significantly, positioning Cass in a place like this with all its connotations of suffering and weakness denotes that she returns to a geographical home in Ireland only to find herself displaced in her own home. Bhabha writes: "to be unhomed is not to be homeless nor can unhomely be easily accommodated in the

familiar division be easily accommodated in that familiar division of social life into private and public spheres" (1994:9). This division between private and public spheres is especially true when considering the relation between women and the home. For N. Edwards and C. Hogarth "[w]omen have long been associated with the "home" and hearth while men have been assigned space, place and authority beyond it" (Edwards & Hogarth 2008: 7). This association of woman/home and man/public space was considered as being a key to happiness and social equilibrium. They also declare home "[· · ·] was once the place that best represented calm and security from a potentially hostile outside world" (ibid 2). However, in *The Loves*, this notion of security within the home is absent as it is shown in the lack of boundaries in the spaces of home/rest home.

This lack of boundaries is thematically pertinent. It shows how the experience of home is transformed from homely to unhomely. Cass comes home with great expectations of being welcomed or at least tolerated. Conversely, she returns home to find herself exiled there, once again. Here, unhomeliness becomes apparent. Emotional denial and psychological and verbal abuse feature her experience at home. As she says to Dom: "The less you see of your auntie Cass the better, because she ain't got no money, and we suspect she does n't go to the church, and we're not too sure if she's a maiden aunt at all" (16). Here, she identifies the mechanisms of the middle-class Ireland of the 1960s as money, religion and the surveillance of sexuality, particularly female sexuality. Cass's relationships do not conform to the middle-class norm of marriage and the economic order it represents.

For Cass, home becomes neither a physical space nor a verbal space. She is not at home as she faces the difficulty of communicating with the people with whom she shares life. As Morley remarks: "[T]he sign of being at home is the ability to make oneself understood without too much difficulty, and to follow the reasoning of others, without any need for long explanations" (2008:90). This "rhetorical country" of Cass ends when her interlocutors no longer understand the reasons she gives for her actions, the criticisms she makes, or the enthusiasms she displays. Thus, for Cass, there are many times for her when the only "real" relation is between her as narrator and the theatre audience, whom she peers at and directly addresses. Like Pirandello's characters, Cass also breaks the 'fourth wall' in order to address the audience directly. According to the stage direction, she regards the audience as 'her friends, her intimates' whereas other characters are explicitly 'interlopers' (15). This figures her awareness of her status as an

unruly body as an antithesis to the contemporary respectable world of her brother. It also functions as “a barometer of Cass’s connection with the world she desperately [tries] to hang on to” (McGrath, 1999:87). Since she has no power to change her reality, she resorts to the audience to establish an intimate relationship. This theatrical interaction with the audience represents the only contact with reality she can find. Through this intimacy with the audience, Cass attempts to make meaning of the harsh circumstances of her life. Here, Cass is a self-conscious performer, fully aware of her theatrical reality. It is worth noting that this technique is strongly present in Act One and Two, but as the play progresses, it completely disappears. Tellingly, this denotes that Cass’s contact with reality gradually disintegrates.

#### 3.3.4 The Staging of Imagined space of Home

Based on Soja’s notion of space, I suggest that the representation of home in *The Loves* is obviously a third space, accompanied by fluid dramatic forms of rhapsodies. I propose that Cass organizes different times, spaces and locations that are incompatible with each other in a single real space such as Eden House. As an enacted utopia, Eden House might be conceived as an alternative space that is different from the actual worlds of America and Ireland, but that resonates with them.

The play dramatizes an impasse between the past and the present which leads to a disjunction between here and there, and between what home is and what it is imagined to be. As a result, the idea of home as a physical and fixed place to return to is negated. Being far-removed in time and space, home is available for return only through an act of imagination (McLeod, 2010:211). In this formulation, home mainly becomes ‘a mental construct’ fabricated from the incomplete memories that survive from the past. Taking these ideas into account, Eden House might be understood as a ‘home-alternative’ space as it re-engages with what has been lost. If home itself is inaccessible and lost, then its mimetic production on stage through Cass’s illusions stands for a compensation of home.

The theatricality of the play has an important role and it is dramatically highlighted in the rest home ironically called Eden House. The house is presented as a forlorn place where Cupid’s statue is “frozen in an absurd and impossible contortion” into the garden of Eden house, symbolising the absurdity and impossibility of love. Friel creates an alternative stage within stage by using rhapsodies as a thematic technique that requires both a rhapsodist and audiences

on the stage. In each act one resident of Eden House (Tribble in act 1, Ingram in act 2 and Cass in act 3) sits in a special winged chair 'downstage right, conspicuous in its isolation'(8) to give fictional accounts of their pasts. Using musical terms, Friel refers to the three characters' narrations as "hymns" and "rhapsodies." Generally, a rhapsody might be defined as a musical composition of irregular form which are having an "improvisatory character". This definition exactly sums up the structure of all the three recitations in the play. In this light, "Rhapsody" is particularly an effective non-realistic device to translate the characters' crisis of reality into words. As D.E.S. Maxwell explains that the dramatic effect of the rhapsody is to portray 'dramatic allegories of a psychological state that compensates for painful fact in the refuge of a private world (1973:76)'. The characters are emotionally thwarted. Their failure is "one of feeling and, proceeding from that, a failure of self-realization and deriving from that, the seeking of a refuge in words or work, silence or idiocy, in exile" (Deane,1985;166). Accordingly, every rhapsodist has his/her private fiction which is prompted from the fear of facing the truth of rejection and emotional sterility. In retrospect, it seems obvious that these rhapsodies make Eden House "a kind of theatre, a place where roles are played out" (Kilroy, 2006: 13). Each "rhapsodist" enacts an alternative world. To do so, they reject the reality that has rejected and marginalised them and then they re-create for themselves tolerable fictions. They do so with the help of the winged chair which is symbolically manipulated in the rhapsodies as a means of transforming the agonized occurrences of their histories into novel and imaginative realities. So Tribble, Ingram and Cass in turn are playwrights and actors. Stylistically, the three rhapsodies are concluded with W.B. Yeats's poem 'The Cloths of Heaven':

Ingram: But I, being poor, have only my dreams;  
 Tribble: I have spread my dreams under your feet;  
 Ingram: Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.  
 Tribble: Our Truth (98).

These lines are thematically linked with the notion of love in the play. For the rhapsodists, dreams are their only truth. They are their own only valuable things to be given to the loved ones. At the same time, love makes them so vulnerable because the person they love could hurt them by treading harshly on their dreams. So they ask each other to pass lightly on each other's dreams. According to the Author's note, each character "takes the shabby and unpromising threads of his or her past life and weaves it [sic] into a hymn of joy, a gay and rapturous

and exaggerated celebration of a beauty that might have been" (7). The music of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* accompanies such dreams, providing a 'potent crutch' to help the actors achieve 'grace and dignity' and invest their soliloquies with 'cantabile magic'.

Tribble converts a dull, poor, spinster life as an unqualified migrant elocution teacher into high romance, worthy of her fictional namesake, where she marries a wealthy prince from Edinburgh. She lives in chateau on the Loire in France, and becomes a world traveller. While Mr. Ingram transfigures the reality of betrayal and abandonment into the romance of love. In his fantasy, Mr. Ingram marries eighteen- year- old Stella, a ballet dancer who was drowned tragically on their rapturous honeymoon in the south of England. With the help of a German prince and his yacht they searched for her body for nine days but never found her. According to Pat Quinn, the resident cynic of Eden House who called Trilbe a 'tramp with notions' (22). What actually happened was that Ingram, an organist in an English cathedral, fell in love with a music-hall dancer, followed her to England, married her to the dismay of his family, and two days after wedding his new bride elope with a German prince on his yacht, never to be seen again. In this way, each character at Eden House transforms stories of disappointment and thwarted love into a sort of private opera (White, 1999: 11).

As far as Cass's state is concerned, the desire to find "home" remains strong in Cass. As already shown, she is caught constantly between oppositions—past and present, belonging and non-belonging, here and there, inside and outside. This forces her to choose from either side or to mentally 'recreate' a space of combining elements. Borrowing Easthope's words, Cass comprehends that "[w]hile homes may be located, it is not the location that is "home". Home is the fusion of a feeling "at home", sense of comfort, belonging, with a particular place" (2004:136). As a painful paradox of Cass's homing coming, she finds in Eden House the home she has come back to. Recognising that home does not simply exist, but is made and lived, Cass symbolically begins to (re)constitute an imaginary space in her rhapsody. Such an imaginary space gives her some kind of ontological security in the location of her residence in Eden House rather than in the location of her origin. This comes as a result of following the example of Trilbe in Act One and Ingram in Act Two. Cass is seduced into the world of dream which is in its fiction "just as real" (60). To do so, she maintains a persona and an illusion that enable her to mask her sense of homelessness. Further, she gradually gives up her attempts to make meaning of the harsh circumstances of

her life and weaves her own private truth instead, a beautiful truth in which love and belonging sustains her existence.

If Eden house provides Cass with an imagined space where she can construct a narrative of herself, this narrative is also mediated through the form of rhapsody. Since she is incapable of reclaiming precisely the thing that is called home, she creates an "imaginary homeland," i.e. an Ireland of the mind. She begins her rhapsody or her 'concerto in which [she] is the soloist' (7) with the "Liebestod" music from Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde*. Wagner's music begins appropriately which parallels the agitation of Cass who, after some moments into the rhapsody, realizes that she is inventing and distorting the facts of her past. Moments later, as the "Liebestod" music grows into an assured, vibrant tone, so do Cass's confidence and creative powers emerge. She imagines a sea voyage with manly Mr. Olsen, her husband with the golden hair, her life in their ten-room apartment on New York's west side, her travels to the Bahamas and South America, and, most especially, her return to Ireland where she is warmly welcomed by Harry, Alice, their children, and others who fill the cars in magnificent homecoming parade. She goes out walking with her old lover Connie. In her revised life Cass is the one who insists that she move out of Harry house, but instead of Edan House she moves to a seaside cottage where she entertains the family frequently. In her rhapsody, she is happy, secure and at home. Ironically, as a mental picture, she really re-discovers the home she has dreamt of all her life in her rhapsody.

Most critics of *The Loves* have conceived the role of illusion in the play in rather conventional terms as an escape from or compensation for a painful reality or like neurotic or psychological symptoms (see E. Andrews, 1995: 99-105; Danton's, 1988, 104; O'Brien, 1989, 57; McGrath, 1999:89-90). However, these rhapsodies may signify symbolic representations of intense longing to belong and a desire for love. Cass is spatially dislocated; similarly, she is caught in the machinations of a drama which has no linear, logical progression. The only solution she is having is to translate her inner emotional turmoil into voiced dreams. Her inner voice is used here as an implicit critique of patriarchal authority that attempts to repress her domestic and romantic desires. Her closing lines form the play's climatic, resonating irony: "Home at last, Gee, but it's a good thing to be at home" (69). The tragedy of Cass lies in her discovery that her homecoming is failed. Her family home is really fragmented, no longer able to sustain images of love and belonging. As a site of crisis, disruption and material competition, home as a physical space in *The Loves* does not provide spiritual

security or 'the pre-lapsarian bliss promised by Eden house'(Andrews,1995:104). Since the home is subject to change and since homecoming is impossible, Cass keeps her psychic needs to feel at home by constructing a purely mental image of home in her heterotopic space at Eden House, sealed from the external world.

### 3.4 Molly Sweeney: Staging Body and Home

#### 3.4.1 Home and Body

The conflation of home and self/body is a significant thread that runs through the representation of the home in *Molly Sweeney* (1974). Following Sarah Upstone, I consider the body as a form that encapsulates a spatial experience. Such a concept may be traced back to phenomenology, captured in Maurice Merleau-Ponty's view that "we are conscious of the world through our bodies, and where particular attention must be paid to 'spatiality'" (2000: 98). In this light, spatial scales, such as home or nation, might be approached through their impact upon the body or, conversely, on the body's role in their production. Taking these ideas as a starting point, I consider how the experience of home space (public and private) in *Molly Sweeney*, thematically and structurally, is transferred to an intimate and personal space: that of the female body.

Some scholars from different fields tend to feminise home. Porteous asserts that home provides the "essential territorial satisfactions" of nurture—"identity, security and stimulation" (1976: 383). Similarly, Tuan sees it as a place of intimacy and well-being (1977:147). These views are further feminized through the work of Jungians such as Gaston Bachelard (1969) and Clare Cooper (1974), who equate the self with the home and thus give it a specific personality. However, *Molly Sweeney* does not reiterate these universalisations and idealizations of the gendered "home space." The play is structured in a way that resonates with Gillian Rose's concept of the "feminization of place" (1993:56). Here, in the production of home, masculinity is an implicit norm, place is understood as a woman space hence the geographical knowledge is constructed on a foundation by the relationship of this masculine subject with the woman which is predicated on the exclusion of woman from the geographical (ibid: 62).

Dan Sullivan notes that *Molly Sweeney* is Friel's "least political play" (P-8). This suggests that the play signifies a new direction for Friel in departing from his thematic concerns that have steadily marked work since the 1970s and the resurgence of conflict in Northern Ireland in plays like *The Freedom of the City*.

Such a suggestion, however, overlooks the allegorical undertones of Molly's story. Overtly, the play does not present "an open political conflict between Ireland and England" (Dantanus: 199), but it does conflate Molly's personal history with that of Ireland. If for that reason alone, in a country where the image of Woman-as-Ireland has long been tied to political discourse, Molly Sweeney continues Friel's tradition of political theatre. But even more to the point, *Molly Sweeney*, like Friel's *Translations*, is also a play about colonization and its consequences. While *Translations* focuses on the effects of colonization on an entire culture, *Molly Sweeney* narrows its emphasis on the colonizer's impact on the personal life of an individual Irish woman. This impact is usefully examined in light of Upstone's assertion that colonisation represents a project that is centred upon the manipulation and appropriation of bodies as both a territory and as a significant way to preserve effective control of land. Here power relations are invested in the body. As Foucault explains: "it is always the body that is at issue – the body and its forces, their utility and their docility, their distribution and their submission" (Foucault: 1977, 25). This is particularly relevant to Molly Sweeney. The play is built on this image of how to control a female body by means of regulation rather than violence. This reflects a colonial discourse of the body which is not simply a story of beatings, rape and slavery. Thus the play can be taken as a political allegory. I attempt to link the character Molly to a symbolic figure of Ireland.

### 3.4.2 Staging the Spatiality of Home

In *Molly Sweeney*, Friel minimises the dramatic space into its basic elements: characters and language. The play totally relies on words with no decoration, no music, no dance, no gesture and no set. This reliance shows Friel's intention to create spatial images and connections with words. Through such staging, Friel allows the spectators to enter the psychic spaces of the characters. The structure of the play consists of thirty five monologues that reveal a series of states of consciousness or situations which become intensified, grow more and more dense, then get entangled only to become disentangled at the end of the play.

Since the time of its publication and première at The Gate Theatre in Dublin, in August 1994, and its subsequent production at the Almeida Theatre in London, in November 1994, *Molly Sweeney* has enjoyed significantly stage success in the USA and the UK. In general, the production history of *Molly Sweeney* largely accords with Friel's stage directions for a relatively static set:

When the lights go up, we discover the three characters - MOLLY SWEENEY, MR RICE, FRANK SWEENEY - on stage. All three stay on stage for the entire play. I suggest that each character inhabits his/her own special acting area - MR RICE stage left, MOLLY SWEENEY centre stage, FRANK SWEENEY stage right (left and right from the point of view of the audience) (13)

This reliance on a static set in which each character inhabits their designated acting area foreshadows the way in which home is registered verbally through actors' monologues. Here, the theatricality of the dramatic space is created through the shifting rehearsals of overlapping and sometimes competing versions of Molly's journey from imagined to real and finally to real-and-imagined spatiality. Thus, the stage space here is a floating one. This theatricality, however, has rarely been observed by theatre reviewers, who have focused mainly on the way in which Friel's monologues and dramatic techniques show the characters' isolation from each other and presumed general stasis. For instance, Karen DeVinney observed how, in the premiere production at the Gate Theatre in Dublin in 1994, directed by Friel himself, "when each actor spoke, he or she stood while the others sat on their plain, straight-backed chairs. Each character occupied a personal space of memory that did not overlap with the others" (112). She argued that such staging supports the Frielian monologue's insistence on isolation by "making physical for the audience their emotional and, indeed, experiential isolation from each other" (112). Similarly, when the production transferred to London's Almeida Theatre later that year (in November), other reviewers showed how its staging spatially isolated each of the three characters. For instance, Marvin Carlson pointed out how "each had his/her own spotlighted chair against a coloured cyclorama with a single suspended window and a small fallen column for scenic background. Molly rarely moved from her chair" (424). The characters have been read as symptomatic of Molly's retreat into an inertia, when instead she gains a rich, dynamic mental community in the play's conclusion through her newly reclaimed space. Her new power is recognised by Christopher Murray when he observes that "Though about to die Molly is mistress of her own world and can admit and exclude those she will" (2000: xxii).

Out of all the productions of the play, the staging of the 2011 revival of *Molly Sweeney* at the Gate Theatre has most stressed consolation and hope for both audience and Molly. This is staged through the scenic changes of the lightening. The stark white stage, variously suggestive of Mr. Rice's clinical operating room and the later mental institution where Molly lives, was decorated only with six to eight chairs scattered around. For each monologue, the speaking actor would

occupy a chair, while the other two actors would stand up with their backs to the audience. In her review of this production, Sara Keating argued that "Director Patrick Mason attempts to bring movement to the play by having the characters walk slowly between the angled chairs of Paul Keogan's clinical waiting-room setting, but the characters seem limited rather than liberated by the deliberate choreography." Still Keating does not understand that the world-view of each of the three characters (save Molly's, in the play's conclusion) is meant to be limited in certain ways. Such staging visually shows two different interlocutory interactions: the first, more intimate one of seated, speaking actor and two standing, listening actors; and the second, wider one of speaking actor and listening audience. Mr. Rice and Frank both invite for our attention, the former through his medical operation on Molly, the latter through his showy verbal performance (Russell, 2013: 35). Mr. Rice self-consciously sees himself as an artist, when he adopts his surgeon friend Bloomstein's insistence that "[w]e're not mechanics. We're artists. We perform" (488). And when he recalls the seventy-five minute operation he performed on Molly, he speaks of it awfully: "[T]he darkness miraculously lifted, and I performed – I watched myself do it – I performed so assuredly and with skill, so elegantly, so efficiently, so economically" (489). Given this production's emphasis on contrasts of white and dark throughout, the words of Friel largely serve to generate the lived, dynamic space of Molly's mind and her transition from homely to unhomely. Keating observes that "[w]hen Molly is not delivering her lines, she stands for the most part upstage, hand against the wall in a bluish half-light". This is a stimulating image, showing how Molly is aware of the limitations of her space. Keating concludes that "by the end of the play she has no interest in pushing the real boundaries of her disability anymore, and has retreated entirely into a fantasy world instead; as if to reflect this, she sits unmoving centre-stage in the final scene" (2004:23). Here, I disagree with Keating as she fails to realize, that in the end, Molly does not see her lack of vision as a "disability" anymore but it helps her create the new fantasy world she happily occupies and imbues with movement through her mind. Consonant with Soja's approach to spatiality, the stage space here is manipulated to reflect a vision of space as simultaneously "real-and-imagined," always at once constituted both by "the concrete materiality of spatial forms" and by "thoughtful re-presentations of human spatiality in mental or cognitive forms" ( Soja, 2006:10-11).

Unlike the Almeida production that included a spotlight on each character's chair, which could suggest an equality among the perspectives expressed by each, the 2011 Gate production used a single, dangling light bulb above each

character's head that only came on when Molly spoke. Thus Molly's narration was more privileged over the stories told by Mr. Rice and Frank. And this unique lighting stressed Molly's becoming the real performer in the final scene through creating verbal space that she weaves in her last description about dwelling in the "border- line country" where she is "at ease" (509). In this speech, she ignores the symbolic fourth wall of theatre and leads the audience unswervingly into the play to experience both her fears and delight. As Anthony Roche puts it, the spare stage set of the play baffles the audience and enables Molly's agency. By removing traditional visual properties from the setting, Friel keeps the audience in the darkness and hence in the same position as Molly Sweeney. Ironically, she is no longer the most disabled but the most enabled of the three characters, positioned to relate directly to the audience and bring them to participate in the world she inhabits (194). Thus, her condition at the end of this might suggest the truth of William James's claim that "[t]he mind is at every stage a theatre of simultaneous possibilities" (1998: 231). In *Molly Sweeney*, Friel affirms that the place where his protagonist is not at ease in the theatre of the mind, a space that the condition of exile can productively create and fill with its own imagined characters. As New York Times theatre critic David Richards observed in his review of the original 1994 Gate Theater production:

"[I]sn't this borderline world also that of the poet, the artist, the playwright? If Molly Sweeney is Mr. Friel's most vivid heroine to date, it is, I suspect, because in describing her special vision, he is also delineating his own" (36).

### 3.4.3 Staging Body as a Contested Space

In the play, Molly is a colonised body who represents a contested space. Her world is colonised by the two men who come to represent different aspects of father and therefore home. The play's plot unfolds through alternating monologues rendered from the points of view of three different characters: Molly Sweeney, her husband Frank, and her surgeon Mr. Rice. Each of these perspectives is vital to filling out the story of a blind woman from the village of Ballybeg in County Donegal to whom partial sight is surgically restored.

In her opening speech, we are told of teaching methods used by her father. In the course of this speech, two things become apparent: her mother is mentally disturbed and her father drinks a lot. It is this the smell of whisky that makes Molly trust Mr Rice as a father figure. It is also apparent that her parents argue a lot: she mentions listening to them: "fighting their weary war downstairs" (15). As

the play progresses, it emerges in her various memories that she is the cause of the conflict between her parents. In Act two, she remembers one of the few visits she paid to her mother in hospital. She is confined outside the screen, while her father argues inside. Her mother is screaming at the father:

She should be at a blind school! You know she should! But you know the real reason you won't send her? Not because you have not the money. Because you want to punish me (58).

Here, the conflict between her parents is a territorial one, with Molly as the contested territory. This theme is confirmed by its reiteration in the contesting claims of Frank and Rice. Both come to disrupt with their intention of restoring Molly's sight- a condition she has never known and does not wish to enjoy in order to restore themselves.

Friel constructs Frank as a character full of enthusiasm. He has worked for charity in Nigeria, he has kept goats with the notion of making cheese, and he has, at one stage, bought beehives with a friend, toyed with the idea of introducing blueback salmon to Irish farms, and, at the very end of the play, develops an enthusiasm for African bees, which he is sure would thrive in County Leitrim. The point of these enthusiasms is that none of them has amounted to anything; and most have ended either in failure, or in their replacement by the next enthusiasm. Molly's friend, Rita, makes plain: "All part of the same pattern sweetie: bees-whales-Iranian goats Molly Sweeney" (38). Rice, on the other hand, is a man whose enthusiasms have been burned out. His wife has left him for a colleague, taking their two daughters, who now live in Geneva with their grandparents. It was this incident that precipitated the breakdown and the drinking. He immediately perceives Molly as: "the chance of a lifetime, the one - in-thousand opportunity that can rescue a career-on, no, transform a career-dare I say it, restore a reputation?(18). Both men make an emotional investment in Molly's operation, and, she finds herself in the position of undergoing life-alternating surgery for their reasons:

And then with sudden anger I thought; Why am I going for this operation! None of this is my choosing them, why is this happening to? I am being used (31).

Here, Molly's body functions as a space of attraction and abjection that is "always simultaneously inscribed in both the economy of pleasure and desire and the economy of discourse, domination and power" (Bhabha, 1985: 150) desired and yet feared as racially hybrid bodies were associated with "threatening forms of

perversion and degeneration” (Young, 1995: 5). In this way, Friel’s treatment of the body can be seen to echo the treatment of the spatiality of home in the play.

In this play, home is not a given space that is already marked by symbolic and material dimensions for the characters. It is a feminised space which is basically uncanny. In *Molly Sweeney*, the uncanniness is produced through “the perpetual exchange between the homely and unhomely, the imperceptible sliding of cosiness into dread” (Vilder: 55).

We meet the central character of the eponymously named play in Act One as she delivers a nostalgic monologue about her home and village. She is so attached to these images that she could negotiate them by sight – so much so that her “home place” was her only comfort zone. Molly resides in what Soja would call an ‘imagined space’, in which her needs are met by her father, and in which she makes no clear distinction between what is her imagined and what is real. Molly’s home is an inner space because it cannot be seen or even known by the sighted people and it is known to her. Her father teaches her to identify flowers by touch and smell as opposed to linguistic classifications: “And he would bend over, holding me almost upside down, and I would have to count them and smell them and feel their velvet - leaves and their sticky stems” (68). She is also described as a happy, competent inhabitant of her blind world, a woman who takes genuine pleasure in her work as a massage therapist, in cycling, in swimming, in dancing, in socializing with her friends and neighbours, and in her two-year marriage to Frank. But Frank is certain Molly has “nothing to lose” (17) in pursuing sight and, as far as he is concerned, everything to gain: “A new world-a new life!” he exclaims. “A new life for both of us!” (26). It is to please Frank that Molly keeps her first appointment with Mr. Rice, and to please both Frank and Mr. Rice, she agrees to two surgeries, one for each eye. In accepting this, Molly is sliding from the cosiness of her imagined space of home into the unknown and the unfamiliar.

The operations are successful in restoring partial vision to Molly’s eyes. But the task of learning to see, learning to recognize the meaning of the visual impressions she can now receive, proves difficult. While, at the beginning, Molly is enthusiastic, dutifully studying the terrain and objects of this new world and submitting herself to endless testing, ultimately the task entirely overwhelms her. As Kuusisto suggests, “in every blind person’s imagination there are landscape” (2005:78). To steal landscape makes the victim rage not against the dark but

against the light. When Molly dances on the eve of her operation, it was in anger and defiance as she feels that it is an exile.

But how can they know what they are taking away from me? How do they know what they are offering me? They don't. They can't. And have I anything to gain? Anything? Anything? And then I knew, suddenly I knew why I was so desolate. It was the dread of exile, of being sent away. It was the desolation of homesickness (31)

In this speech, Molly realises, once having the operation, the impossibility to return to the womb and to her original home, this in itself would "constitute a true homesickness" (55).

The place to which Molly is brought is a place of a total destruction to her identity and personality. She is 'unhoused' in her new world. This is captured on the stage through the image of the mirror. Molly is forced into a version of what Lacan terms the mirror stage and her fictive sense of unitary selfhood is replaced with a fragmented subjectivity in which the boundaries between what is 'real' and what is imagined become blurred:

Then there was the night I watched her through the bedroom door. She was sitting at her dressing- table, in front of the mirror, trying her hair in different ways. When she would have it in a certain way, she'd lean close to the mirror and peer into it and turn her head from side to side. But you knew she couldn't read her reflection, could scarcely even see it. Then she would try the hair in a different style and she'd lean into the mirror again until her face was almost touching it and again she'd turn first to one side and then the other. And you knew that all she saw was a blur. Then after about half-a-dozen attempts she stood up and came to the door-it was then I could see she was crying - and she switched off the light. Then she went back to the dressing-table and sat down again; in the dark; for maybe an hour; sat there and gazed listlessly at the black mirror. Yes, she did dive into the Atlantic from the top of Napoleon Rock; first time in her life. Difficult times. Oh, I can't tell you. Difficult times for all of us (53).

This image expresses the essence of Molly's sense of uncanniness as an image of a woman caught in a mirror, trapped by her blurred reflection, trying to find a way to make contact with her new world. Unable to cope with the sighted world, Molly retreats psychologically and loses her ability to see.

At the end of the play, deserted by both her husband and doctor, Molly resides in a psychiatric hospital where, in Mr. Rice's estimate, "she was trying to compose another life that was neither sighted nor unsighted" (59). Molly herself tells us at the end of the play:

I think I see nothing at all now. But I'm not absolutely sure of that. Anyhow my borderline country is where I live now. I'm at home there.

Well . . . at ease there. It certainly doesn't worry me anymore that what I think I see may be fantasy or indeed what I take to be imagined may very well be real – what's Frank's term? – external reality. Real – imagined – fact – fiction – fantasy – reality – there it seems to be. And it seems to be all right. And why should I question any of it anymore?  
(509)

In the language of Edward Soja, we may think of Molly's residence in the psychiatric hospital as a "Thirdspace" – a uniquely dense, intensely generative locus of intersecting and sometimes contradictory spatial points that are constantly reflected and transfigured in myriad "real-and-imagined" ways. The world Molly inhabits before her surgeries represents her imagined home space as composed by her imagination. It is totally different from the "borderline country" to which she has settled at the end of the play. Her original home was genuine and secure, her dwelling in latter is similar to that of an exile who may not feel entirely that belongs in her new country. When Rice recollects his first meeting with the pre-surgery Molly, he comments on "her calm and her independence; the confident way she [his] hand and found a seat for herself with her white cane. And when he spoke of her disability," he tells us, "there was no self-pity, no hint of resignation" (16). She herself confesses that her world, at odds with sighted reality, is "disadvantaged in some ways," but it is a world she nonetheless inhabited fully and happily and "never thought of [...] as deprived" (Ibid). Here, her confession is similar to the English officer Yolland's recognition that Gaelic Baile represented a different consciousness than his own, neither "striving agitated, but at its ease and with its own conviction and assurance" (*Translations* 40). On the eve of being turned out of this world, Molly appropriately feels the "dread of exile, of being sent away [...] the desolation of home- sickness" (31). Frank notes in fact that the evening's impromptu party begins to "feel like a wake!" (29). the party particularly represents the "American wakes" held the night before an emigrant's home leaving. It is true that Molly will not leave Ballybeg, but changed conditions at home create dislocation. The Irish who stayed in Ireland during the latter half of the nineteenth century, for example, were made to discover that "a life conducted through the medium of English became itself a sort of exile" (Kiberd,2003: 2). Similarly, Molly's efforts to acquire the language of sight will separate her, with cruel finality, from the comfort of home.

### 3.5 Conclusion

On a micro-spatial level, the concept of home in this chapter, as demonstrated in *The Enemy Within*, *The Loves of Cass McGuire* and *Molly Sweeney* is a psychic

space that is shaped and deeply affected by the external powers. In their spatial configurations, the plays deviate from the assumptions and stereotypes of a home as a nationalistic space. Columba, Cass and Molly are united by their desire to find a space they might call home. However, their desires are thwarted by a number of reasons which are related to their gender and the situations they find themselves in. Foregrounding exile, gender and body politics, these plays suggest that home is a political site of renewal and resistance.



## **Chapter 4: The Representations of Domestic Space in *Philadelphia, Here I Come!*, *The Gentle Island* and *Dancing at Lughnasa***

### **4.1 Chapter Overview**

This chapter of the thesis consists of three chapters, presenting a spatial analysis of home in *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* (1964), *The Gentle Island* (1971) and *Dancing at Lughnasa* (1990). It aims to extend the discussions in the previous part by reflecting upon the underlying intersections between ways of conceiving home as a domestic space, and exploring the variety of stage spaces that presents home as a political space of crisis and potential transformation. As its Latin root (*domesticus*; *domus*) denotes, 'domestic' signifies belonging to the home, house, or household. And so the concept, 'domestic space,' as presented in this chapter, takes into account the material, psychological, gendered, social, and political aspects of house. This part demonstrates how the spatiality of home as domestic space leads to a deeper understanding of Friel's concept of home. As conceptualized here, domestic space looks both inward at interior spaces inside the house and outward to the public space. Thus the house is not a self-contained space; rather it is produced by and from external powers. In this sense, the spatiality of home blurs the borders between inside and outside, private and public, physical and psychological. In staging home as such, Friel interrogates the nationalistic representation of home and its value as an idealised and apolitical location. At the centre of his treatment of domesticity, therefore, is a reversal of representation, in which the home no longer repudiates its political status to construct a nationalistic ideal, but is instead explicitly political.

## 4.2 *Philadelphia Here I Come: Unhomely Home*

### 4.2.1 Introduction

The first production of *Philadelphia Here I Come* was directed by Hilton Edwards (co-founder, together with Michael MacLiammoir, of the Dublin Gate Theatre in 1928), at Dublin's Gaiety Theatre, as part of the Dublin International Theatre Festival of 1964. Edwards found the play "intensely human [...] well written and intensely normal, a play on a situation that could take place in any Irish country town" (*Irish Press*, 24 August 1964:n.p.). The same article reported that the London producer Oscar Lowenstein had already bought the play 'sight unseen' for the West End. One month later and a week into the festival, it was reported that the play had "so impressed B.B.C. scouts in script form that it has already been bought for a radio adaptation" and was being tipped as the highlight of an otherwise lacklustre festival ( *Daily Mail* , 24 September 1964:n.p.). Desmond Rush enthusiastically declared that it was "far and away the finest new Irish play of this Dublin Theatre Festival and of this year," going on to state that "it firmly establishes Mr. Friel in the front line of our contemporary writers for the theatre" ( *Irish Independent* , 29 September 1964:n.p.). The play presents the issues that overwhelmed the younger Irish generation at the time: emigration, family relations, personal relationships, and economic standing. Its dramatic focus is on a father-son "silent war" (Pine, 1999:104). The action is limited to one day and early the following morning in which Gareth bids farewell to his Donegal friends, Katie Doogan, the woman he wants to marry; his former school Master Boyle; Canon Mike O'Bryne; and Madge, his family housekeeper.

### 4.2.2 Home on Stage

Unlike the ideal home of Gaston Bachelard, in which "the outside has no more meaning" (85), the concept of home in *Philadelphia* Friel evokes this outside in order to challenge it. The intrusion of the public into the private makes home in the play a gendered space. Yet, at the same time, this produces home as a political space of resistance for its postcolonial inhabitants, regardless of gender. Gar, denied a position from which to speak, undergoes a profound crisis of identity that Brian Friel describes as 'the deep schizophrenia'. It is with this phrase in mind that I propose to examine how the spatiality of home in the play is grounded in what Soja has identified as the trialectics of spatiality: the interplay of the diverse spaces to produce a lived (symbolic space) of resistance. This

interplay of the real/material and imagined that Friel required for rendering the spatiality of home is effectively suggested through a split protagonist as well as a split stage.

Like Columba, Gar's sense of self is in schism. His character might be approached as a 'victim' of what Nayantara Sahgal describes as 'the schizophrenic imagination'. Within a post-colonial conception of 'Selfhood' or subjectivity, Sahgal writes:

I am thinking of schizophrenia as a state of mind and feeling that is firmly rooted in a particular subsoil, but above ground has a more fluid identity that doesn't fit comfortably into any single mould. A schizophrenic of this description is a migrant who may never have left his people or his soil. We are all somewhat divided selves. But I am referring to the divisions that [...] circumstances impose on the creatures we already are (1990:14).

Sahgal's definition of schizophrenia is appropriate to the character of Gar in Friel's play. Literally speaking, Gar is a divided self. He cannot find himself on a specific spatial scale. His ambivalent attitude to his home space is expressed through a double-power of attraction and revulsion. The conflict at this ambivalent level is comically rendered by the following exchange:

PRIVATE: You are fully conscious of all the consequences of your decision?

PUBLIC: Yessir

PRIVATE: Of all the consequences of your decision? Of leaving the country of your birth, the land of the curlew and snipe, the Aran Sweater and the Irish sweepstakes?"

PUBLIC: [With fitting hesitation] I-I-I-I have considered all these, Sire

PRIVATE: Of going to a profane, irreligious, pagan country of gross materialism.

(32)

Gar's ambivalent situation is exacerbated by his inability to localise himself within a temporal continuum as the past (his childhood memories) and the future (his American fantasies) constantly intrude upon his present (Ballybeg stasis). As Maureen S.G. Hawkins explains, this is a characteristic of Public Gar's schizophrenic condition:

Despite his desire for closeness with others, Public Gar strives for the interference and withdrawal, which characterise the schizoid individual. While he is not clinically hallucinated, the vivid reliving of past experiences, such as his last walk with Kate and his interviews with her

father and with his Aunt Lizzie, as well as his ability to hear Private Gar, whom no one else hears, suggest hallucinatory states. Although he does not have delusions of persecution or omnipotence, his fantasies verge on both. Furthermore, Private Gar frequently adopts the role of internalised persecutor often found in schizoid individuals (1996:469).

However, while her argument is interesting, I would like to suggest that Gar O'Donnell is not a pathological schizophrenia as much as he represents a post-colonial sensibility of identity and home in a post-partitioned Ireland. His divided self might be taken as a case study to show how a colonial gaze that produces territory (home) has also created "an identity for the colonised" (Upstone, 2011: 6).

This schizophrenic sensibility (imagination) is manifested in the essential duality of the character(s) Gar O'Donnell whose schizoid subjectivity is represented in the technique Friel employs of splitting the main protagonist into two characters, played by two different actors who appear on the stage at the same time. The stage direction specifies that Public Gar and Private Gar are two views of one man. Public Gar is the public persona, the mask "that people see, talk to, talk about," while Private Gar represents "the spirit [...] the unseen man, the man within, the conscience, the alter ego, the secret thoughts, the id." Though Public Gar makes conversations with Private Gar, he never looks at him as "one cannot look at one's alter ego" (27). When Public Gar has entered his bedroom at the opening of the play, his Private foil joins him and remains together throughout the play. In short, 'Private' is Public's alter ego, his repressed 'other.'

Having Gar's alter ego staged in such a way answers one of Friel's concerns about characterisation: "How to interpret or how to reveal this young man; how he felt, his thoughts, his emotions on this particular night of his life. How to reveal this without having to stop, freeze the action and talk aside" (2000: 56). If the stage space is to function as a space that is identifiably imagined as well as material; and psychological as well as actual, it requires to be split to become "fluid" (27) and flexible. This split in character is a useful dramatic technique through which Friel has created two distinct levels of reality on the stage: real and imagined. The real level is Public Gar's actual interaction with his father, Madge and other visitations on the eve of his departure from the teacher, the Canon, and the boys. In contrast, the imagined level is cerebral, reflecting Private Gar's drama of mind with its mingling between the past and the present, fantasy and biography. Accordingly, the stage operates as external and internal mediums to reflect Gar's shifting consciousness of personal, internal, and psychological

realities of belonging/not belonging and feeling at home or feeling at odds with home.

The spatial representation of the home illustrates a central tenet of *Philadelphia*. It substantiates the idea that the space constructed when judging political meanings are reversed by Friel's representation of home. In the play, such a reversal is taken even further, to the individual rooms (the kitchen and the bedroom) that construct a home. This spatial re-arrangement extends the de-familiarization of home from the home country (e.g. *The Enemy within*) to more private structures. Sara Upstone believes that the real power of a post-space house can be manifested in the 'miniscule spaces' that ultimately and most securely accommodate resistance. This suggests the postcolonial domestic is not a space of the home as a complete structure; rather it is a space of its deconstruction, its turning around and inside out.

*Philadelphia* complicates this issue by utilizing split scenes that require simultaneous presentation on stage of more than one locale. Friel uses a minimal set by adjoining the kitchen and Gar's bedroom from opposite sides of the stage, giving each a balanced significance that a fully realistic staging would not allow. In such a case, the attention of the audience can move fluidly and imaginatively from locale to locale, ushered by lighting and dialogue. On *Philadelphia's* split stage, the bedroom and the kitchen are always both visible. This set is greatly naturalistic, and audiences know immediately that they are in the west of Ireland cottage so often cited as a principle setting in Irish cottage drama. The divide between public and private space is marked on Friel's stage by the wall to separate the kitchen from the bedroom. As described, the set is clearly designed to reflect simultaneously a public and a private space and uses those juxtaposed spaces to explore imagined and spatial aspects of character. These simultaneously visible public and private spaces enhance the play's interrogation of their relationship. Here, the spatiality of home becomes a metaphor for the relationship between the characters.

*Philadelphia* begins with a realistic situation between the housekeeper, Madge, and Gar O'Donnell. The movement from this realistic situation to an imagined one occurs when Gar moves into the bedroom and initiates stylised criss-cross dialogue with an off-stage character who then enters. The bedroom has been 'in darkness'; here the raising of the lights signifies that Gar is crossing a 'threshold' from what is real to what is imagined in order to stage his encounter with his alter ego. Through these theatrical techniques, Gar's movement is shown as

spatially contiguous within his consensus reality; that is, there is no separation of imagined and real because it is all a spatial real for Gar. Gar's spatial movement also signifies the effect of the space on the characters. Lefebvre explains: "Every space is already in place before the appearance in it of actors. [...] This pre-existence of space conditions the subject's presence, action and discourse, his competence and performance" (1991: 57). The bedroom as a private space has an effect in producing Gar's double reality.

The bedroom is set apart from the everyday world of the family space in the kitchen. Having very little access to the rest of the house, it functions as a relegated space, an architectural cul-de-sac held at a psychological (if not physical) distance from the rest of the house. For Gar, the bed room is the only space in the house in which he has ever felt happy, sharing jokes, and free to think, to talk and to dream. It is the space where he can re-union with his repressed other. It is a space Gar calls a "man's room" (46). More importantly, it is the space where his resistance to patriarchal authority begins. The process of Gar's appropriation of the house starts when he constructs a space out of foreign exotic influences, that, significantly, becomes Gar's imagined home space where he can express his dislike of his father's behaviour ( and by extension of the Canon) and assert himself. For example, the 'technological presence' of "a record player and records" (27) which offers everything from Ceili music to Mendelssohn represents a deviation from what the patriarchal authority accepts or tolerates, as reflected in the Canon's initial reaction to the Mendelssohn "What's that noise?" (90). Most of the personas that Gar adopts are derived from cinema ("The Walter Mitty-style" fantasy scenes taken from the western Cinema ("tham thar plains belongs to Garry the Kid" (34) and James Bond spy thriller), radio (announcers) and television (fashion paraded). All these exotic things are alien to the traditional spirit that dominates O'Donnell's house. Thus they are condemned and prohibited by S.B. or the Canon. By adopting them, Gar expresses his resistance. In this sense, Gar's room answers his urgency in construct, using Hook's words in describing African-American experience of home, a "private space where [he does not] directly encounter [...] aggression to enact [...] resistance" (47).

If the bedroom is a private space, the kitchen represents the public one. It is only Private Gareth who moves freely between these spaces. He is both inside and outside, or here and there at the same time. This can work in two ways: Gar can remember the rooms, continue to feel physically present in them; while the

others can appear to be mindless of his continuing presence. Thus, Gar is definitely aware of where other characters are and often of what they are saying as well. Like the spaces of the bedroom, the kitchen has its own "persona" and atmosphere. It is described in such a way as to reflect S. B. O'Donnell's personality. It is "a bachelor's kitchen," (26), implying the dominant figure of Gareth's father as an authoritarian power and the absence of the mother. It is a cheerless and comfortless place that is "sparsely [...] furnished,' with no cloth on the table [...] rough cups and saucers, with large school-type watch" (ibid.) For S.B., the kitchen is a space that is capable of being ordered to secure power. Gar's presence in the kitchen of his home is a hostage to S.B.'s disciplinary rules, as interpreted by Madge. When 'The Boys', his friends, come in, it is implied that beer bottles are rejected. While Ballybeg is the geographical background where the play is located, it never appears on the stage. Its description suggests that its negativity. The offstage presence of the shop appears early in the play as a hindrance to Gar's growth as a young man. Here, his will is subjected to S.B.'s. His first question to Gar is about coils of barbed wire which he has ordered. The meanings of entanglement and imprisonment are further shown in Private's next speech, as he tries hard to recall how many coils he had brought into the shop (34). S.B. when he comes in from the shop, carries the keys with him (47). He asks Gar if he has set the rat-trap in the store (48). Thus Ballybeg shop signifies the meanings of entrapment and confinement.

Thus, in his use of stage space, and in that stage's use of public and private space, Friel shows in *Philadelphia* a complex awareness that home is not confined to the domestic space and the public is not simply its social or historical counterpart. His awareness of the fluidity of these spaces results in rich connotations that destabilize any fixed concepts of home. This requires me to examine the role of the unhomely effects in the play in relation to Bhabah's concepts of "the world-in-the home" and "the home-in-the world" (1997:445).

#### 4.2.3 Father-Son Relationship

Following Soja's refutation of spatial binaries of private and public divide, I would contend that *Philadelphia* stages the interplay of the domestic space and the repressed "unhomely" moment of the public space in such a way as to reflect the "world-in-the-home." In this sense, "home" spaces become a space of "unhomely" moments linking "the traumatic ambivalences of a personal, psychic history to the wider disjunctions of political existence" (Bhabha, 1994:448). In the

play, the unhomely figure that serves to disrupt political unities is a male protagonist who belongs to the new generation, emerging in the 1960s (the temporal setting of the play) in Ireland, and who resists the foundations of a patriarchal society.

The 1960s witnessed a considerable number of social, political and cultural transformations in Ireland. Eamon de Valera, the dominant politician in the early decades of the new state, was elected president of Ireland in 1959 but, then resigned. His departure marked a political transition to a younger generation. In August 1961, Sean Lemass announced that Ireland had embarked on modernisation and a move towards economic prosperity. O'Toole identifies the shift to industrialization and internationalization as the critical force behind such changes. These economic changes were accompanied by social and cultural changes, which O'Toole attributes to the policies set in motion by Ireland's Finance Secretary, T. K. Whitaker:

Whitaker was sowing the seeds for the abandonment of nationalism as an economic, and gradually as a cultural force.... the strength of the nationalist movement was its inclusiveness, the way in which it managed to find a place within its political programme for everything from social justice to religious righteousness, from the words the Irish were to speak to the games they were to play, taking theatre and literature effortlessly into its warm embrace (1987: 56).

As a result, the economy began to grow. Rising living standards resulted in the emergence of a more liberal and secular society, with a reduced role for the Catholic Church, with an increasing interest in British and American culture via media. For Morash, Irish media from the 1960s onward shows how *telefís Éireann's* dependence on American programming. He attributes this to economics, the cost of screening an American series was just £20 per hour and this showed the only way that Irish television could compete for viewers with its British counterpart: "to put it simply, without American television, there would have been no Irish television" (2010:175).

According to Declan Kiberd, this "breakneck speed of change" in society added a force to the notion of 'generation' in the sense that it widened the gap that had separated fathers from sons in such a way as to suggest that two generations: the old and the young occupied totally different countries. When a social order begins to disintegrate, the relationship between fathers and sons is reversed. As Frantz Fanon observes that when a family disintegrates into its fraught rudiments under the new tension: "[E]ach member in this family had gained in individuality what it

had lost in belonging to a world of more or less confused values” (1970, 81 cited in Kiberd, 1995:485) In this context, the father is ineffectual while even the son who adopted nationalist positions remains ‘deferential’ in the home. With the coming of the revolution, “the person [who] is born assumes his autonomy and becomes the creator of his own values” (ibid.). The father still recommends prudence but the son, in rejecting that counsel, does not reject the father. *Philadelphia* reads like spatial mediations on this theme, transforming home into a contested space between father and son.

In *Philadelphia*, Friel deals with a generation gap: the old generation (introduced by biological fathers/S. B. O'Donnell, Senator Doogan and by the spiritual father/the Canon) and the “transitional generation” or the young generation (Gar and “the Boys”). Both generations are unable to understand each other's languages. This is what characterises the relationship between Gar and his father: “we *embarrass* one another” (45: the italics are Friel's). It is this recognition that they no longer have anything to say to each other is what has traumatised Gar. Their communication is defective, transforming home into a non-verbal space. This is well described by Madge: “The chatting in this place would deafen a body. Won't the house be quieter soon enough-long enough?” (29).

S.B and Gar are brought together more by genetic relatedness than by shared sympathies. S.B is an authoritarian father while Public Gar is submissive. In his brief intrusion into Gar's fantasy in Episode One, Friel tells us how O'Donnell is [over]dressed, denoting his concern to appear responsible and respectable (7). He also juxtaposes two different reactions by Gar in response to O'Donnell's authoritative call: “Public reacts instinctively. Private keeps calm.” Ultimately Instinct is stronger than reason: Public rushes to the door and opens it” (7). S.B. O'Donnell has a negative influence on Gar's identity. In the presence of his father, Gar is transformed from an assured, open young man, we see in the opening scene with Madge and his fantasies, into a different one. In speech and gestures, he becomes “a surly, taciturn gruffness” (ibid). This is evident in the scene when Gar fails to remember the number of the coils of barbed wire that were used during the day:

S.B: (louder) Gar! [...]

Public: Aye?

S.B.: How many coils of barbed-wire came in on the mail-van

this evening?

Public: Two. Or was it three?

S.B.: That's what I'm asking you. It was you that carried  
them into the yard.

Public: There are two-no, no, no three-yes, three-or maybe it  
was [...] was it two?

S.B.: Agh!

(34)

This exchange is an example of many that recurs in the play. It shows how the men's language is confined itself to commercial and materialistic terms between boss and worker rather than between father and son. Their language resembles the tick tock of the big clock that presides over the kitchen, suggesting that to an extent everything is regulated, controlled and non-emotive in the domestic space of the kitchen.

Throughout the play, Gar resists his father's lack of communication. First, Private Gar tends to ridicule his father's habitual behaviour by exposing his father's repetitive routines. In advance, he voices what S. B. is going to say. Gar Private says it first and so gives everything the father subsequently says. In this way, although we only see one night in the O'Donnell household, the play succeeds in reflecting the experience of home as it is actually inhabited:

PRIVATE: [...] And now for our nightly lesson in the English'  
language. Repeat slowly after me: another day over.

S.B.: Another day over.

PRIVATE: Good. Next phrase: I suppose we can't complain.

S.B.: I suppose we can't complain. (48)

Second, in resisting his father's constant silence, Private Gar sets to fill the space of home with nonsensical words and expressions. Whenever Gar lapses into a moment of silence, Private leaps to his feet and unleashes a verbal barrage of lame jokes and linguistics nonsense: 'Ta-ra-del-oo-ah-dol-de-dol-de-dol-de-ha'(56). Filling the home space with nonsensical words is only a desperate attempt on Private's part to avoid awkward silence from which an underlying conflict might emerge. It is the overwhelming feeling of nothingness that comes with the deafening silence.

Gar's verbal resistance might be understood not as a usual cliché of rebellion against a tyrannical father, but it might be taken as a subtle case of a protest against a father's inability to offer any clear lead at all. In *Midnight's Children*, S Rushdie writes that all children in the colonies possess the power to re-invent the parents and to multiply the fathers as the need arises. Gar has repudiated his biological father by seeking a series of surrogate relations, and through furnishing himself with an alternative father. The teacher Boyle, "who knew all the Gallagher girls" (53), shows intimate connection and sympathy with Gar. Gar is a preferred image for aspiring Gar than his biological father. Similarly, Gar resorts to the Canon, as a spiritual father, on a whim of translating his inner turmoil of finding routes of communications with his father. However, the Canon proves to be an ineffectual one like his father. Private's indictment of the Canon is important. As a priest, he should be "all things to all men" with the ability to "translate all this loneliness" and to explain man's suffering and they should endure. But the Canon who is "arid" remains silent, unaware of Gar's turmoil. The only thing the Canon does is to repeat the meaningless expressions of his evening routine of tea and inspections. Private concludes his tirade saying "Prudence be damned! Christianity isn't prudent. It's insane" (88). Hence, the Canon is inadequate in sustaining the spiritual consolation Gar longs for.

Private Gar becomes desperate because his suppressed emotions are too introvert to be communicated to others. He is entrapped within his repressed alter-ego. Hence, his 'dancing around [and] singing to the tunes of 'Daisy'' (ibid), might be conceived as an expression of his protest as no verbal power could translate his 'half-crazy' love to his father. When language fails and he is reduced to unavoidable silence, Gar resorts to music. Failing to obtain a response from the Canon in interpreting his feelings to his father, Private recoils to non-verbal communication in the form of the Mendelssohn violin concerto to establish a bond between himself and his father. Here, the music symbolically functions as a meta-language to communicate the incommunicable desire of belonging. Like lighting, the use of music in the play denotes Gar's spatial movement from external reality to inner reality. The space of the stage, particularly as produced by music and lighting is what Andy Merrifield (writing of Henri Lefebvre), refers to as space "re-described not as a dead, inert thing or object, but as organic and fluid and alive; it has a pulse, it palpitates, it flows and collides with other spaces. And these interpenetrations, many with different temporalities, get superimposed upon one another to create a present space" (Merrifield, 2006: 105). The music changes according to which room is in focus. Moved by the Mendelssohn, Gar

falls into intimate memories with his father by narrating their trip to go “fishing on a lake on a showery day” (83). Gar evokes the power of music to translate his belief that love might be redeemed from his apparently barren relationship with his father by asking him to listen:

GAR: (referring to the second movement of the concerto): Listen! Listen! Listen! D'you hear it? D'you know what that music says? ... It says that once upon a time a boy and his father sat in a blue boat on a lake on an afternoon in May, and on that afternoon a great beauty happened, a beauty that has haunted the boy ever since, because he wonders now did it really take place or did he imagine it (ibid).

Significantly, the music rises in intensity, symbolising Gar's frenzied state of mind. Gar feels particularly ignored by his father because, while SB enjoys playing draughts with the Canon, Gar is left to mourn moments from his childhood:

There are the two of us, he says; each of us is all the other has; and why can we not look at each other?' The speech ends with great anger, with Gar lamenting as he borrows a phrase from the rosary: 'Have pity on us, have goddam pity on everyone gaddam pity on every goddam bloody man jack of us [...] To hell with all strong silent men (89).

Both the Canon and the music fail in communicating Gar's sense of displacement, his urgent need to belong or even to make his father understand his longing for a home. Hence, Gar is spiritually homeless. Ironically, Gar's feeling out of place and longing to belong comes not as a result of leaving home but, rather, are the cause of leaving home.

#### 4.2.4 (Un) homely Motherland

Most of *Philadelphia's* actions move to dismantle the mythologies of homeland that underpinned both colonial and anticolonial nationalisms in different but overlapping ways. Indeed Gar has expressed the view that homeland has become a rather empty anachronism, remarking:

Answerable to nobody! All this bloody yap about father and son and all this sentimental rubbish about 'homeland' and 'birthplace'-yap! Bloody yap! Impermanence - anonymity -that's what I'm looking for; a vast restless place that doesn't give a damn about the past. To hell with Ballybeg, that's what I say (67).

Through Gar's rejection of the homeland and family, predominant images of Irish nationalism, Friel opens a new way to explore the shifting parameters of the colonial and post-colonial politics from the nation to the alternative spaces of domesticity.

The experimental space through which Friel explores these parameters is the home. Although *Philadelphia* is set in a domestic space, the home is rarely a stable, maternal, or unifying family space. Indeed, the various forms of oppression and repression occurring in its home context mark the oppression and repression of colonial and post-colonial systems, which exercised power through the ambivalent spaces of domesticity. In this respect, the action of *Philadelphia* affords a subtle perspective on Bhabha's concept of the 'Unhomely'. Bhabha interprets the "unhomely" as the recollection of a repressed previous experience of something familiar, which suddenly returns unbidden to a person's consciousness as a feeling of loss or fear coupled with uncanny familiarity.

*Philadelphia* presents Gar in the process of constructing a fiction of his mother. This reveals his desire for claiming a lost home space in the figures of mother and surrogate mothers which are metaphorically associated with the motherland. Gar's desire to return to the mother is associated with his deep fluctuation over leaving the 'motherland'. According to Richard Kearney, the 'myth of motherland' is

Foundational [myth] of (our) identity', [which provides] a sense of rootedness in the past which would allow us to make the break with the 'alien' culture of colonial Britain which has uprooted and alienated us from our original sense of ourselves. [This foundational myth], which would enable the orphaned child to return to the security of its maternal origins, were identified by Pearse in a positive sense with the three mothers of our historical memory: the mother church of the Catholic revival; the motherland of the nationalist revival; and the mother tongue of the Gaelic revival (1986:74-75).

In the first two episodes of the play, Gar has sought to find an attachment to home either by collecting memories about his mother or enacting memories with a surrogate mother. Initially, Gar fictionalises a mother from Madge's reminiscences.

His fantasies set the absent mother as an antithesis to his father. Where the father was forty when they married, the mother was nineteen; where the father comes from disciplined, petit-bourgeois Ballybeg, the mother comes from the wilderness of Bailtefree, "beyond the mountains"; whereas the father represents for Gar a symbol of lack of communication, the mother is intimately associated with Gar's recurrent passage of the opening of Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*: "It is now sixteen or seventeen years since I saw the Queen of France, then the Dauphiness, at Versailles; and surely never lighted on this orb, which she hardly seemed to touch, a more delightful vision" (56). Here the idealisation of Marie- Antoinette is a counterpart to Gar's alienation. For Burke,

the 'delightful', regal feminine signifies the glory that has gone from the world. For Gar, the Burkean passage represents his fantasy of a mother as a mythic persona. Thus, his fictionalised mother stands for everything that S.B is not and everything that Gar has never been experienced but yearns to know. She was young, tender, spontaneous and free. However, Gar's myth of his mother is rendered uncanny when Madge reveals a secret of Gar's mother to him. She was not as he imagines her to be. She is not pure. Her image is polluted by a questionable morality: "She went with a dozen that was the kind of her she couldn't help herself" (88).

However, Gar's disillusion with the image of a mother(land) does not prevent Gar from seeking "the security of (his) maternal origins" in form of a surrogate mother, firstly in the character of Madge and then in the figure of Lizzie/Elise who wants him to fulfil the role of a surrogate son. Tony Corbett sees Lizzy as a grotesque stereotype of what is termed in Ireland "the returned Yankee" (2008:43). Indeed, she is a composite stereotypes of a boastful Americanness and garrulous son-obsessed Irishness. While, Gar, for Lizzy, is a means for him of fulfilling her maternal desires, Lizzy, for Gar, is a way by which to be mothered. Furthermore, she declares her desire to leave all her material wealth to her 'surrogate son'. However, Private criticises this relationship as being neither symbiotic nor necessarily advantageous to Gar:

PRIVATE: September 8th, the sun shining, not a breath of wind - and this was your mother's sister - remember. And that's how you were got! Right, honey? Silly and impetuous like a Gallagher! Regrets?

PUBLIC: None.

PRIVATE: Uncertainties?

PUBLIC: None.

PRIVATE: Little tiny niggling reservations?

PUBLIC: None.

PRIVATE: Her grammar?

PUBLIC: Shut up!

PRIVATE: But, honey, wasn't it something?

PUBLIC: Go to hell.

PRIVATE: Her vulgarity?

PUBLIC: Bugger off.

PRIVATE: She'll tuck you into an air-conditioned cot every night....

PRIVATE: And croon, 'Sleep well, my li'l honey child. (89)

This exchange reveals that Lizzy is an ideal character, again as imagined by Public Gar. She does not have any resemblances with the three mothers (described by Pearse in Kearney's definition, quoted above). She is secular and materialistic. Her language is not Gaelic but a vulgar English and she is more associated with her new country than her old one. Thus, she is neither Catholic nor Gaelic nor nationalistic. Thus, Lizzy's image, just like that of his mother, is unhomely. In their totality, these unhomely images of the motherland only serve to disrupt images of nationalistic unities. This indicates the extent to which the question of home is multifaceted and ultimately political. In Ireland, the promotion of the family by the 1973 Constitution and by the Catholic Church, the ultimate small-scale way in which political affairs are conducted, the absence of a settled body politic, have all thrown a disproportionate emphasis on the family as constituting the central principle political identity and as mediating between the private space and the public space.

### **4.3     *The Gentle Island*: Uncanny Presence**

#### **4.3.1     Introduction**

Brian Friel's *The Gentle Island*, a play about patriarchy, homosexuality, violence and the fragility of home in the west of Ireland, premiered at Dublin's Olympia Theatre on 30 November 1971. This opening came two days after a weekend *The Irish Times* described as "the most violent since internment was introduced in August." It was the same day the British Army announced its intention to arm its Northern Irish helicopters with machine guns. It was only two months before Bloody Sunday shattered what remained of calm in Friel's own city, Derry. On 1 December, *The Irish Times* both reviewed Friel's new play and lamented the Dail's "detachment" concerning deaths in the North. Not quite one year later, 18 October 1972, Belfast's Lyric Theatre opened its production of *The Gentle Island*, presenting it between productions of plays by Wilde and Shakespeare. The next day, 19 October, the front page of *The Irish Times* announced that forty-eight hours of rioting between British troops and Belfast Protestants had left four dead and many injured.

For Roche, the repercussions of the Northern Ireland Troubles had led many Irish poets, playwrights and novelists to directly treat the street violence and the partisan standoffs in their literary outputs. The theatre, with its social focus and its representational proximity, was under pressure to present plays of a documentary nature, characterised by its melodramatic conventions. So plays about love between a young couples from either side of the sectarian divisions are common (Roche, 2011:15). However, Brian Friel resists such pressure in his first play to be premiered during the Troubles, *The Gentle Island*. His approach is not to tackle the political tensions and violence of the period directly, rather it is a metaphor. In an interview with Aodhan Madden of *The Sunday Press*, Friel made it clear that he had no intention of becoming the new Sean O'Casey and situating his drama at the centre of the Northern conflict. Rather, "he says, what's happening in our island provokes tensions in all of us, tensions which the writer will channel indirectly into art" (1998: 78). In relation to *The Gentle Island*, Friel notes that "we see most facets of Irish life, love, hate, loneliness, tensions in the life of the gentle island [...]. It is a serious slice of island life, a metaphor for Ireland" (1971:31). This connection is made explicit as the character's dilemma in the domestic space is a mirror of the tensions and violence at the centre of Ireland's political instability. As Northern Ireland undergoes tremendous changes under the effect of the Troubles, the spatiality of home in Friel's depopulated island also undergoes certain modifications. These point out that home gradually moves away from its definition as shelter, support, security and comes to have negative connotations like fear, exclusion and violence. As George suggests: "homes are not about inclusions and wide open arms [...] when different groups or individuals jostle each other to establish a space as their own, as an exclusive manifestation of their subject hood, this struggle can become as urgent as keeping oneself alive". As a result, "home" becomes a contested space in times of political tumult either on the level of power struggles at a national communal stage or at the interpersonal familial level" (1994:18).

The central concern of *The Gentle Island* is familial and sexual politics within a tiny, 'claustrophobic' (Friel, 'Self-Portrait' 20), exclusively Catholic community on Inishkeen off the coast of Donegal. The action of the play is centred on tensions between a father, a daughter-in-law, and his two sons, intensified by the departure of the rest of the islanders, and the arrival of two outsiders. The opening scene of the play presents the island's depopulation after all but one family voted to emigrate either to the Irish mainland or to more distant English urban locations (16-18). The remaining, single family is dominated by Manus

Sweeney, and his two sons who remain out of filial loyalty. Soon, the audience quickly recognises that the eldest son Philly and his wife Sarah plan to leave after the salmon season has provided them the funds to relocate (24). The island's disturbing silence is interrupted by the arrival of two tourists from Dublin, Peter and Shane, who have stopped there in their excursion to far-off islands (GI, 28). Initially, the pair is welcomed by the Sweeneys, and Peter becomes infatuated by the island's romantic scenery; in fact, Manus and the elder Peter appear to make a sincere tie of mutual respect. Then, however, Shane provokes strong (if not contradictory) emotions from Sarah. After rejecting Sarah's sexual invitations, she later accuses him of a homosexual encounter with Philly. Ultimately, Shane almost convinces Manus of his innocence and escapes the island, but Sarah uses Manus' gun to gravely wound him at the end of the play.

The critical interpretations of the play generally attempt to show how Friel unveils 'a naive Irishness' by de-familiarising its pastoral archetypes, an engagement that he will later develop in such plays as *Translations* (1980) and *Communication Cord* (1982). Maxwell's early discussion of the play juxtaposes Peter's fascination with the island's Arcadian tranquillity and romanticism with the impending danger that renders it 'Apache territory' to Shane (Maxwell, 96). While Dantanus describes Peadar O'Donnell's "angry protest over 'the impounding of the Gael'" as the cultural ethos informing this "confrontation between the East and West of Ireland" (1975: 127-8). Andrews explains this topic in terms of a temporal conflict between Tradition and Modernity that "bitterly" reworks such stereotypes as the Noble Peasant and the family as "bastion of moral value" (Andrews, 125-6). Similarly, Helen Lojek's reads the play in the light of Synge's western world and such American Westerns as *Shane* and *High Noon*. However, with her reflection on the play's depiction of homosexuality and its impact upon such younger playwrights as Frank McGuinness, Lojek also offers a discussion that evaluates both the cultural and artistic impact of Friel's delineation of homosexuality in a homophobic Ireland (1988: 55-9). With the play's anti-idyllic context assured, I would like to change the nature of the question asked about the cultural dynamics of *The Gentle Island* by focusing on home and how it is spatialized by exploring the interplay of patriarchy and sexuality.

In his study on Micheál Mac Liammóir (a dramatist, impresario, writer, poet and painter), Éibhear Walshe explains that homosexuality was illegal in the Republic until 1993, more than two decades after the opening of Friel's play. While Mac Liammóir himself lived as half of an openly gay couple in all of Ireland,

the radical nature of Friel's staging of homosexuality in 1971 is emphasized only through its comparison to Mac Liammoir's own efforts to remove all traces of homosexuality from his plays, even his 1963 drama of Oscar Wilde's trial and imprisonment *The Importance of Being Oscar* (Walshe, 1997: 157–9). However, Friel is far from being a writer concerned with interrogating sexuality even in its heterosexual construction; rather, his drama depicts a normatively heterosexual world (see Lojek, 1999:55-9; Boltwood, 2007:114 and Parker, 2006). As far as the spatiality of home is concerned, I would suggest that Friel's employment of homosexuality provides a useful strategy for reading home in the play. The cultural and epistemological placing of the queer 'on the edge of', 'at the back of', 'in opposition to', and even 'underneath' heterosexuality resembles the relation of the *unheimlich* to the *heimlich*. Freud calls attention to the lexical ambiguity of the word *heimlich*, pointing in particular to its two different and paradoxical meanings; the familiar and the secret (Freud, 1990 [1919], pp.345, 347). This evokes the idea of the uncanniness of the incident where something secret is exposed: "everything is *unheimlich* that ought to have remained secret and hidden but has come to light" (ibid). The use of uncanny in discussing *The Gentle* offers new ways of problematizing concepts of home by demonstrating how the uncanny may work to destabilize definitions of gender and sexuality and raise questions about definitions of home.

#### 4.3.2 Home on Stage

Whilst nationalistic depictions of home obscure chaos and separate home from the public sphere of politics to represent it as a hearth or as an ideal pastoral, Friel's representations foreground chaos. Upstone explains that 'chaos' is a way through which a post-colonial writer re-imagines space (2011:90). Yet when chaos is used, it does not mean an utter departure from all stability; rather, it is an elimination of the fixed to open up new ways of understanding and experiences (see Soja 1994 & Upstone 2011). Thus, a significant way to maintain the metaphorical role of home in *The Gentle* has to do with how Friel endows the domestic space of the play with chaos. An awareness of this chaos highlights the patriarchy and violence which characters must negotiate (as explained in the last section of this chapter).

In *Reading Theatre*, Ubersfeld states that the "theatrical text, in order to exist, must have a locus, a spatial dimension in which the physical relationships between characters unfold" (1999:94). The spatial locus in the play consists of

two spaces: exterior/public space (Inishkeen Island) and the interior/ private space (MANUS SWEENEY's cottage). Friel removes the boundaries between these spaces by spatially juxtaposing them to each other, with none of them is predominant. The stage directions makes this clear:

About one-third of the stage area, the portion upstage right from the viewpoint of the audience, is occupied by the kitchen of MANUS SWEENEY's cottage. The rest of the stage area is the street around the house. Against the gable wall are a curragh, fishing nets, lobster pots, farming equipment. There are two doors leading off the kitchen, one on each side of the fireplace. One leads to MANUS-JOE bedroom, one to SARAH-PHILLY bedroom. There are *no walls separating the kitchen area from the street* (Italics mine, 1).

This way of staging home is remarkably different from what is presented in *Philadelphia* or *The Loves* where the spatiality of home is confined to an interior space (the home of S. B. O'Donnell, Harry McGuire's home and Eden House) or has fluctuated/alternated between several interior settings. Further, in *Philadelphia*, only Private Gar could walk through the walls separating the bedroom from the kitchen; all of the other characters, including Gar Public, had to be aware of the limits of the stage as a realistic space, and thus they enter or exit through the bedroom door. In *The Gentle*, this distinction has been eliminated. The imagined and the real or the theatrical and the realistic do not occupy separate domains, but are merged into each other within the same stage space. Having no wall to separate the kitchen area from the street is a twofold strategy. Firstly, it does not theatricalise Sweeney's cottage as a self-contained space that is located outside the influence of the political dynamics of public space. In other words, the inside of 'life's intimate human spatiality' (Soja, 1994:104) and the outside of political negotiations are not divided spaces, but interior and exterior are fluid and interconnected. Secondly, this no-walled set renders the conventional rural cottage setting a de-familiarised space by deconstructing it so effectively. This sense of de-familiarisation is immediately apparent. The curtain initially rises on an unfamiliar interior space of an Irish cottage kitchen. The political character of Sweeney's house is made apparent through an acknowledgement of its patriarchy. Describing himself as "the king of Inishkeen," Manus Sweeney, the patriarch, appears to be "sitting in an airplane seat in the kitchen, his back to the audience, staring resolutely into the fire" (11) His bodily positioning connotes a man with a the symbolic power of a colonial sovereignty who is living in his world, isolating himself from everything that is going on outside the cottage. He furnishes his house from what he has salvaged from the relics of the Second World War, making no distinction between Allied or

German disasters. All could be exploited for his survival: clocks from Dutch freighters; lamps off a British tanker; a pilot's chair from Germany. His daughter-in-law, Sara is seen knitting, wearing men's boots and a long skirt. As her intermittent looks at the window suggest, she is caught between the inside of the cottage and having some awareness of what is going on outside. The elder of Manus's two sons, Sarah's husband Philly, is absent from the stage, something that will prove characteristic and crucial to the outcome of the play. The younger Joe, described as 'in his twenties' (11) rushes onstage and gives the two inmates of the cottage a detailed description of the boats leaving the Island in the mass emigration that is in progress.

In the play, the exterior space, Inishkeen Island, is presented in a way that brings outside influences to threaten the static complacency of the inside of the home space. Much of the text is taken up by different, contradictory 'readings' of the island, which, like Ireland, is imagined as a place of plenty, as a prison, as a paradise and spiritual haven, as a site of violence where emotional growth is inhibited and sexuality repressed. The very name of the island is problematic and proves deeply ironic; embedded, embodied within its two elements is, one might suggest, a history of linguistic, cultural and political violence. Inishkeen is an anglicization of the Gaelic Inis ('island', a feminine noun) and caoin ('beautiful', 'pleasant', 'gentle'), though this latter element once anglicized has associations with sharpness, bitterness, loss, and grief.

The plot of the play is structured around two spatial movements: outward and inward. The outward movement is embodied by the island exodus that signifies another 'Flight of the Earls' (4). Joe Sweeney bids farewell to three different groups from his tribe who cross the stage space on their way from their own cottages to the archetypal destinations of Irish emigrants to the UK: Scotland, particularly for people from Northern Ireland; urban centres like Manchester; and the 'Irish' areas of greater London suburbs such as Kilburn. Two of the three have a personal tie with Joe: his peers, the two young men who give fair warning to the women of Glasgow that the men of Inishkeen are coming; and Anna, for whom Joe clearly has longings. Both reflect on the sexual maiming that the island has endured. Like the 'boys' in *Philadelphia*, Bosco and Tom are so optimistic of their future sexual encounters outside the Island. As Friel noted to director Dowling, they also establish that "Sarah is desirable" a focus of erotic interest. Bosco remarks: "It's a buck like me Sarah should have got, Jaysus, I'd never rise out of the bed except to eat" (12). The next to enter is a young woman and an old man. Anna's primary concern is her aged father, who has "been drinking for days and is

almost inarticulate" (13). Joe repeatedly promises that he will write to Anna, since clearly he has some feelings for her. But those feelings have never been articulated, they are kept repressed. The third leaving is Sarah's parents, Mary and Neil. Mary alternately criticises her foolish husband for failing to kill the dog and the younger males at the dance the night before. She only excludes her son-in-law Philly for his activity at the salmon fishing, which she takes to be a sign of sexual virility. But it also accounts for Philly's frequent absences and indicates her concern that Sarah is showing none of the signs of pregnancy after four years of marriage. The fact that Sarah is barren is troubling; Friel uses sterility as a metaphor for larger problems in the play.

This outward spatial movement that depopulates the Island acts as a counterpart to an inward movement. Friel brings two intruding strangers into the world of the island's only remaining family: Shane, an engineer, and Peter, a musician. Peter is Shane's former teacher, his benefactor, and by implication, his lover. They are urban representatives of science and art thrust into a world they find paradise only because they do not comprehend it. The irony of the fact that Peter and Shane, delighted by this rustic purity, do not know the language. Both of these movements (outward or inward) disrupt established domestic rhythms. Thus, the spatiality of home in the play can be read as one where old and established binaries (such as inside and outside) erode and new forms of chaotic and fluid spaces are beginning to emerge.

#### 4.3.3 Home as a Chaotic Space: The Role of Patriarchy

Unlike *Dancing*, what is significant about Friel's representation of the home in *The Gentle* is that it rejects the assumption that domesticity is wholly the sphere of women. The gender implications of the colonial home do not only affect women and, more significantly, the influence of patriarchy is felt by all Sweeney's house inmates. Philly, Joe and Sarah are 'subjected' beings because they occupy a subaltern status in terms of their sexuality, age, and gender. Since Manus's house is tied with patriarchy, its spatiality is produced by both the colonial power relations and the characters' attempts to subvert these relations. While this subversion ultimately dissolves the domestic patriarchy in *Dancing*, it ironically reinforces of predominant ideas of patriarchy in *The Gentle*.

While the presentation of patriarchal relationships in *Philadelphia* embraces the maternal in Madge and Lizzy, *The Gentle* relies upon the depiction of men and

women in a masculist community in which the figure of the mother is absent. Such an absence strengthens Manus's patriarchal hold on his boys: Philly and Joe. In their only scene alone together, Philly shows some curiosity about what the 'Mother' (21) had to say about her, only to be disappointed by another of Manus's blatant fabrications, this time on the somewhat touchy theme of marital togetherness:

Philly: What did he say about mother?

Joe: She had long fair hair. I never knew that,

Philly, did you?

Joe: ... And his job was to plait it every night before she went to bed.

And you should have seen his face when he was telling me.

Philly: With one hand?

Joe: One hand what?

Philly: How did he plait it with one hand? (21)

Unlike the divided Gar in *Philadelphia*, the male figures in the play, particularly Joe, flout Manus's patriarchy. Joe's relationship with his father is unsatisfactory. Joe tends to mock his father openly, in particular, when the latter forces him and Philly to stay on the island and under his roof by manipulation (19) and promised inheritances (22). So he ironically describes his father the 'King of nothing' (18) when Manus declares himself the undisputed king of Inishkeen after its depopulation. Joe, through the play, expresses his envy for those who have left: "Whatever wind there is is with them" (17) and his contempt for a life in Inishkeen, spent tending 'bloody cattle' or 'scrabbing a mouthful of spuds from the sand' (18). These feelings of contempt culminates in the play's end when he overtly confronts with Manus paternal authority, accusing Manus of cowardice – 'You – you – you haven't even the guts to bid them goodbye' (18).

What characterises patriarchy in *The Gentle* is its association with the misogynistic. The play opens on a symbolic scene in which Nora Dan is ferociously attacked by men who have decided to transfer her into another boat against her will. This scene is further filtered by the tale of the Monks. Two young monks were turned to stone because they fell in love with the old monk's niece and tried to escape with her from the island. While the story has obvious contemporary parallels with youth's disruptive sexuality, the frustrated escape and the conflict between old and young, it signifies the depiction of the abbot's niece as unsettling the composure of male society (32–3):

Peter: I imagine, if you could see them, they're trying to escape now.  
 Manus: Who?  
 Peter: The monks and the girl.  
 Manus: Them. Hah! They're wasting their time. They'll make nothing of it  
 (54).

Sweeney's cottage is a contested space, shaped by a similar misogynistic patriarchy. In terms of the customs of the gentle island, Sarah's value as a married woman is in having children. Having failed to produce children for Manus's kingdom, Sarah is ostracized, mistreated and forced to occupy the margin. This ostracism is reflected in Manus's frequent attempts to ignore her presence, and not even mention her when he introduces his house inmates to Peter and Shane:

And it's seldom enough we have company. This is my son, Joe. And I'm Manus Sweeney. I'm the - hah! - [...] *Tea, woman*. Come in [...] (All enter kitchen except [...] SARAH) [...] You'll have to meet Philly. The best fisherman on this coast. And Joe here's our farmer. And I'm the - what's the word for it? - I'm the coordinator. That's it. We're a self-contained community here (GI, 30: *Italics Mine*)

Noticeably, Manus has not forgotten Sarah; in fact, his speech cited above is interrupted by his tough order to her to make tea. She similarly figures as the one who is expected to make dinner (39) and supper (53).

Sarah might be viewed as a victim by her husband, being subordinated to his conservatism and materialism. This is reflected in the dialogues that occurred between her and her husband. These are characterized initially by a series of authoritative, mechanical questions concerning Philly's welfare and his catch, and contain a pointed reference to his father as the one person he is able to satisfy. He also tends to repress her. In a significant exchange with him before the arrival of Shane and Peter, Sarah provides some insights into her later actions:

Sarah: Maybe if you spent less time on it [fishing] we might be better off.  
 Philly: Farming? Here?  
 Sarah: You and me. (Pause)  
 Philly: I'm tired.  
 Sarah: You're always tired when you're at home.  
 Philly: I was up all night, woman. When you and the rest of them were away drinking and dancing I was working.  
 Sarah: So you were (25).

Sarah has a contemptuous attitude towards Manus, and what she views as the pernicious authority he exerts over her husband. She pictures her own narrative of neglect as a consequence of Manus's account on his wife, Rosie Dubh, his Dark Rosaleen- and the abuse that has led to madness. Philly's sexual indifference and impotence are, according to her psychological 'truth', the direct product of Manus's promiscuity and its aftermath of marital negligence: "Joe doesn't know the truth. But Philly does. And he'll never forgive you for it. And if he can't father a family, you're the cause of it" (57). As a way of resisting Manus's authority, Sarah threatens him to reveal his dark secret - that he did not lose his arm in a mining accident in Montana, but that it was cut off by the uncles of his pregnant girlfriend in an act of vengeance on the island itself:

SARAH: And that's how the arm was lost - in that fight. And he married Rosie then because he had to - he was stuck here; there's no living in England for one-armed labourers. But by that time Rosie was past caring. And a month after her second son was born she went out for a walk along the cliffs on the east side and was never seen since (58).

If the representation of home is metaphorically interpreted as representing political, cultural and sexual dysfunction, Sarah might be seen as an incarnation of those elements - within the state of Northern Ireland /within the nationalist community of the North/within 'Catholic Ireland'/within any society/within the human psyche - that, if repressed, excluded, silenced, are likely at some stage to lead to violence as the subsequent section shows.

#### 4.3.4 Strangers at Home

As harmony is removed from Sweeney's house, its political nature is stripped away to reveal a space of tensions. Filled with disorder and chaos, Friel's representation of the home challenges the nationalistic ideal of domestic space, and robustly questions its status as a hearth, or a site of order. The home in *The Gentle* is explicitly a space where negotiations of power are externalised through a number of the 'uncanny' events which are associated firstly with the incursion of the two strangers, who are representatives of the public space, into the private space of home and then the discovery of their secrets. For the purpose of this section, the uncanny is understood as the feeling that occurs when the familiar becomes strange and the boundary between the homely and unhomely is blurred (Freud, 1919). The effect of these events is to show the processes of chaos and change; Shane's queer 'presence', and Sarah's overt and

Philly's ambiguous sexual reactions to it, will further subvert an already fraught domestic 'political' space.

Although Shane and Peter are from Dublin, Sarah initially thinks they are "Yanks" (28) and Manus calls them "strangers" (49). The central image is an island, which seems idyllic but has hidden undertones of violence. While Peter affectionately embraces the "heavenly" island and its people, Shane remains detached, finding the Island menacing: "Apache name means scalping island" (p. 26); the name could in fact be read as inisscian or "knife island". Shane is an orphan without any living relatives; even his relationship with Peter is, as he puts it to Sarah, one of "Obligation, sired by Duty out of Liability" (37). Initially, Manus, having no idea of their homosexuality, welcomes Peter and Shane. For his part, Peter gives Manus a clock for the household as an expression of intimacy. Manus befriends Peter because of their similarities and shared values. Peter's admiration of Manus' 'permanence' (54) is succinctly conveyed in his own expectation of 'a modest permanence' from Shane (42).

Peter and Shane's homosexuality forms "otherness". Manus's 'self-contained community' is not flexible enough to welcome Peter and Shane because their homosexuality cannot be easily incorporated into the island's dominant patriarchal structure. Their homosexuality is disruptive as it firstly threatens the status quo of the home and has led to violence. This is shown in two important scenes. The first is a dark, 'Strindbergian' dance of desire initiated by Shane and the second is the scene where Manus and Sarah await the return of the young man so they can shoot him (described in Friel's notes as 'the ritual'), Using Boltwood's description, both of these scenes are emblematic. I would here contend that the dramatic power of these scenes lies in producing a spatial chaotic effect that transforms the domestic space into a space of violence.

The dance scene symbolically captures the relationship between the characters and its configuration in terms of their bodies that spatially operate. At the centre of the scene is Shane singing 'Oh, Susannah' and trying to draw the other characters into his dance. But from its very beginning there is a choreography of movement among and between the characters that makes of the whole scene a dance of changing desires. Shane first tries to dance with Philly, who roughly refuses, and then attempts to dance with Sarah, who slaps his face:

SHANE: pretends the slap has sent him reeling. He recovers. He goes after SARAH again as she goes into the kitchen and then into her bedroom. As he pretends to follow her into the kitchen PHILLY trips him at the door. He falls. The laughter rises. He gets up - without

breaking his song - and pretends to stagger after her. PHILLY shoves him roughly back. He falls against JOE. JOE pushes him away. He falls against PETER. PETER shies away from him and looks around in rising panic. He lurches towards PHILLY. PHILLY punches him. He falls heavily. He makes no effort to rise. He just lies there, singing. PHILLY punches him again and again.

PHILLY: Dance, you bastard! Dance! Dance! (45).

As a symbol of sexuality, the dance configures the tensions between Sarah, Philly and Shane. When Sarah first meets Shane, she affectionately talks about a summer she spent as a maid in the Arcadia Hotel on the Isle of Man (both symbolically named), in the course of which she went to fifty-one dances. She tells Shane, "You would like it" (29). Sarah blames Manus and Philly for her unhappiness, but turns her hatred for them towards Shane but he refuses to sleep with her. As Girard suggests: "like violence, repressed sexual desire accumulates energy and sooner or later bursts forth, causing tremendous havoc" (1977:8). The second emblematic scene is set in motion by the speech from Sarah to Manus that Philly, her husband and the patriarch's eldest and favourite son, the male future of the island, is down in the boathouse in the dark "with that Dublin tramp, Shane. That they're stripped naked. That he's doing for the tramp what he couldn't do for me" (61). Nonetheless, though Manus accuses Shane of having "[stolen] my son" and threatens to shoot him, his resolve fades in his hesitancy to verify either Sarah or Shane's version of events (67).

## **4.4 "The whole thing is so fragile it can't be held together much longer" Failed Domesticity in *Dancing at Lughnasa***

### **4.4.1 Introduction**

In *Dancing at Lughnasa*, a play written in 1990 and considered by most critics one of Friel's "high point[s] of critical and commercial success" (Coult: 2003, 103), the dramatist focuses on the spatial re-presentation of a purely female-dominated house situated on the fringes of Ballybeg in County Donegal. The play depicts the personal lives of five sisters: Kate, Maggie, Agnes, Rose, and Chris in Donegal in the 1930s, and exposes the way their domestic lives are forever altered by the new events and new comers. On a dramatic level, the play presents the audience with a typical Irish domestic space, comprising a house and its

surroundings. Together, it explores the spatial intricacies of the geographic locations of Ballybeg and Africa and the diversity of imagined spaces of the characters, providing useful avenues for interpreting the representation of home in the light of Massey's concept of the 'Thrown-togetherness' (2005). The 'thrown-togetherness' of space explicitly works against the romantic concepts of timeless places and pre-given identities rooted in places. Within this conception, home is produced by relations between the human and other-than-human. These relations create multiple and heterogeneous spaces in which diverse trajectories meet and co-exist; and are always in the process of being made and remade, never finished. This chapter takes up Brian Friel's *Dancing at Lughnasa* as a conceptual starting point for speculating on the thrown-together home in terms of the postcolonial spatiality of home through two spatial frameworks: the internal and the external.

#### 4.4.2 Home on Stage

One of the basic concepts in this part of the thesis is to show how Brian Friel's representation of the domestic space directly challenges the privileges of the traditional Irish cottage as a space with nationalistic potentialities. Whilst the Mundy home of *Dancing at Lughnasa* may initially suggest nostalgic potential that echoes nationalism, the relationship to nationalism is indeed interrogated. Both biographically and structurally, *Dancing at Lughnasa* is a memory play. This is established by opening and closing the play with tableaux accompanied by the narration of Michael as a young man looking back to his memories of August 1936. As described in the stage directions of the published script, as Michael begins to speak:

[T]he stage is lit in a very soft, golden light so that the tableau we see is almost, but not quite, in a haze [...] And so, when I cast my mind back to that summer of 1936, different kinds of memories offer themselves to me [...] In that memory [...] the air is nostalgic with the music of the thirties. It drifts in from somewhere far away a mirage of sound a dream music that is both heard and imagined; that seems to be both itself and its own echo; a sound so alluring and so mesmeric that the afternoon is bewitched, maybe haunted, by it (70).

In the first production of the play, this mood of nostalgic memory was given particular attention by Joe Vanek, a stage designer, who designed a stage, dominated by a golden field of wheat. As he recalled:

That we wanted a field of wheat to figure in some respect was an early decision, although there was no mention of one in the script nor did we

consider the possible complexities of achieving such a 'real' image on stage. After various experiments with angles across the box behind the house and angles rising up through the box, we conceived the field as the rear wall of the house itself, rising in an improbable but dramatic wedge.

(Vanek in Coult 2003: 206)

Michael's role, similar to Gareth's split character in *Philadelphia Here I Come*, is efficiently performed by two characters: the invisible seven-year-old boy and the embodied narrator who never participates in the action. This duality of the role reflects what is usefully identified by Gilbert and Thompkins as a dramatic strategy of postcolonial performance. "Working in opposition to exclusionary identity politics," Gilbert and Thompkins suggest, "split subjectivity enables the recognition of several even, potentially, all of the factors and allegiances that determine the syncretic colonised subject." One way of showing this on the stage is via "the presentation of a narrator who is simultaneously staged in the shape of a different actor. This strategy ensures that a single character is embodied in several ways, and even in several sites" (1996: 231-232). Friel offers Michael his introductory monologue while presenting his family in non-verbal tableau, as if to establish Michael as an "author," introducing "his" characters. This dramatic strategy creates a meta-theatrical reality in which both the narrator and his family inhabit different spatial and temporal levels. Michael is in the present time, i.e. 1990s in London, while the Mundy's residents are frozen in their Ballybeg house in 1930s. In each tableau, the characters are divided into two groups, one inside the house and the other outside in the garden:

MAGGIE is at the kitchen window (right). CHRIS is at the front door. KATE at extreme stage right. ROSE and GERRY sit on the garden seat. JACK stands beside ROSE. AGNES is upstage left. They hold these positions while MICHAEL talks to the audience (9).

The spatial position of the characters on the stage within the confines of the house represents their relationship with the place in which they live. The tableau positioning of those trapped in 'the house' Chris, Maggie, and Kate dramatizes their lives. Chris's position at the door may signify her violation of the patriarchal norms of the house as a mother of a child out of wedlock. Maggie, looking out the window, evokes a desire to escape that will never be realized. In contrast, Kate, the eldest sister and, metaphorically, the 'patriarchy' of the family occupies the extreme stage right. This spatial position shows an emotional detachment, a way to keep her sisters under her disciplinary authority. The characters who are outside the domain of the house in the "[un]cultivated garden" are Rose, Agnes,

Gerry, and Father Jack. With the exception of Fr Jack, those characters have left Ballybeg. All characters are not released until the end of Michael's monologue. Then the lighting changes and the kitchen and garden "are now lit as for a warm summer afternoon" (11).

The fact that the Mundy Home is entirely constructed as a nostalgic memory may reveal it as a metaphor for a nation which is manifested in Michael's longing and desire for home. In fact, criticism of the play often makes the presence of idyllic Ireland a much more concrete construction than the play-text actually suggests (Armitstead, 1990; Coveney, 1990; O'Donnell, 1990; Pine, 1990). For example, O'Donnell sees *Dancing at Lughnasa* as "a singularly beautiful poetic vision" (1990:69). Coveney explains that the play directs its spectators towards the "lives lost in history [that] have been given substance in art" (1990:15). The 1998 film version of the play also tends to stress a mood of nostalgic pastoral idyll of Ireland. In addition to the strong performances by a cast led by Meryl Streep (Kate) and Michael Gambon (Uncle Jack), reviewers repeatedly praised its accomplished evocation of a sense of place through accent work costuming, charming landscapes endowed with a melancholic golden hue, and the pervasive presence of traditional Irish music (Armstrong, 1998; Blue Velvet, 1999; Fung, 1998; McCarthy, 1998; O'Brien, 1998; Weitzman, 1998). In other words, all the necessities seemed to be there for yet another presentation of nostalgia, rooted in the discursive construction of Ireland as a pastoral space.

This emphasis on nostalgia foregrounds romantic concepts of timeless places with pre-given identities rooted in places. Thus space in such contexts is a singular and bounded entity as they are "sites of nostalgia [which opt-out] from progress and history" (Massey: 1994:151). Arguably, this sense of spatial rootedness is problematic. According to Massey, this encourages "reactionary nationalisms, competitive localisms and introverted obsessions with "heritage" (Ibid.). Thus, to associate a 'sense of place' with stasis, memory and nostalgia is not productive. Delving into the past for internalised origins of place is a confining practice. Through representing nostalgia in *Dancing at Lughnasa*, Friel, in my analysis, does not engage directly with the concept of an idealised version of Ireland. No references given within the text show the specifics of the play's idealised space. Conversely, what the play attempts to project is a rejection of an absolute, colonial-influenced nationalism. As in *The Gentle Island*, Friel questions the idealism and myths upon which the Republic of Ireland was founded, including the republican ideals of 1916 and the de Valerian myth of a frugal,

Catholic, Gaelic, rural Ireland as the foundation of the state. The Ireland that Friel nostalgically evokes, imagines, and creates is not one in which Ireland is a 'nation' if this is to be taken to mean a unified and homogenous space.

Based on the above, Friel's uses of nostalgia gesture towards interrogating a more intimate experience of human spatiality that is associated with a domestic space, the home as a physical location, rather than a nationalistic metaphor of idealism. This is reflected in the way Friel manipulates the stage to produce the physical space of his characters. We are presented with a micro-spatial picture of a domestic space that may appear to epitomise a traditionally 'national' Kitchen:

The room has the furnishings of the usual country kitchen of the thirties: a large iron range, large turf box beside it, table and chairs, dresser, oil lamp, buckets with water at the back door (2).

Far from dividing the home space into private and public, Friel relegates this stage picture by opening the house up to the adjoining garden which "is neat but not cultivated" (7). As Vanek explains (Coult 2003: 206):

We quickly reduced the basics of the house as described in the text to a single, diagonal wall that contained all the necessary physical elements; a stove, a press, and a door to the rest of the house. As we developed the floorplan of the kitchen and its arrangement of furniture, the walls and the windows gradually vanished and the main flagstone floor floated free as three open sides anchored by the fourth main wall with its gigantic angled beam and massive sill. The overall framing of the set developed simultaneously, from a harsh, angled granite walled box in a wash of naturalistic greens and browns of the mountainside to a more neutral, simply textured white box, hazed with a wash of amber pollen or dust.

While in *The Gentle*, one of the outer walls of the house has been eliminated, Friel reduces the walls of the Mundy home into only one. He also makes use of potent threshold spaces such as windows and doors:

There are two doors leading out of the kitchen. The front door leads to the garden and the front of the house. The second in the top right-hand corner leads to the bed-rooms and to the area behind the house. One kitchen window looks out front. A second window looks on to the garden (2).

These channels create a spatial fluidity and interconnectedness that unbound the Mundy house in two directions at once: towards the domestic and the private (the internal spatiality); and towards the public and the collective (the external spatiality). This, in its turn, suggests ideas of containment and transformation that awaited the Mundy house. As Kate puts it:

You work hard at your job. You try to keep the home together. You perform your duties as best you can - because you believe in responsibilities and obligations and good order. And then suddenly, suddenly you realize that hair cracks are appearing everywhere; that control is slipping away; that the whole thing is so fragile it can't be held together much longer. It's all about to collapse (40)

More than in *Philadelphia Here I come* or *The Gentle Island*, the spatiality of the Mundy house appears to reflect traditional ideas of nostalgia and seems to function as a mere metaphor for the nation, yet open doors and windows and removing the outer walls, combined with Michael's sense of uneasiness quickly muddle such connections. Such a representation, away from the service of colonial/nationalistic discourse, suggests an idea of chaos in the home. Thus the play begins with Michael's interrogation of the domestic space of the Mundy family by relapsing to a crucial moment in his past when he realised that things would never again be the same. As the older Michael recalls: "[E]ven though I was only a child of seven at the time I know I had *a sense of unease*; some awareness of a *widening breach* between what seemed to be and what was, of things changing too quickly before my eyes, of becoming what they ought not to be" (2; my emphasis). Michael, here, identifies holes in the fabric of the world that he evokes on the stage, things that were breached. He attributes this breaching to the external intrusions (whether human or non-human), symbolising the world, into the Mundy house. In this context, Michael's identification here reveals his recognition, relevant to the concept of home in the play, that the border between home and world are "confused; and, uncannily, the private and the public become part of each other, forcing upon us a vision that is as divided as it is disorienting" (Bhabha, 1997:16). His first monologue is a rapid delivery of a series of narratives that detail many concurrent events. "When I cast my mind back to that summer of 1936 different kinds of memories offer themselves to me", Michael recalls, "[W]e got our first wireless set that summer [...] my mother's brother, my Uncle Jack, came home from [...] a remote village called Ryanga in Uganda [...] during weeks of [the Festival of Lughnasa] we were visited [...] by my father, Gerry Evans, and for the first time in my life I had a chance to observe him" (2). This narration provides 'estranging' syntax that reveals an unhomely experience whose essence is formulated by the forcible (human and non-human) intrusions into the house of dramatic events in order to unsettle, to de-familiarise and to displace, as discussed in the subsequent sections.

#### 4.4.3 The Internal Space of the Mundy House

In her *Space, Place, and Gender* (1994), Massey suggests that all spaces are inherently gendered. As she points out:

From the symbolic meaning of spaces/places and the clearly gendered messages which they transmit, to straightforward exclusion by violence, spaces and places are not only in themselves gendered but, in their being so, they both reflect and affect the ways in which gender is constructed and understood.

(1994: 179)

Bearing this in mind, the Mundy house is viewed as a gendered space, inscribing spatial differences of nationalistic patriarchy. The play is set in the early years of the new Irish Free State. The nationalistic ideology of independent Ireland has given the male a priority over the female in all the things. According to Ann McClintock, the nationalistic movements in the emerging nations have “ever granted women and men the same privileged resources of the nation-state” (1993: 63). The woman’s right to nationhood normally relies on marriage to a male citizen, and almost always women are “subsumed only symbolically into the body of politics”, representing not themselves but “the limits of national differences between men” (Ibid). This precisely captures the main premises in De Valera’s Constitution. The Republic’s Constitution represents a particular kind of “social map” that “recognize[s] the Family as the natural primary and fundamental unit group of Society, and as a moral institution possessing inalienable and imprescriptible rights.” It also creates the “grounded rules” to regulate the gender roles and relations. According to Article 41 of the 1937 Constitution, the Irishwoman has a very specific role as “the State recognises that by her life within the home, woman gives to the State a support without which the common good cannot be achieved” (Bunreacht Na hÉireann 1937). Within the same line, Article 41 .2.2 confines the role of the married women to fulfil her domestic duties: “The State shall, therefore, endeavour to ensure that mothers shall not be obliged by economic necessity to engage in labour to the neglect of their duties in the home” (ibid). Within this conception, women are tied to hearth/home, denied to have a role, during the war of independence, in the public space in order to make a homely atmosphere based in the home after the upheavals of war.

This allocation of certain kinds of ‘gendered’ activities to certain ‘gendered’ space might be related to the idealized domesticity of the Victorian home. According to Upstone, “in English colonies and neo-colonial America, the home

followed Victorian trends in domestic practice” (2016: 118). In this context, the house is a spatial miniature for the empire “while the colonies [...] became a theatre for exhibiting the Victorian cult of domesticity that needed constant and scrupulous policing’ (1993: 34). This split results in producing an explicitly gendered space: the males are responsible for maintaining political and public order, the females are responsible for echoing this in the home, providing refuge from the perceived struggles of the marketplace in a space of harmony and rigid organisation. Thus, the idealized domesticity of Victorian society not only constructed gender roles, it did so partly to serve colonial needs. In *Dancing at Lughnasa*, Brian Friel deconstructs this colonial method of representation in such a way as to mimic it. In other words, he evokes a colonial home in order to reveal its ironies and its unhomeliness.

Initially, the Mundy house seems to signify a spatial order within which de Valera’s idea of womanhood is to be achieved. The interior space of the kitchen is well-ordered and maintained: “this is the home of five women the austerity of the furnishings is relieved by some gracious touches - flowers, pretty curtains, an attractive dresser arrangement, etc.” (2). This scene suggests that the house is a private female space. Furthermore, the first scene of the play reveals the Mundy sisters in the kitchen while they are performing their domesticated roles:

[They] busy themselves with their tasks. Maggie makes a mash for hens. Agnes knits gloves. Rose carries a basket of turf into the kitchen and empties it into the large box beside the range. Chris irons at the kitchen table. They all work in *silence*. (2)

These every-day details demonstrate how the Mundy sisters (except Kate) are stereotypically entrapped in their domestic space. Despite the fact that they have been without a male head of home, their bodies are discursively codified by patriarchal norms. Each one of the sisters has a fixed duty that never changes throughout the play. Maggie is always in the kitchen, Agnes knits and gets dinner on the table nightly. Chris, Michael’s mother, is a homemaker. The play’s emphasis on regulating the sisters’ bodies reflects how the postcolonial body, using Upstone’s words, “is not an autonomous entity, but one already marked by the colonial [power]” (2014:117). Moreover, defining the Mundy sisters in terms of their domestically corporeal roles reveals an “internalized exile” where the sister’s body “feels disconnected from itself, as though it does not belong to it and has no agency” (Katrak, 2006:2). This sense might explain why all the sisters work in silence. They are outsiders within “indigenous patriarchy” (ibid). The impossibility of having a sense of the self is shown at the beginning of the play

when Christina Mundy asks: "When are we going to get a decent mirror to see ourselves in?" to which Maggie, her sister, replies, "You can see enough to do you" (1-2). On a literal level, the women's reflection is fractured and distorted by a small, cracked mirror. But here, this nonverbal device metaphorically shows that the women's positions are fissured, unnaturally multiplied and fragmented. All of these women are not only spinsters who have desired, at some point to be married only to be thwarted, they are not wanted within their own cultural context, but their bodies are codified and regulated.

Linking *Philadelphia Here I Come* and *The Gentle Island, Dancing at Lughnasa* also utilises home as a space of colonial power relations. The Mundy house is spatially constructed by a nexus of external and internal power relations. The external is that of the unnamed priest of Ballybeg. Representing deValera's 'pious dogmatism,' the priest has the authority to victimise and to oppress the sisters and even to regulate the sisters' behaviour religiously and economically. He excludes and rejects the Mundy home by sacking Kate, the family breadwinner, from teaching when it turns out that Jack was not, after all, a heroic defender of the Catholic faith in Africa.

The internal power is ironically represented by Kate Mundy. Introduced as a "very proper woman" (9), Kate duplicates the values respected by the priest, and beyond him, by the Republic's Constitution in the stereotypes they constructed for the women. Kate Mundy is at odds with the dominant ideas of women at the time. She is not a dependant but a breadwinner, adopting an asexual role in order to support her family. In many ways, she is a 'manly woman' in her advocates of the religious and political views on social morality and restriction. As she is subjected to the moral teachings of the Catholic Church and narrow-minded attitudes of 1930s nationalist politics, so she subjects her sisters to them. Thus the presence of these relations with the spatial domain of the Mundy house asserts its status as a space of hierarchies.

Furthermore, Kate acts as a conscience that represses the libido of the five sisters. Each of the Mundy sisters is sexually repressed. This is suggested by their recollections of past loves; their desire to dance and their reactions for Gerry's coming:

The news throws the sisters into chaos. Only CHRIS stands absolutely still, too shocked to move. AGNES picks up her knitting and work with excessive concentration. ROSE and MAGGIE change their footwear. Everybody dashes about in confusion - peering into the tiny mirror, bumping into one another, peeping out the window, combing hair (30).

Michael's existence suggests that Chris has been aware of her sexuality. There is a palpable sexual attraction between Gerry and Agnes. It is also hinted that Rose has a relation in the back hills with Danny Bradley. Maggie dreams of her youthful love of Brian McGuinness "with the white hands and the longest eyelashes you ever saw" (73) and laughingly contemplates the polygamous marital system of the Ryanagans. However, all these desires are repressed and carefully monitored by Kate. The Mundy sisters contribute to the maintenance and smooth running of a patriarchal system under which these women are oppressed.

#### 4.4.4 The External spaces of the Mundy House

In his 1999 study of Brian Friel, McGrath has suggested that the myth of the Irish revival unmask an Irish psyche that is fundamentally pagan, hidden under a Catholic façade. The Irish twentieth century interest in Celtic folk beliefs, fairy lore, supernaturalism and superstitions is only a manifestation for this myth. For McGrath, this myth is particularly relevant to the protestant writers of the revival like Synge and Yeats who attempt to remove the Celtic, peasant Ireland from its religious mask. While Friel contributes to this myth, he, following Joyce, revises it by not minimizing the role of paganism or its religious veneer. Looking at *Dancing at Lughasa* and *Wonderful Tennessee*, McGrath explains that paganism and Catholicism have equal proportions: "the paganism in these two plays is sufficiently generalized to suggest that beneath the veneer of civilization we are all Dionysiacs, Nietzsche and Freud, especially the former, are as relevant to these plays as Celtic gods and rituals" (234:1999). The efforts of scholars like those of McGrath have worked to highlight the frequent use Friel makes of religion and paganism in his work. However, such investigations, with their focus simply on instances of these concepts remain analytically at the level of text. Here, I want to extend and refine these argument. More specifically, I want to suggest that paganism functions as a subversive space that destabilises, unsettles, (and interrogates) the colonial spatial order and control.

In her theory of space, Massey has suggested that space, including the home-space, is a thrown-togetherness. The Mundy house is a spatial manifestation of this. It is a space that not only brings five unmarried sisters together, but it also breaks up its local coherence by linking it to the wider space of Ballybeg, the back-hills and Africa in such a way as to illuminate a spatial antagonism between the discursive Irish state religion of Catholicism and the non-discursive marginalised signs of Irish/African paganism. Thus, images of Catholicism,

intermingled with those of paganism, are shown in the Marconi Radio, in the dance of the five sisters, the images of wheat onstage, the bilberries picked by Rose and Agnes, and the pagan practices in the “back hills” above Ballybeg, all combine to produce the unhomely effect of the world-in -the home within the Mundy house.

In evoking Celtic and African paganism, Friel is not merely attempting to show Irish or African paganism as manifested specifically through the harvest festival of Lughnasa or the Ugandan Reygan but to affirm their importance in producing a fluid space, impregnating it with a political purpose of subversion, thus this transforms the space of the Mundy house home into a space of resistance and change. As Friel has admitted that “*Dancing at Lughnasa* is about the necessity for paganism” (2003:222). The various images associated with the Festival of Lughnasa or Raygan in the play operate flawlessly to demonstrate this necessity and its persistence in the Mundy house. While audience attention is drawn to the sisters’ wild dance in Act One and the Michael’s memory of that dance, Friel also memorably evokes the marginalized dancing round the Lughnasa fires in the “back hills” above Ballybeg. Rose has already told Kate about the bonfires that are lit “beside a spring well” and the dancing that takes place round this bonfire (16). These images are wholly consistent with to Jack’s account of the African Festivals of Ryanga where hundreds of people offering sacrifices to Obi, the Goddess of the earth (47); how love-children were desired by Ryangan household (39-41); how the Ryangan religious ceremonies shade their secular celebration and how: “there is no distinction between religious and the secular in their culture” (48).

The use of paganism produces two spaces: the real/rational space and the non-verbal space. While the first is linked with Ballybag community and how they see the harvest festivals, the second is related to the private world of the Mundy family and how paganism has an effect on their house. As far as the real space is concerned, the practices of Lughnasa are subversive and dangerous, imbued with satanic practices and mysteries. Kate reports from a local gossip that “[T]hey were doing some devilish thing with a goat—some sort of sacrifice for the Lughnasa Festival; the Sweeney was so drunk he toppled over into the middle of the bonfire” (5). Here, the name 'Sweeney' has specifically pagan connotations in the villagers’ mind. Elmer Andrews notes that “the boy’s name links him with the ancient Irish archetype of pagan disobedience and impiety, the legendary Sweeney who defied the Christian authorities and was punished by being condemned to fly around like a bird for the rest of his life” (1995, 226). Thus his

story is elaborated, through Ballybeg people's mind, into horrific extents: "[h]e was anointed last night [. . .] Not an inch of his body that isn't burned [. . .] He knows he's dying [. . .] Just lies there moaning" (16). This vilification of Lughnasa rites reveals a spatial conflict, upon which the concept of home is constructed, between what is real and what is imagined, between Ballybeg and the back hills or Uganda. This implies a metaphorical elimination of physical stability which is a significant subversion of the home's status as a space of hierarchies. This is facilitated by the destabilisation of language. Thus the use of music and dancing in the play contributes to the creation of a non-verbal space.

The Irish and African images of paganism are injected into the spatial domain of the Mundy house through the deployment of Marconi, a radio-set the sister bought that summer. Marconi looms so importantly in the play that it becomes almost a character in itself. Understanding its role in the Mundy house and how it intermittently stimulates the sister's dancing enables a deep understanding of the concept of home as a thrown-together space. The sisters look at the radio as a symbol of paganism. Maggie wants to call it "Lugh after the old Celtic God of the Harvest," but Kate strongly rejects that saying: "it would be sinful to christen an inanimate object with any kind of name, not to talk of a pagan god" (1). This symbol was given a particular emphasis in the Abbey Theatre's 2000 production. This production provided a brochure to the play. In this brochure, Marconi has a grotesque face, surrounded by waving golden wheat, occupies the top half of the house. Such a presence is suggestive of its uncanniness and its power as something strange and unfamiliar with a potentiality of unsettling the domestic space of the sisters. In this regard, Michael's description of the radio music as 'voodoo' is useful. This draws audience's attention to its uncanny and pagan feature. Firstly Marconi violates the house of the 'sensible women' and then transforms them into 'shrieking strangers' (2). An important example of Marconi's power over the sisters is revealed by the sisters' devotion in listening to it. Part of this stems from the radio's poor reception. When it does burst into life, the sisters generally drop everything they are doing and listen intently and often then dance. Marconi's power is developed throughout the play to reach its climax in the dancing scene. Regarding its influence on the Mundy house, F. C. McGrath usefully likens Marconi to Henry Adams's dynamo in *The Education of Henry Adams* in its unseen and mysterious energy. While it generates a nostalgia, it is related to the process of modernization embodied by the knitting factory that destroys Agnes and Rose's career. Thus it uncannily signifies the demise of an era for which the nostalgia is generated.

Thus, while Marconi represents a subversive power for conventional values, it creates a non-verbal space within the spatial domain of the Mundy house through music. The function of this space is understood in terms of Friel's assertion that "what music can provide in the theatre [is] another way of talking, a language without words. And because it is wordless it can hit straight and unmediated into the vein of deep emotions" (Murray, 1999:177). From this point, the non-verbal space of the Mundy house provides an alternative space for the Mundy sisters to transcend the ordinariness of their lives via music and to put them, as Michael says, puts them "in touch with some otherness" (9). This otherness is represented by re-claiming a union with the bodies that have been oppressed and repressed. This is seen in the dance scene. What provides a stimulus for the eruption of the wild dancing of the sisters is a reel tune, "The Mason's Apron," played by a Céilí band which is a traditional Irish music. The use of this particular brand of music is suggestive of a sense of subversion. The dancing of the sisters occurs within their domestic space which is, as shown in the previous section, a space of colonial/patriarchal order. Through their dancing, the Mundy sisters seem to be conscious of the fact that they are violating this order. Rose throws away her knitting, signifying the cottage industries of deValera. Chrissie throws Jack's surplice, the Catholic Church, to join in the dance. As Friel suggests, "there is a sense of order being consciously subverted" to the point of 'near hysteria'. Here the dancing of the sister is an act of deterritorialisation that disintegrates the Mundy home, eliminating it from its ideal (nationalistic) position, and providing new opportunities for its occupants. What the sisters perform with their dancing is an act of rupture of the boundary between the real space and the imagined when, this is exactly the chaos necessary to disrupt the colonial order of the domestic space that consumes them.

Confining the dancing of the sisters into the domestic space of the house has nothing to do with submission or obedience. I do not agree with what Terry John Bates, the choreographer of *Dancing at Lughnasa* under Patrick Mason's direction, has suggested that such a confinement is only to assert the women obedience to the patriarchal orders of their community. He explains:

You have to have that feeling of claustrophobia. If they all start to prance around the stage, you've lost that claustrophobia in the kitchen. I think you've got to keep the frustration of these women. There's only Kate who goes out to the garden and dances because she doesn't want to be seen to be dancing inside houses (in Coult 2003, 193).

Bates argues that the oldest sister escapes to the garden because she is unable to withstand the pressure and the intensity of emotions within the house; thus Bates gives another suggestion: "They [the sisters] are doing extreme things. I mean Kate would never dance in that kitchen, but maybe she's been driven to do it. She has to get out of the house, and this is a very awful moment, really. They're all letting off steam" (in Coult 2003, 196). My argument here is that Kate's to and fro movement between the house and the garden suggests a mode of behaviour that is out of her character and simultaneously indicative of some deep and true emotion. (Friel 1990, 22). Kate, who "identifies most with repressive religious authority" (McMullan, 1999: 97), simultaneously "fights against her moments of 'otherness', because her return to her mundane self is the harsher for the contrast" (Cave, 2006:194).

The other four sisters who remain within the physical confines of the house throughout their dance create an imaginary space in which they openly express their repressed desires through their bodily movements. In his stage directions, Friel advises that their initial movements do not underscore the idea of togetherness, but rather the individuality of the women. The dancing scene is divided into two phases. The first phase is the individual performance. Each sister reads the music in her own unique way in order to create imagined spaces that are visually represented by her bodily movements. This gives us the impression as if they were occupying separate physical spaces which are not overlapping. For example. Maggie's "look of defiance, of aggression [and] crude mask of happiness" and wild shouts "Come and join me! Come on! Come on!" (Friel, 1990:21) denotes an imagined space that is, in McMullan's words, being "the most subversive, with her wicked, provocative sense of fun, her parodic dances, and her 'Wild Woodbines'" (1999, 97). Her dancing movements demonstrate her allegiance to the world of back hills, the far-away Ryanga rather than the ordered and repressive village. Compared with the dancing styles of other sisters, Rose's "wellingtons pounding out their own erratic rhythm" (Friel, 1990: 21) visually expresses her unrefined, simple-minded nature. Agnes is the one who "moves most gracefully, most sensuously" (Friel, 1990:21). As Mason recalls, "He [Friel] was very specific about Agnes— she was a very nice dancer. She was the best dancer. I think he had a soft spot for Agnes" (in Coult 2003, 193). Consequently, her dance denotes her "highly intelligent and sensitive but harbouring deeply repressed desires" (McMullan, 1999: 97) that is apparent in her dancing with Gerry that is imbued with erotic tension and ambiguity. The second phase of the dancing scene is the collective performance when all of the sister

“meet [and] retreat [. . .] form a circle and wheel round and round [. . .] [with] their arms tightly around one’s another’s neck, one another’s waist” (Friel, 1990: 21-22). As each woman celebrates her corporeality we see that they transcend ideological, discursive regulation. Their non-systematic dance is beyond either colonial or patriarchal control, transforming their domestic space to a space of resistance. Using Soja’s terms, the diversity of the sisters’ dancing styles creates multiple imagined micro-spaces in which the female characters express their repressed feelings and anxieties, thus the Mundy house in this sense becomes a form of third space in which “everything is simultaneously actual and illusory” (75).

#### 4.4.5 Conclusion

As stated in the introduction, the analysis presented in this part of my thesis has been conducted with the main aim of identifying to what extent the domestic space of the home and the conceptualisation of internal and external space contributes to the spatiality of home as a political space. Through this part, I have outlined how what I see in Brian Friel as a postcolonial playwright has used the domestic space as a source of resistance. Constructing fluid, open and chaotic spaces, *Philadelphia*, *The Gentle Island*, and *Dancing at Lughnasa* offer models of home spatiality that may be seen to challenge nationalistic absolutes. Here, home space is not a pre-given entity. It is chaotic space that firstly captures the postcolonial experience of home, and then, gestures towards the possibility of subverting a nationalistic order that comes to signify.





## Chapter 5: Spatial Representations of Homeland in *Aristocrats*, *Translations* and *The Home place*

### 5.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter is an attempt to analyse the concepts of the Big House, nation and Hemait in *Aristocrats*, *Translations* and *The Home place*. In the previous part of this thesis, I suggest that Brian Friel effectively challenges the use of the house as a nationalistic ideal by the politicisation of the domestic space. While this part takes up the same line of the argument, foregrounding a postcolonial representation of home as an inherently political space, it complicates this representation in relation to class, nation and race.

### 5.2 A Postcolonial Treatment of the Big House in *Aristocrats*

*Aristocrats* premiered at the Abbey Theatre in Dublin on 8 March 1979 and won the New York Drama Critics award for the best foreign play in 1989, the play deals with the concept of the Big House. It is set during several days in the mid-1970s at the aristocratic Ballybeg home of the O'Donnell family. The four grown children (Judith, Casimir, Alice, and Claire) are gathered for Claire's wedding to a fifty-year greengrocer widower from the village. Throughout the course of three acts, the children, along with Alice's husband Eamon, a villager named Willie Diver, and an American academic, Dr. Thomas Hoffnung, who is studying the history of the family, recollects and squabble about their respective lives. When the patriarch of the family, Justice O'Donnell/Father, dies at the end of Act Two, Claire's marriage is postponed. Casimir, Alice, and Eamon make plans to return to their homes abroad immediately, as Judith declares that she will be selling the family home due to lack of funds. As the funeral becomes the central focus of the family gathering, rather than the wedding, the O'Donnell family's final decay is represented in one overwhelming display of dramatic irony. This chapter analyses the spatial representation of Big House in *Aristocrats* and how this corresponds to, contrasts, expands or contradicts the traditional concept of home. To a significant extent, *Aristocrats* recognises the role of the Big House as

a metaphor for a colonised nation. Indeed, the play reasserts the connections between domestic space and colonial powers. Yet, the use of metaphor does not serve to produce a nationalistic space; rather it creates a counter-space that dismantles and reveals the disparities of the colonial structure is based upon.

### 5.2.1 The Tradition of the Big House

In her study, *The Big House in Ireland: Reality and Representation*, Jacqueline Genet considers the tradition of the Big House as part and parcel of the Irish history, established by the English colonisers (1991:15). In 1170, Richard of Clare, called Strongbow, invaded Ireland and invented an architectural design of the Big House to assert English authority and identity. The Big House was not impressive in its architecture. However, it was sharply contrasted with the peasants' cottages or the "shebeens" which William Carleton describes so well in *Valertline McCluhy*. For long centuries, the high walls of the Big House separated the Gaelic population from the English invaders, thus functioning as a symbol of a colonial domination. In the seventeenth and eighteenth century, the evolution of the Big House in Ireland had reached its zenith in the period when it became the Protestant Big House of the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy. As a term 'Ascendancy' refers to a ruling class of "a narrow social and political elite [...] who sat in the Irish-Parliament or who exercised significant influence over the return of the 300 members of the House of Commons" (1991:15). This class is politically influential. It legalises a number of rules, known as the Penal Laws (1704), against the Catholics. Among these laws were the exclusion of the Catholics from almost all public institutions such as universities, the legal profession, the armed forces, education (either as teachers or pupils); their banning from possessing arms; and not allowing them to own a horse worth more than five pounds. Moreover due to legislation against the inheritance among Catholics, the lands of Roman Catholics passed into Protestant hands. While many of these landowners and landlords chose to manage their estates through managers and become absentee landlords, others built their Big Houses on the Roman Catholic lands. These houses are not truly castles yet they represent the strongholds of the landed aristocracy. In contrast with the surrounding rural Irish cottages and hovels, impoverished, predominantly Catholic, the Big House comes to signify the wealth and power of the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy as a class as they straddled the chasm between the colonized and their colonizers, the imperialistic English. Coole Park and Lissadell are two of the most famous Big Houses celebrated in Anglo-Irish writings, and both were acquired by Protestant families during the eighteenth

century. The famine was a turning point for the Big House in Ireland, for many land lords whose wealth depended on tenancy experienced great difficulty. The decline of the Big House was dramatic. As the historian Michael Winstanely puts it: “[F]rom the 1880s, landowners were willing and needed to sell out because, almost without expectation, landowners were in debt” (2012:69).

According to W. J. McCormack, the tradition of the ‘Big House’ does not enter into Irish literary discourse until the late nineteenth century after the actual historical demise of Anglo-Irish Ascendancy. This tradition deals with the Big House as a space of traditional values, belonging exclusively to the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy. In the novel, it can be traced back to Maria Edgeworth’s *Castle Rackrent* (1800), Somerville and Ross’s *The Real Charlotte* (1894) and Elizabeth Bowen’s *The Last September* (1929), and continuing in many later works such as Molly Keane’s *The Rising Tide* (1937), Aidan Higgins’ *Langrishe, Go Down* (1966) and Jennifer Johnston’s *The Captains and the Kings* (1972). In the Irish theatre, the Big House is prominently figured in Dion Boucicault’s *The Colleen Bawn* (1860), W. B. Yeats’s *Purgatory* (1939) and Lennox Robinson’s *The Big House* (1929), Killycreggs in *Twilight* (1937). This presence of the Big House is a topic of intense debate. For Deane, the use of the Big House theme represents a ‘retrograde act’ following a patrician Yeatsian trends in Irish literature that “distorted history in the service of myth” (1985: 32). He considers the Big House in Irish literature to be anachronistic, “far from the contemporary reality”, and advises to seek “our intellectual allegiances and our understanding of our history elsewhere” (Ibid.). In contrast, Andrew Parkin opposes Deane’s view that the revival of the Big House in Irish writing is an ‘artificial’ process; he explains:

It is, on the contrary, entirely natural: the corpse is exhumed by some for the purposes of revenge; by others it is resurrected in the nostalgic and ambivalent imagination, for they are its apologists and its critics ... What we are encountering is the tenacious hold of a form of rural culture over the modern imagination, however cosmopolitan. This is partly accounted for by the immense energy of the pastoral – here is the Irish version of pastoral (Parkin in Genet: 217).

However, Parkin’s explanation of The Big House as an ‘Irish version of pastoral’ and Deane’s view of it as a propagator of distorted myths serve to complete each other. As Gearóid Cronin usefully notes:

What Deane is criticizing and what Parkin fails to perceive is the complicity of most Big House literature in the fabrication of the myth of an idyllic rural Ireland which fails to take account of the historical and political reality. (Cronin 1991: 217).

Friel deconstructs this idyllic version of Ireland as suggested by the Big House tradition in his work. His very early treatment of the Big House is the short story "Foundry House," collected in *A Saucer of Larks*. The story deals with the homecoming of Joe Brennan and his family, a wife and nine children, to his family's old home, "The gate lodge to Foundry House (52). In his return, Joe attempts to come in terms with his memories in light of the present circumstances. The Hogan family, who live in Foundry House, are "supposed to be one of the best Catholic families in the North of Ireland" (52); however, the Hogans have lost all the grandeur and authority that they once did. Interestingly, the Hogans appear to have no trouble accepting their current status. Many of the elements of this story, like the crumbling of the Big House and the generational gap, have re-appeared in *Aristocrats*.

While *Aristocrats* ostensibly chronicles the deterioration of a family home in much the same way as 'Foundry House', it depicts a more obvious construction of a house, it is in the play that depictions of the home are useful for an analysis of postcolonial spatiality. The opulent house that is "overlooking the village of Ballybeg, County Donegal, Ireland" (251) is a 1970s home of District Justice O'Donnell" (151), represented by the Ballybeg Hall, existing in the shadow of British colonialism and Protestant Ascendancy, owned by a family still influenced by the legacy of colonial past. Yet it also presents an impeccable illustration of the 'house as house'. Generational shifts and family tensions are blatantly evident, and thus, the ideal 'house as nation' is again interrogated. What is uncanny, here, is that this house is inhabited by a Catholic, not Protestant, family that manages to attain wealth and status. As Tom Hoffnung, an American sociologist, explains this to Eamon:

Tom: Well, when we talk about the big house in this county, we usually mean the Protestant big house with its Anglo-Irish tradition and culture; and the distinction is properly made between that tradition and culture and what we might call the native Irish tradition and culture which is Roman Catholic.

Eamon: With reservations-yes. So?

Tom: So what I'm researching is the life and life-style of the Roman Catholic big house no means as thick on the ground but still there; what we might call a Roman Catholic aristocracy-for want of a better term.

(281)

This uncanniness can be read as an act of mimicry. Under colonialism, mimicry is seen as an opportunistic pattern of behaviour: the person in power is "copied" because the mimic aspires to have access to that same power one day. The Big House, thus, can be seen as a performative space where the members of the O'Donnell family, as a Roman Catholic gentry, have taken the roles of the mimics of the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy which is in itself a mimicry of the English

colonisers. By definition, the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy is an amalgamation of English and Irish cultural customs that were living in the manner of the English landed gentry and imitating the Celtic customs of the indigenous population. In this sense, the O'Donnell are dual mimics, ironically imitating both the coloniser and the colonised. Their status is hybrid and Janus-faced: English but not quite and equally Irish but not quite. Not only has the O'Donnell had a hybrid status between English and Irish cultures, but they also exist in a precarious space between Irish and Anglo-Irish societies, unable to fit into either. They are excluded from both the Anglo-Irish society because of their religion and from the lower class of Ballybeg because of their social and economic status. When the village boys, including Willie Diver, ridicule Casimir on his return from school, they reflect a distance that villagers keep between themselves and the O'Donnell. Eamon alludes to the way the peasants perceive the gentry:

let's see can we help the Professor. What were the questions again? What political clout did they wield? (Considers. Then sadly shakes his head) what economic help were they to their co-religionists? (Considers. Then sadly shakes his head) what cultural effects did they have on the local peasantry? Alice? (Considers. Then sadly shakes his head) we agree, I'm afraid. Sorry, Professor. Bogus thesis (281).

Here, while Eamon is humorous, he suggests that the Catholic aristocracy was not generally respected by the lower citizens of Ballybeg. This is aggravated by a reference within the play that the O'Donnell family become aristocrats through allegiance to the English imperialism by being "without locality [...] administering the law for anyone who happened to be in power" (294), which would alienate them from the peasant.

Thus, the focus on a Catholic Ascendancy rather than a Protestant one is relevant. It does not only seem, as Tony Corbett suggests, to eliminate the play from any political implications as being an indictment of traditional upper-class Protestantism or British colonialism (2002:75). Rather, I am suggesting that this focus enables Friel, who considers himself allied neither to the Northern state nor to the Republic, to reveal a postcolonial dilemma. This is manifested by the members of O'Donnell family who are denied prestige and political power, aspire to attain social standing, and thus their physical space represents the impact of a political process of colonialism. This allows two important arguments to be advanced. First, the Big House simultaneously functions as a colonial as well as a postcolonial space. It is colonial as it is produced by the act of mimicry in which the O'Donnell family attempt to be a replica of their colonisers, as seen in the physical production of home and by the character of the father. It is a

postcolonial space as it interrogates the power on which the house is based in such a way as to reveal its inconsistency.

### 5.2.2 The Spatial Representations of the Big House

While *Philadelphia* split the central character into two, *Aristocrats*, with no single character dominating, split the stage space in two to present simultaneously an interior and exterior spaces. Ballybeg Hall has its study upstage right; but two-thirds to three-quarters of the set is the outside garden. The removed wall exposes the interior space of the home to the audience. This also facilitates the characters' spatial movements from one space into the other. In the production of *Aristocrats* at London's Royal National Theatre in 2005, Tom Cairns combines the roles of director and designer. He used the Lyttelton's revolving stage for producing a significant effect of adjusting the spatial relationship between the inside and the outside in each act of the play. This spatial simultaneity enables Friel to demonstrate how the House metaphorically reflects the status of its residents. In doing so, he deploys gothic elements in such a way to question the status of the O'Donnell Big House as a representative for colonial authority. The Ballybeg Hall is physically spatialized in a state of shabbiness: the roof leaks, the floors are rotting, the gazebo is falling down, the seats are rusted and buckets are dispersed around the decaying rooms to catch the water when it rains. The family can no longer afford its maintenance or even to heat it properly in the winter. In his study of Horror Fiction, Victor Saga has suggested that the concept of the Big House is "a perfect emblem of the ravaged body, the dead sight of the world's insults: yet sinister and aggressive, as if this dross might resurrect itself in a frightening, attenuated form of life" (1988: 17). Within this conception, the physical deterioration of the house is symbolically reflected in the ravaged corporality of the father, District Justice O'Donnell, paralysed from a stroke, emotionally and physically incapable, and fixated on the past. This physical connection is metaphoric, demonstrating a particular experience that is related to the deterioration of the colonial authority.

This colonial infiltration of the Big House cannot be ignored in *Aristocrats*; it is personified by the unseen presence of the father who internalizes the negative attributes of a colonizer. Though he is physically incapable, and his presence is reduced to a disembodied voice coming through a baby alarm, he is still capable of controlling the space of home through his domineering voice. On more than one occasion, his voice leads Casmir, his son, to a tearful, frantic breakdown.

Presented as an oppressive power, the father, as Casimir says, is very "adept at stifling things" (307). He is always aggressive, he orders people around, he reproaches people. He refused to allow Claire to develop her musical talent because, even though he had married an itinerant actress himself, he did not want "an itinerant musician" for a daughter. His stifling of Claire suggests perhaps what drove his wife to suicide. He also humiliated Judith, who took care of him and his household after the death of his wife, by persistently reminding her how she had "betrayed the family" (257) with her political and sexual adventures in Derry

The deterioration of the physical structures of the Big House also denotes a deteriorating status for the O'Donnell aristocratic class. This is captured by the symbolic representation of the marriage that is transformed into a funeral. The family gathering for Claire's marriage is transformed into a funeral with the death of the father, the symbol of authority. Claire's wedding to a common man may appear to symbolise a funeral of the aristocratic tradition itself. It is here Friel deviates from the tradition of the Big House by eschewing a sense of that nostalgia. The Ballybeg Hall is not a space of idealism or nostalgia. According to McGrath, "Aristocrats has the potential to be a nostalgic piece for the aristocratic Ireland, but Friel is much less nostalgic and more realistic about the decline of the Irish aristocracy than, say, Yeats" (1999:148). Thus, the metaphorical usage of the Big House as a colony reveals the inconsistencies of the colonial order the house is based upon. Rather than idealising or eulogising the Big House, Friel avoids this by accepting the in-avoidability of the decline and by recognizing that the passing of the tradition comprises a liberation as well as a loss. Alice expresses this ambivalence in terms of the possibilities that the closing of Ballybeg Hall opens up for her: she says, "I don't know what I feel. Maybe a sense of release; of not being pursued; of the possibility of [...] of 'fulfilment [...] No. Just emptiness. Perhaps maybe a new start" (324). Commenting on the liberating prospects of aristocratic decline, George O'Brien says that the O'Donnells are "fortuitously freed into a future that catches them somewhat unawares but nevertheless willing to make a go of it" (1989, 92).

### **5.3 Re- Mapping Home: Brian Friel's *Translations***

"What kind of space are we talking about? And to whom does it belong?" (Smyth, 1991:4). These are the questions that *Translations* (1980) are engaged in, looking at home space and defining its condition and ownership, politically,

socially, culturally and discursively. In this chapter, my analysis focuses on the negotiation of home space, identity, and relationships in a post-colonial Ireland as staged in *Translations*. Henri Lefebvre asserts that understanding a space means breaking down its “image of immobility,” transforming it into a “nexus of in and out conduits” (Lefebvre, 1974:93). As will be seen, Friel’s home spaces are flexible and rely on characters’ subjective interpretations. However, this sense of flexibility will undergo a rupture in dramatic meanings and representations throughout the play. This rupture takes place in both the interiority of the characters, and within their perception of home space in which they reside. Friel’s *Translations* concentrate on moments of homecomings, arrivals and spatial, cultural, linguistic dis-posessions which enact Friel’s postcolonial sense of home spatiality as an unhomely space. This kind of spatiality is usefully read in relation to Edward Soja’s concept of ‘thirdspace’ which is a “ purposefully tentative and flexible term that attempts to capture what is actually a constantly shifting and changing milieu of ideas, events, appearances, and meanings”(Soja,1996:2). As I will show, Friel models, deconstructs, and explores the meaning of space in his play.

### 5.3.1 *Translations*: Text Background

The founding of the Field Day Theatre Company in 1980 by Brian Friel and the actor Stephen Rea and the production of their first play, *Translations*, was a turning point in Irish theatre history. Friel, from Derry, and Rea, from Belfast, had attained international fame, but both were frustrated by the absence of a theatre company in Northern Ireland that might address the issues of political violence, cultural segregation, spatial partition, and images of Northern Irish identity circulating in the media and theatre abroad. Both Friel and Rea aimed at establishing a major theatre company that would act as a ‘fifth province’ for Ireland which is a creative, imagined space where the modes of national identity could be re-examined and represented. Their intentions to create a new space for the nation reflect the Abbey’s national theatre manifesto. Friel himself notes in an interview that “maybe Field Day is some kind of pretentious attempt to imitate what Yeats was striving for” (1982: 8). For both Field Day and the Abbey, the role of theatre has a political aim of creating a sense of shared community and challenging negative national representations.

Nevertheless, when this type of national theatre project emerged for the second time in Ireland, it developed in the midst of the Troubles in the North. Thus, the

theatrical representations of Field Day are significantly different from the theatrical tradition of the Celtic Revival. Rather than presenting an idealist and romantically national space “that is outside all the political questions that divide us [Irish citizens]” (Gregory 378), Field Day adopts a kind of theatre that aims to dramatize the critical issues of national representation and cultural discourse. If the Abbey’s theatre sought to stage an image of a stable community, holding up a mirror up to “the real Ireland” as a nation, Field Day aimed at distorting that mirror by producing a theatrical space that would be able to capture Irish concerns of divisions and fragmentations and to question that national ideal. According to Seamus Deane, the Field Day Company:

“contribute[s] to the solution of the present crisis by producing analysis of the established opinions, myths and stereotypes which had become both a symptom and a cause of the current situation” (Deane, Ireland’s Field Day vii-viii).

Deane continues arguing that the Abbey’s “real Ireland” represents one of these “established myths” that must be abandoned. Instead of duplicating the fixed image of the homeland on the stage, Field Day intends to stage national representation as a series of maps that act as a spatial image to represent the reality of fragmented national landscape.

Based on this, *Translations* can be read as both a parable about, and a diagnosis of, the conditions of the post-partition Catholic community in Northern Ireland. The play is set in a Donegal hedge-school in 1833, before the devastating Famine of the 1840s, at a time when two controversial events happened: the Ordnance Survey, and the national system of education to replace the existing informal system of hedge-schools. Both had implications for representing the concept of home in the play. In his working diary, kept during the writing of *Translations*, an entry for 18 June, 1979, Friel reflects on the dilemma of cultural transitions that face every generation, in general and Friel’s dramatic characters, in particular:

The cultural climate is a dying climate - no longer quickened by its past, about to be plunged almost overnight into an alien future. The victims in this situation are the transitional generation. The old can retreat into and find immunity in the past. The young acquire some facility with the new cultural implements. The in-between ages become lost, wandering around in a strange land (12).

On the surface, these observations point to the historical period in which *Translations* is set but equally they refer to the troubled, contemporary 'Ireland' in which the play was written, the constitutional crisis of Northern Ireland in the 1980s. In the decade that preceded the premiere of the play, confinement without trial was introduced; the event known as Bloody Sunday happened in Derry; the

Sunningdale Agreement failed as a result of Protestant strikes and UDA atrocities; the IRA bombed Birmingham; the Prevention of Terrorism Act, permitting detention without charge, was announced; the Blanket Protest took place, and Britain was found guilty of 'inhuman and degrading' treatment of prisoners by the European Court of Human Rights. In 1980 the hunger strikes began in Belfast. Thus Friel conceived and wrote the play in one of the most turbulent periods of Irish history since partition.

In *Translations*, Friel re-reads a particular historical 'transition' in his inherited tradition, brought by the Ordnance Survey and National School System, which precipitate a permanent Anglicization process in the tradition of Baile Beag Irish society. The King's Ordnance Survey is carried out by English Officers, Royal engineers, and trained officers and soldiers, assisted by a native translator-go between, Owen, and it takes place against the backdrop of his father's hedge school. Subject to the map-making project, Baile Beag is surveyed and all its official place names are changed from Irish into English equivalents. Being "overwritten by the colonisers" (Ashcroff, 2006: 392), Ballybeg is thus faced with imminent danger of losing its own language, culture, and tradition.

The theatrical image of the Royal Engineers nineteenth-century Ordnance Survey of Ireland has provided Friel with a symbol for colonial occupations which is not only political or military but also linguistic, cultural and discursive. Friel explains how this idea of the Ordnance Survey as a metaphor for colonialism occurred to him:

In 1976, I came across A Paper Landscape. And suddenly here was the confluence, the aggregate, of all those notions that had been visiting me over the previous years: the first half of the nineteenth century; an aspect of colonialism; the death of the Irish language and the acquisition of English. Here was the perfect metaphor to accommodate and realise all these shadowy notions -'map making'(1983:123).

Thus, the Survey, Map and Name-Book emerge in the play as leitmotifs, engendering a theatrical image of the way in which a colonising English culture sought to disturb and impose itself at political levels on a settled Irish home space.

Moreover, Friel's chosen moment of history in *Translations*, the Ordnance Survey of Ireland coincides with the establishment of English-speaking National Schools in Ireland in 1831, as Bridget correctly reports. Both of these historical moments represent political and cultural colonialisms that attempt to erase the

Gaelic sense of home space. *Translations* dramatizes an opposition between hedge-school and National School. The hedge-School, which represents the setting for the drama, signifies a reaction by the native Irish against the Penal Laws that were imposed by an imperialist England in the sixteenth and seventeenth century. P. J. Dowling explains that the Penal Code barred Catholic education in Ireland, though he adds “it may be said to have been illegal from almost the time of the Reformation” (1971:73). As a secret form of education, the hedge-school took its name from the practice of schooling in the open air or in out-houses. With the establishment of a State system of education in 1831 the hedge-School gradually died out. The Catholic Emancipation Act, which effectively ended the colonial Penal Laws in Ireland, was passed in England in 1829 and the National Schools Act for Ireland was passed in 1832. By locating his play in Baile Beag/Ballybeg in 1833, Friel generates a dialectic between Gaelic hedge-School and English National School, the latter “an institution of primary education, established by the British Government [in Ireland] in conformity with its educational policies and cultural objectives” (O'Brien, 1988:104). In *Translations*, Bridget explains the new government regulations for National School attendance:

You start at the age of six and you have to stick it until you're twelve at least [...] And every child from every house has to go all day, every day, summer or winter. That's the law [...] .And from the very first day you go, you'll not hear one word of Irish spoken. You'll be taught to speak English and every subject will be taught through English (330).

The main aim of the educational policy in the National Schools was directed towards linguistic and cultural translation of the Irish public into an English speech-system. In addition to these historical matrices produced by the British in the 1830s, the threat of the potato blight, the reality of evictions and the possibility of migration are ever lingering in the background of the daily lives of the people of Ballybeg as to provide part of the context of the play.

### 5.3.2 **Blurring the Boundaries: The Home and The Nation**

In *Home Territories: Media, Mobility and Identity*, David Morley maintains that images of home have been historically used as a measurement to determine the health of the nation-state. Home is not, Morley suggests, merely a location of brick and mortar; it is a “polyvalent symbol” that relates the ideas of the hearth with those of security, solidarity and the nation. Subsequently, within the imaginary spaces of the nation, feeling at home can refer not only to one’s local place of residence or even one’s community, but also being at home represents a secure space that includes the shared values of an entire people. Ideally, to be at

home means to feel secure and situated within the borders of the nation. As Morley writes in reference to the German idea of Heimat, [...] "national identity is always mediated by local experience at the level of home, family, village or neighbourhood – and even wider spaces. In this process, communal intimacy is reconciled with ideas of national greatness as the nation is idealized as a kind of hometown writ large, a socio-geographical environment into whose comforting security we may sink" (2000, 33).

While the concept of Heimat connotes a secure and nostalgic image of the home as nation, Brian Friel unsettles and transgresses these images in *Translations*. More precisely, home is presented as a kind of 'Third Space' in which the private and the national coalesce and because of this, I argue, home emerges Uncanny, 'unheimlich,' as a symbol of the inability to demarcate these boundaries, as the unifying secure space of the nation is disrupted by dislocation. Since the spatiality of home, here, has the qualities of an unhomely space; this has led me to explore it with reference to Homi K. Bhabha's concept of the unhomely.

Drawing on Sigmund Freud's concept of the "Uncanny", Bhabha, in his essay "The World and the Home," uses the notion of the uncanny to describe the somewhat dismal state of (post)modern sense of belongingness and the sense of "home". For Bhabha, the state of the "unhomely" is not a state of lacking a home, or the opposite of having a home, it is rather the recognition that the line between the world and the home are breaking down. As Bhabha notes: "in that displacement the border between home and world becomes confused; and, uncannily, the private and the public become part of each other, forcing upon us a vision that is as divided as it is disorienting"(1992:141). For Bhabha, the unhomely is expressed in the sensation that your home is not yours, and he broadens Freud's discussion from personal to political causes. Bhabha's unhomely appears through "holes" in the fabric of reality, things that remained unsaid, questions that remained unanswered. As in *The Dancing, Translations*, is well suited for this analysis, insofar as Friel demonstrates the degree to which the spatiality of the unhomely affect both the characters in the play and dramatic structure of the play. Focusing on the unique setting, the hedge-school, in which the events take place, I argue that Friel employs the stage in order to highlight the play's distinctive spatiality, particularly with respect to the shifting power relations of colonialism that render unhomely what has previously been homely (for the characters in the play).

In terms of the dramatic structure, *Translations* is divided into three discrete dramatic moments. The first moment establishes the dramatic situation of the play, the second explores and develops the argument of the play by depicting an act of transgression while the third shows the effect of this action. In the play, the hedge-school represents home, standing in for normality, for ordinary and familiar life. By locating the action of the play in a hedge-school, Friel, firstly, deviates from the nationalistic image of the home as manifested in the peasant cottage. Secondly, the hedge-school enables Friel to provide a focal point which brings individuals with their various concerns and aspirations together in one space. Through this physical representation of home, Friel manages to separate and categorise but also simultaneously draw together different experiences of the people of Baile Beag, in particular the O'Donnell family, including their domestic space, its features and their personal relationships.

The hedge-school is divided into two distinct spaces: domestic space and educational/political space. The domestic space is the upper part of the hedge-school that is offstage. Being private, it is the space that the characters are retreating to/ or returning from. This might be taken as a gesture to the concept that the peasant home is still a symbol of home/land. Here Friel thus represents the peasant home as homeland critically (it is removed and off-stage) rather than emotionally (through the nostalgic image of the cottage). The second space is the lower part of the stage. It is the public area where the school is held. Putting the public space of the school front and centre might suggest that the play is more concerned with how understandings of identity and national symbols are fostered and circulated rather than in simply invoking a traditional nationalistic image. Furthermore, the space of the school is used for political purposes as it is the space which Lancey used to address the community. Thus, the hedge-school as home, using Doreen Massey's spatial terms, is disruptive and unsettling in a number of ways. First, "it made present something which was absent; it was the space of a house no longer there". Second, "it turned the space inside out. The private was opened to public view" (1995b: 36). This makes the hedge-school an unhomely symbol for home as its spatiality functions interchangeably and sometimes instantaneously as private or domestic space and as public or political space. Building on that, I argue that the interior of the hedge-school which is invisible offers a possibility of personalised, familial and subjective space while the exterior space is common and politicised which serve to materialised the shifting relations of colonial power. In their totality, they represent the lived space of home.

The physical structure of the hedge-school does not create a nostalgic image of home. It is described and shown on the stage in such a way as to de-familiarise it:

The hedge-school is held in a disused barn or hay-shed or byre [...] Along the back wall are the remains of five or six stalls [...] where cows were once milked and bedded [...] around the room are broken and forgotten implements: a cart-wheel, some lobster-pots, farming tools...." (1982: 383).

Here, the interior of the school-house does not create serene images of the Irish home or a "portrait of some sort of idyllic, Forest of Arden life" (Friel, 1982:61). "The room is comfortless [...] and functional – there is no trace of a woman's hand" (1). What is seen on the stage are only "the remains" of a representation of a dying cultural history—the implements that had represented "real Ireland" are "broken or forgotten," and the stage itself is "dusty." Friel's emphasis on these details reveal an underlying motif of the unhomeliness of home. As more than a scenic background, these spatial arrangements project characters' connections to a past that is broken, archaic and out of touch with the contemporary world. What we also see on the stage is a 'certain community' whose members are having physical defects. Sarah is dumb, Manus is lame and Hugh is alcoholic. Using Friel's words, this "physical maiming [...] is a public representation of their spiritual deprivation" (1982:6).

This theatrical presentation of the hedge-school as unhomely home is intensified by the spatial arrangements of the stage space developed for the first production. The Derry Guildhall did not have a proper stage, so a stage space was constructed for the performance of the play. The spatial arrangements of that stage along with the sparse set design produced a kind of Brechtian defamiliarization effect. Here, I find Christopher Morash's description useful. For Morash,

Consolata Boyle's design was not a conventional naturalistic box set, in that it lacked side flats, and the stage was a seven-sided thrust with 1:16 rake, lacking the proscenium arch usually associated with naturalism. Along the back of the stage, she built a simple wall of unfinished, vertical wooden boards, angled along the top so as to create a false perspective. In this wall were two unframed doors, one stage right and one opening to a small platform, just left of centre at the set's highest point (rising to about 12 feet (3.6 metres) reached by six stairs. There was almost no stage furniture, apart from a table down left, and a few very low scattered stools, so that the set's most prominent feature was the large, open playing space, projecting out towards the audience.... (Morash 239)

In the absence of the flats and the proscenium arch that would frame the image on the stage, the staging arrangements of the play would suggest a departure from the earlier endeavors to manipulate the stage as held a mirror up to the nation. The unfinished structure of the set displays the image of the peasant as itself being re-constructed. With broken signifiers of a narrative of national history, the stage is seen by its “large, open playing space, projecting out towards the audience,” demonstrating an attempt to engage with the audience or to have them address representations of Irishness directly. Thus, in its production, *Translations* challenges the traditional staging and images of the nation.

These de-familiarizations of home space are shown on the stage through associating the figure of the woman with the homeland in an unexpected way. Sarah is framed within an Irish mythology of motherland, but is used to symbolise the death of a Gaelic orality. Sarah as a symbol of the nation is presented as a mute character. The play begins with a lame Gaelic tutor, Manus, giving lessons in language to dumb Sarah. This rehearsal is enacted out and described in realistic details but is freighted with symbolic implications: “get your tongue and your lips working” (384). Sarah was able to utter her name and place of origin: Sarah Johnny Sally from Bun na hAbhann. At the beginning of the play, Sarah is making repeated efforts to speak, a thing that might point to her endeavor to feel her female and Gaelic identity. However, this situation is reversed with the coming of colonial powers and mapping. Sarah's birthplace, *Bun na hAbhann*, becomes the subject of Owen and Yolland's translations. It was a hard name to translate into English. They reject the Anglo-Irish names of Owenmore and Binhone and the anglicisation to Bunowen: “that's neither fish nor flesh”, and finally agreed on “quite arbitrarily on Burnfoot, which bears no relevance to anything” (337). When Bridget declares that in the new National School where “You'll be taught to speak English and every subject will be taught through English”, Sarah becomes dumb again. She was only able to grunt and mime. In the final act of the play, when Lancey threatens to impose his colonial authority over Baile beg landscape, Sarah becomes entirely mute in the face of the colonizer: “Sarah's mouth opens and shuts, opens and shuts. Her face becomes contorted [...] Again Sarah tries frantically [...] But Sarah cannot. And she knows she cannot. She closes her mouth. Her head goes down” (440). In this way, Sarah might be seen as a symbol of Ireland, a figure like 'Cathleen Ni Houlihan' that is 'struck dumb' who comes under the impact of colonialism and the threat of partition.

### 5.3.3 Re-mapping the home Space

In *Concerning Violence*, Fanon has argued: “the colonial world is divided into compartments [...] if we examine closely this system of compartments, we will at least be able to reveal the lines of force it implies. This approach to the colonial world, its ordering and its geographical layout will allow us to mark out the lines on which a decolonized society will be re-organized.” (1963: 37). Brian Friel employs cartographic discourse to explore these lines of force in the representation of home in the play. *Translations* visualizes the political, the cultural and the linguistic compartments through the use of the map. In this sense, the map functions as a theatrical metaphor for these compartments creating two distinct spaces: colonial space and postcolonial space. The individuals in both of these spaces are in the process of becoming and being.

Like Shakespeare's map in *King Lear*, Friel's map dominates the stage background for more than half of the play. Act Two opens with Yolland, the English orthographer, and Owen bending over a large, blank map of the surrounding Donegal area. Boundaries are being drawn on the map, and their task is to translate the Irish names used by natives into English. The Royal Engineers who carry out the Survey are Lancey as cartographer ('maker of maps') and Yolland as orthographer ('he gives names to places'). As the heads of the company of soldiers, they might appear to represent the epistemological representatives of the colonial image of the map-making English culture. Their endeavours represent what Yair Wallach argues for in his study 'Trapped in mirror-images: The rhetoric of maps in Israel/Palestine'. Wallach sees maps, like the mirror-maps of Israel/Palestine or of any other partitioned regions, as rhetorical claims for power and over territory which are often read as signs of maximalist territorial ambitions and hidden wishes to “wipe the other off the map” (2011:1). In the play, the Ordnance Survey is carried out, as Captain Lancey explains, “so that the military authorities will be equipped with up-to-date and accurate information on every corner of the Empire” (31). The significance of his marking and translation of place-names, therefore, goes far beyond an innocent geographical purpose. As Ronald Rollins explains, the survey is intended specifically to achieve two main purposes: “to disassociate the Irish from their past and to control their future, a control deliberately linked to the immediate transformation of Irish topography and to the future educational process, especially the use of language” (Rollins, 1985: 36). By initiating the Anglicization of the Gaelic place-names, the ordnance survey highlights its political

implications, which is to wipe out Irish place-names. This effectively acts as a dispossession of home. To explain this, place-names are significant in the sense that they do not only have an immediate referent, they also “make a condensed or elliptical remark about the place, a description, a claim of ownership, a historical anecdote, even a joke or a curse on it” (Robinson, 1993:25). Thus the process of wiping off place-name entails a loss of all the cultural and historical connotations. It also creates a sense of dislocation. This is shown when Owen intentionally asks his father about his ability to find his way within the new system:

Owen: Do you know where the priest lives?

Hugh: At Lis na Muc, over near . . .

Owen: No, he doesn't. Lis na Muc, the Fort of the Pigs, has become Swinefort. (Now turning the pages of the Name-Book — a page per name.) And to get to Swinefort you pass through Greencastle and Fair Head and Strandhill and Gort and Whiteplains. And the new school isn't at Poll na g Caorach — it's at Sheepsrock. Will you be able to find your way? (42).

Furthermore, the activity of the map-making make home a contested space in which multi-facet discourses of power and identity converge and infiltrate the physical space of the Hedge-school.

Captain Lancey's survey acts as a reminder of the spatial dispossession and the shift in power disparities between coloniser and colonised. In Act III, Captain Lancey reads aloud the list of the place-names that Owen translates. His way of reading this list acts as a signifier of his dominance over the home that confirms Yolland's fears, since the catalogue effectively functions as an eviction roster. Here the names “Swinefort . . . Burnfoot . . . Dromduff . . . Whiteplains” (62) would entail “the master/slave relationship” and bring this “hierarchical relationship to mind every time the newly instituted place name is articulated” ( Meissner, 1992:170).

Thus, the hedge-school as home and homeland acquires a spatial significance where maps are continually contested and re-negotiated. Here, the play depicts the unique condition of each character, creating a series of highly personal representations of what inhabiting a colonised homeland actually entails. For example, Hugh's pupils learn the importance of the maps as a means to

attach themselves to a homeland with all of its actual and imagined spaces. Conversely, the significance of national representations of the map is minimized by Lancey. Speaking in the language of the coloniser, Captain Lancey, “the cartographer in charge of this whole area” (402), is as Yolland describes him, “the perfect colonial servant” (414). Lancey is responsible for drawing the colonial “lines of force” (Fanon, 1963:37) through his military control of Ballybeg. His discomfort with Ballybeg’s natives reveals his desires to evacuate home of its cultural past and “placeable” identities. Lancey insists that “a map is a representation on paper—a picture—you understand picture?—a paper picture—showing, representing this country—yes?—showing your country in miniature—a scaled drawing on paper of—of—of—” (406). Lancey’s account of the map shows his colonial reasoning that lands are nothing more than empty spaces before they are organized, partitioned and moulded according to English names and standards. According to Lancey, the landscape has “sections” and “selected areas” rather than “townlands” (439): it is a “system of compartments” (Fanon 37). His notion of the homeland as a “drawing on paper” reveals his perception of nations as abstract rather than lived experiences. His colonial enthusiasm is captured by his desire for “accurate information of every corner” of the colony. The charter reads that the survey is meant to end “the violent transfer of property” (40) by producing acknowledged borders, but has the opposite effect and the play ends with Lancey’s men violently ripping the home and homeland from its inhabitants. The denouement of the play proves that what is set out on paper does not work in practice—the ordered image of the colony on paper will lead to political and social chaos. For Jimmy Jack, however, the map creates an imagined, mythical or fictional epics allow people to have a sense of wholeness, entirely detached from the real landscape. Thus, the characters here are caught in a state of striving for an understanding of their home space. However, the tension between real and ideal space leads them to experience a sense of disruption as well as to alienate them from their home spaces as will be explained in the following section.

#### 5.3.4 Interlopers in the Home

The spatiality of home in *Translations* is framed by a particular kind of internal politics. This is manifested by the arrivals of Owen and Yolland as interlopers. The status of these interlopers is politically affiliated with the British military. In each case, the interloper, who came from outside, represents an uncanny other: they represent the *unheimlich* which contrasts

with the home entered. Thus, their intrusions into the home space bring into conflict inner space versus outer space; the material space versus imagined space; private space versus public space.

One of the ironies in the play is that Owen is not an Englishman, but he is a character returning home. He is a Ballybeg native. Friel's stage directions show the intricacy of this identity:

Owen is the younger son, a handsome, attractive young man in his twenties. He is dressed smartly—a city man. His manner is easy and charming: everything he does is invested with consideration and enthusiasm. He now stands framed in the doorway, a travelling bag across his shoulder" (400).

As a character, Owen represents a series of paradoxes. He is the absent son whose homecoming brings tears to Hugh's eyes (401) and a much needed "enthusiasm" to the dusty hedge-school. However, he is also deliberately "framed" on the threshold. His liminal position may signify his problematic relationship to home. His liminality might politically replicate the audiences' own images of home and belonging in the North. For Republicans, being geographically attached to Ireland, but politically and culturally exiled, and for Unionists politically and ideologically attached to Britain, but geographically located in a colony.

The play begins with Owen's homecoming, the younger son of the hedge-school master Hugh, after six years away from his native townland of Baile Beag. Upon his homecoming, Owen attempts to re-acquaint himself within his home community, by showing, for example, his attachment to the home-school space: "As he crosses the room he touches and has a word for each person" (401). This demonstrates his acquaintance with the pupils, and his words reveal his memory of their inside jokes—he asks about the declining quality of Anna na mBreag's poteen (401) and Jimmy's imagined wedding to a goddess (402), and even plays his father's linguistic definition game "*partly to show he has not forgotten it*" (403). In his conversation with Sarah, he finds himself as "placeable" in Ballybeg "I'm Owen—Owen Hugh Mor. From Baile Beag" (403). It is noteworthy that he manipulates a version of his name that stresses his connection to his father and ancestors, rather than his Anglicized surname. However, Owen's attempts to locate himself within his home serve only to assert his status as a stranger in his house. His "English" appearance and his urbanity make him different from the local culture. Indeed, as he attempts to indicate his belonging to the community through

inside jokes, the Ballybeg residents' repeated questions to him emphasize his strangeness: he is asked about the city/Dublin and the stories of his achievements. All of these have put him in contrast to the rural Ballybeg. This may establish him as symbolic of Northern identity as one of the differences between the Northern Irish identity and the cultural map of "real Ireland" in the Republic is the industrialized, urban image of the North.

A negative and anti-nationalistic image of home is introduced through Owen's homecoming with the political interlopers, the English soldiers fulfilling the Ordnance Survey of the colony. He introduces Lancey and Yolland in a disturbing way. Firstly, he has re-localised himself within his community, then, he proclaims: "two friends of mine are waiting outside the door" (402). While performing as an intermediary between the two groups, He keeps the Englishmen outside until he gains the trust of his native community. It is only through Owen that the British military officials can talk with the Ballybeg peasants—literally as he translates for them, and metaphorically, as they are only allowed into the home-school when Hugh announces "Your friends are our friends" (403).

Owen uses a kind of free translations in which he changes Captain Lancey's words. This is seen in two ways: he reduces Lancey's 'ponderous officialise' to simple words; and second, he mitigates the threatening tones of Lancey's words. For example, when Lancey says, "His Majesty's government has ordered the first ever comprehensive survey of this entire country—a general triangulation which will embrace detailed hydrographic and topographic information and which will be executed to a scale of six inches to the English mile" (406), Owen translates this statement as "A new map is being made of the whole country." But when Lancey says that the purpose of the survey is that "the entire basis of land valuation can be reassessed for purposes of more equitable taxation" and "has for its object the relief which can be afforded to the proprietors and occupiers of land from unequal taxation," Owen translates these comments as "This new map will take the place of the estate-agent's map so that from now on you will know exactly what is yours in law" and "the new map will mean that taxes are reduced" (ibid.). However, his elder brother, Manus translates Lancey's comments differently as he reads them from his Gaelic cultural perspectives. He immediately asks Owen: "What sort of translation was that". When Owen makes the smart response, "Uncertainty in meaning is incipient poetry," Manus retorts, "There was

nothing uncertain about what Lancey said: it's a bloody military operation" (480).

In the play, there is a brother-brother conflict. Manus always mistrusts the motives of his brother. He constantly challenges and protests against the change of their Gaelic place-names or the reason the British soldiers insist on calling Owen 'Roland'. Owen's response, "It's only a name" (408), does not convince Manus. Here, Owen's response might serve to underline his betrayal of his people by his collaboration with the colonisers. This conflict between Owen, as a symbol of the colonisers, and Manus, as a symbol of the colonised, transforms the space of the hedge-school into a space of resistance as Manus refuses his brother's and his English friends' unhomely presence in his homely space. Later in the play, Owen is defeated by the tragic consequences of his action. At the end of the play, he must translate Lancey's determination, if they do not find the missing Lt. Yolland, to destroy all the local townlands they have just renamed (439). As Lancey threatens to destroy all new Anglicized names of the villages, Owen must translate them back into Gaelic. Owen realizes too late that he is betraying his native home in order to advance himself.

Like Owen, Yolland is an interloper. Yolland, an Englishman, is the cultural foil to Lancey's topographical survey: "Yolland's official task, which Owen is now doing, is to take each of the Gaelic names – every hill, stream, rock, even every patch of ground which possessed its own distinctive Irish name – and Anglicize it..." (409). Yolland's role is to duplicate Lancey's geographical clearing of every corner of the land in linguistics terms. What is striking here is the use of a language that has colonial undertones to impose authority: "to take...every hill, stream, rock...which possessed its own distinctive Irish name" mirrors the colonial effort to provide military authorities with information on every corner of the colony (406), so that the colony gets rid of the "foreign civilians" and their cultural claims to the land simultaneously. While Lancey's first address to the community reveals that for him the colony is simply a map, Yolland's speech reveals that he perceives the landscape as Edenic. For Yolland, Ireland is "heavenly" (414). He announces: "I think your countryside is – is – is – is very beautiful. I've fallen in love with it already. I hope we're not too – too crude an intrusion on your lives. And I know that I'm going to be happy, very happy, here" (407). Yolland's understanding of

the Irish landscape might be seen as a kind of romantic nationalism as he conceives colonizer's presence as an invasion on an otherwise idyllic life.

Owen and Yolland's translation of a landscape may appear as a state of in-betweenness. Their occupation metaphorically sets them in the unhomely, deterritorialized space of as-yet empty map and literally in the school-home, a space for education about public meta-narratives and maps. Owen's "official function as a translator is to pronounce each name in Irish and then provide the English translation" (409), while Yolland's role is to choose between the offered "approximate English sound[s]" (409). The Irish names show a vanishing landscape and the English words represent a landscape that is only "approximate" and will have yet unsettled political, social, and ideological issues.

In the second act, the stage image suggests the impossibility the men have as they struggle to integrate their understandings of Ireland to the map and the difficulty of finding their places in paper representations:

A large map—one of the new blank maps—is spread out on the floor. Owen is on his hands and knees, consulting it. He is totally engrossed in his task which he pursues with great energy and efficiency. Yolland's hesitancy has vanished – he is at home here now. He is sitting on the floor, his long legs stretched out before him, his back resting against a creel, his eyes closed. His mind is elsewhere [...] around them are various reference books, the Name-Book, a bottle of poteen, some cups etc. (409).

This extract shows how Friel defamiliarised the concept of home in the play by making a clear contrast between Owen and Yolland. Owen, the character who is supposed to be at home, is in the process of eradicating all of his community's affiliations to his homeland for the sake of the colonialists. He has already uprooted himself as he is no longer Owen Hugh Mor from Baile Beag, but Roland O'Donnell from Ballybeg (as translated by the English soldiers). Yolland, the interloper, on the other hand *is ironically* "at home," having a kind of empathy with the place. Yolland is disconnected from his surroundings and from the political map he is meant to be creating: "his eyes closed" to the realities of the task and to the map, and "his mind is elsewhere." The poteen and the cups that clutter the floor further underline the quality of his home as an imagined space. When he tries to express the imagined cultural map he has been struggling to adopt, he realizes how this map is different from his surroundings: he is "*embarrassed*" and reaches for the "lying" poteen (416). Yolland is aware of the impossibility of being a part

of the home space that he imagines. This awareness culminates in his speech with Owen:

Even if I did speak Irish I'd always be an outsider here, wouldn't I? May I learn the password but the language of the tribe will always elude me, won't it? The private core will always be...hermetic, won't it? (416).

Here, Yolland longs to belong to the place that he comes to occupy. Thus, He insists on having a relationship with Maire as a way to belong to the place he loves. Even before he has spoken to Maire in any detail, he speaks to Owen of her home:

YOLLAND. That house immediately above where we're camped -  
OWEN. Mm?

YOLLAND. The house where Maire lives. OWEN. Maire? Oh Maire Chatach.

...

YOLLAND. I hear music coming from that house almost every night.  
OWEN. Why don't you drop in?

YOLLAND. Could I? (413-4)

Yolland's frequent reiteration of "that house" captures his deep longing to be contained within the Irish domestic space and shows his desire to belong. Their love-story is characterised by its lack of communication and its conflicting desires. In their one scene together, Yolland tells Maire her Gaelic is beautiful to his ears while she speaks Latin. The stage directions significantly specify that: "each speaks almost to himself/herself" (429). These speeches to themselves produce internal maps of their shared future life that can never be united. Yolland sees Maire as a route to Ireland, while Maire, who has been eager to flee Ireland since the opening of the play, looks at Yolland as way to escape the limitations of life in Ballybeg.

Yolland's yearnings to attain the "private core" of Irishness is reflected in the staging of the play. The domestic sphere is barred from the view of the Englishmen on stage. Yolland is physically unable to feel the intimacy of home culture. The domestic space is located in a loft and accessed only by a set of stairs that only Hugh, Manus, and Owen use. The home that is invisible at the top of the set seems to delineate that a home space is nothing more than a space of a specific community. The stairs that link the symbolic home overhead to the school-house where national identities are being remapped are a transient space. When Manus leaves, he warns Owen that "those stairs are dangerous without a banister" (433). This can be taken

as a symbol of the inability to reach the home as a private core of certain community. While Yolland desperately longs to belong, he is unable to experience its private core. In Ballybeg, he is only a traveller on a leave. This is exemplified by the transient reality of his “home”—his military tent. Thus, Yolland’s inability to be assimilated into Irish home denotes the cultural divide between Ireland and England, between the colonisers and the colonised.

To sum up, the spatiality of home, in *Translations*, is politically presented to eschew the conventions of a nationalistic home that comes with typical cottage-dramas. Here, home emerges as an ambivalent space of becoming whether in reference to the domestic space of the hedge school or a sense of belonging and being at home in Ireland.

#### **5.4    *The Home Place: Why Home Matters***

In her study of home, Rosemary M. George has suggested that the main connotations of “home” as a “private” space are complicated if they are connected with a larger geographic place where one belongs such as home-country, city, village. This chapter sets out to explicate these spatial complications in Friel’s 2005 drama, *The Home Place*. Staged in Dublin’s Gate Theatre and went on to a three-month run in London’s Comedy Theatre, *The Home Place* is set in late August 1878. Its plot is consisted of a series of clashes in Christopher Gore’s aristocratic home that has led to a rift in the family’s aristocracy within Ballybeg community as well as the father’s within the household. The play opens as Christopher’s elder cousin Richard prepares to travel to the Aran Islands where he will go on his research on the Celtic race. This mood of racial consciousness frames the efforts of both Christopher and his son David to wed Margaret O’Donnell, the local Irish woman who supervises the Lodge; in fact, at one point in the action, Christopher and Richard are engaged in a debate on whether his Kentish blood will be irredeemably diluted through such a marriage or the hybrid Irish race benefit from his “generous infusion of English blood” (33). However, during Richard’s phrenological examination of several of the area’s poor villagers, a group of local resistant, who recently murdered the abusive Lord Lifford, disrupt the field work and force Richard to leave the estate. Christopher’s surrender to the peasants’ defiance of aristocratic privilege shames

him before his family and leads to his emotional collapse after Margaret rejects his marriage proposal.

#### 5.4.1 **Big House: Colonial Fantasy of Space**

In *The Home Place*, Friel constructs a plot that suggests the consequences of the English plantation in Ulster which represents one of the highest period of spatial upheavals in Irish history. There is no palpable example of spatial dislocation than the imperial projects when the English extended their control over Ireland by driving the Irish landowners off their land and replace them in the sixteenth and seventeenth century. As colonisers, the English planters conceived space as a myth, a fantasy or a medium that could be ordered, controlled and regulated. In Friel's *The Home Place*, the colonisers, as represented by Christopher Gore, and his cousin, Richard Gore deliberately and consistently attempt to regulate and control the space of the Big House in order to secure power. While Gore's colonial power is directed towards a physical territory, Richard centres his power on manipulating and appropriating the colonised bodies in order to control that territory.

Considering himself as a colonizer and a planter (63, 68), Gore conceives the Big House as a tabular space that can be measured and catalogued through controlling the numbers of the trees that encompass The Lodge. This strategy, shown in his determination ultimately to thin up these trees at the end of the play, entails an internalised desire for the absolute and for the domination. For him, if the land was mapped, then it would be a secure and perfect colonial space in this way he might fulfil his ancestral Planter's statement that : the " [f]irst thing is to identify the specimens. They'll be distinctive. And they'll need most space. Any tree that encroaches on their territory will have to go" (70).

While in *Translations* the controlling stage image is map-making, a nineteenth century craniological image is the means through which the imperial forces attempt to dissect, classify, identify and categorise the colonized body in *The Home Place*. Richard Gore is an enthusiastic craniologist, representing British imperial power in India. Having come to Ireland to measure the native's heads, Richard Gore is portrayed as taking "the measurement efficiently and brusquely" of Christopher's tenant Maisie in Act Two (50), and as rapping "Tommy's head sharply with his knuckles" when he is measuring him a little later in the play (54). His three "specimens" are local people, signifying a vista of the local community. Ragged, dirty and starving, they are three faces of impoverished Ireland: a widow

begging for food, a boy who is cheekily outspoken, and a girl who is intimidated and silent. By measuring their craniums and other skeletal characteristics, he seeks to demonstrate the inferiority of the colonised in the natural world in order to scientifically predict their potentially perilous conducts. Throughout the play, he asserts that if the British ruling class could master this technique: “we wouldn't just control an empire. We would rule the entire universe”. This image effectively captures what Simon Ryan and Leigh Dale in *The Body in the Library* (1998) identify as a bodily process as a colonial practice of governmentality where the appropriation of land needs also to be seen as a capture of bodies, and the maintenance of power can be read as a mastery of these bodies as much as of territory.

What needs therefore to be emphasised is that while *The Home Place* reflects these wider political concerns, it raises the spatial as inherent to the questions of colonial power and resistance. Like *Aristocrats*, the play deals with the concept of the Big House, but it marks a breach rather than a return as it changes the focus of the Big House from the colonised to the coloniser. In *The Home Place*, the staging of the physical space of home is kin to *Aristocrats*, yet it is a more politically charged space. Its exterior space consists of “unkempt lawn”, backed to one side by the opened-out breakfast room of a “Big House” and a crescent of trees to the other. The breakfast room occupied the forestage with windows opening fully to the sides to reveal the lawn backed all round by the trees. Many of the play's scenes take place on the lawn. In terms of the individuals' spatial position on the lawn, two sets of characters are distinguished. Those who secretly observe the prosperity of the house from within the trees represent the nationalists, Con Doherty and Johnny MacLoone, who are encroaching on the lawn, ready to attack. Those characters like Richard Gore, who view the trees from the house, having political power, domestic security and a colonial structure to protect their place of plantation, are by the end of the play left pondering what “invasions” might be forthcoming. The lawn, in this sense becomes a contested space, which the initially colonized occupied, threatening in their turn to relegate the colonisers into the confines of the house or reducing them into exile.

#### 5.4.2 Nationalistic or Colonial Home

*The Home Place* examines the concept of home as a spatial context for embodying the characters' (post)colonial reaction to the nation. Both the English and Irish characters show a desire for belonging to an ‘imagined community’

sustained by Romantic ideologies of Heimat. For Friederike Eigler, the concept of Heimat has a rich set of cultural and ideological significations that usually combine concepts of belonging and identity with an affective attachment to a place of origin. Central to the nationalistic ideology of Heimat is its exclusionary manifestations of place that is based on a binary of the insider and outsider (2014:13). This sense of the Heimat as a fixed, timeless space that would defy the external intruders is invoked and interrogated in *The Home Place* via the characters of Clement O'Donnell, a nationalist character/the insider, and Richard Gore, a coloniser/the outsider. Both characters have internalised the value of racial categorisation. Both attempt to create an ordered and homogeneous space through codifying and classifying what to include and what to exclude within nationalistic boundaries. Thus, this pairing of the characters shows how nationalism can be seen as an extension of the colonial project in ordering of space and establishing mental boundaries within the same nation. As Elie Kedourie asserts that the boundaries are constructs that are intended to give the nation superiority (1993:120).

The schoolmaster, Clement O'Donnell, defines Ireland and Irishness in terms of an organic, ancestral landscape that is embedded and rooted in the soil of the Heimat. For him, Ireland is not a homeland for those who are not born in it, including the Gores. In doing so he imagines an exclusively Irish space that can be produced by an affiliation to a fictive Celtic spirit. For Clement, this affiliation is basically nationalistic and can be captured by Thomas Moore's music:

CLEMENT (To Richard) I imagine you have poets in England of much greater accomplishment, Mr Richard. But Tom Moore is the finest singer we have; the voice of our nation. Yes – yes – a romantic man and given to easy sentiment, as I am myself; a mixture of rapture and pathos. But he has our true measure, Mr Richard. He divines us accurately. He reproduces features of our history and our character. And he is an astute poet who knows that certain kinds of songs are necessary for his people. And they were especially necessary at the time he sang them (90).

In Clement's mind, Moore is a symbol of Romantic nationalism as he was an advocate for organic nationalism and a friend to the Irish patriot Robert Emmet, for whom he wrote, *O Breathe Not His Name*. Oft in the *Stilly Night*, while less explicitly honouring of the cause of the United Irishmen, recalls their losses in the lines: 'When I remember all/ the friends, so link'd together/I've seen around me fall', thus lending a romantic provenance to the events of the play. O'Malley-Younger has taken this clue to suggest that the Melody of Thomas Moor in *The Home Place* functions as 'cri de coeur' for a collective Irish Volk, and which

symbolically reveals a “national spirit in the face of tyranny and oppression” (2004:205). However, this is not Friel’s way of staging revolution, but the melody functions as spatial configuration that links an off-stage Ballybeg school with nostalgia and stasis. Thus, Clement’s association of music with nationalism constructs what Doreen Massey terms as “regressive sense of place” in which place is conceived of as timeless, rather than in flux (as all places are), allowing place to represent nostalgia for home that includes a community of those who are similar and excludes the different (Massey, 2013). Moreover, Clement’s use of the musical term ‘measure’ to identify Irish character and history is similar to that of Richard Gore’s measurements of the colonised bodies. This, together with Clement’s refusal to accept the Gore’s maid Sally in his choir as a child because of her name / genealogy: “Never met a Cavanagh who wasn’t a crow,” makes Clement not a counterpart of Richard Gore as he is a stereotyping. As Luke Gibbons suggests, “[B]y positing a countering notion of Irish racial/national character to combat the English stereotype, Irish nationalists were therefore performing an act of static stereotyping” (1998:104). Thus their attitudes are echoing each other. Both assume that Irishness is empirical and given, and reducible to a single meaning. Within their conceptions, Heimat can also be similarly ordered and controlled, creating what Benedict Anderson terms an ‘imagined nation’, an essentialized, and imaginary community, “characterized or shaped in terms of presumed shared traits.”

As the play makes clear, both Clement and Richard’s mission of fixating the meaning of home to an abstraction are failed. Friel de-familiarises the concept of Heimat by choosing to engage with what Shaun Richards defines as “a meaningful but not naïve authenticity”. This authenticity is not, for Friel, an empirical or fixed entity, but a fluid category, an effect that is irreducible to a single meaning, which must be subject to a continuous process of reappraisal and redefinition, particularly if they are linked to intimate human spatiality. It is also linked to the personal as this involves the process of “imagining [...] a place as one’s home that functions on the everyday level of ordinary people as they write and live ordinary lives” (George, 1996:15).

#### 5.4.3 Home as a Hybrid Space

As shown in the previous section, the concept of home is loaded with wider political implications. However, what is crucial for understanding how politics intrudes into the home space is the way in which Friel manipulates the domestic

space of the Big House to unsettle and to displace the concept of Heimat from centre-stage. While home, for Richard Gore, Clement O'Donnell or Con and Johnny MacLoone, is an imagined space of Heimat and race, it is, for Margret and Christopher, a lived space that is at once the Heimlich, reflecting pleasures of the hearth and the unheimlich, reflecting terror of the space or race of the Other.

Two spatial configurations at the outset of *The Home Place* suggest this spatial framework. The first of these is the 'ethereal', 'sophisticated' and 'wondrous' music of the local school choir singing the Thomas Moore melody "Oft in the Stilly Night". This music has an effect on Margaret, "chatelaine" (15) of the Lodge as it nostalgically and sentimentally takes her into her homeland. The significance of the music is stressed from the very beginning of the play. As indicated in the script, both the Lyric and Gate productions opened silently with the two women of the household working: Margaret folds washing on the lawn, the maid Sally works at the fire in the house. However, when Margaret hears the children's voices from the schoolhouse, she is drawn, almost pulled to the front edge of the stage as the memories of her past possess her, as in the Thomas Moore song she is listening to: "Sad memory brings the light / of other days around me [...]" Not only Margaret but the audience listen to the choir "for two full verses, absorbing the music [...]" before any dialogue begins. The stage directions do not depict Margaret but the audience listen to the choir "for two full verses, absorbing the music" before any dialogue begins. The stage directions depict the singing as 'ethereal', 'sophisticated.' Her initial situation between her father's choir and her duties as an employee in the house where she now lives is a suggestion to the subsequent discords of home. The second spatial configuration is the marauding falcon whose threat is intensified by the dialogue between Margaret and Sally, juxtaposed with the entrance and exit of Con Doherty:

MARGARET: When you're finished there, put the chickens back  
Into the henhouse.

SALLY: You told me to let them out.

MARGARET: The falcon's back. I'll have to get someone up to  
shoot him.

The symbolic association of the Irish (in the character of Con) with a hunter, and the residents of The Lodge as victims suggest a sense of the unheimlich. The tension is intensified by Christopher's anxiety after Lord Lifford's assassination, a landlord beaten to death on his way to evict one of his tenants. Gore is paranoid, questioning Margaret about "which of us is next on the list" and ends it stating

“of course there’s an ugly scheme abroad [. . .] Maybe they’re plotting out there already. Maybe the whole of Ballybeg is going to rise up and [. . .]”. These configurations reflect the Lodge’s simultaneous but irreconcilable experiences: *Heimlich* and *unheimlich*, and together raise the question of whether the Lodge can be a space that signifies the sustaining and positive sense of a home.

Friel’s rendering of contrasting images of *heimlich* and *unheimlich* suggest the extreme ambivalence Margaret and Christopher feel toward their most unhomelike home. Both the desire for a home and the fear of what it is outside pass through this ambivalence of the Big House, The Lodge. Though they are displaced from their place of origin, they have made home in a place that is not their perceived *Heimat*. Margaret, Con’s cousin (16, 53) and the Lodge’s “*chatelaine*” (21), is caught between two home places: on the one hand, the Catholic family and school house in the village of Ballybeg she has left when she was fourteen; on the other, her current location in The Lodge. Throughout the play, Margaret attempts to blend in The Lodge. In doing so, she has not only to give up her peasant identity by alienating “herself [...] from her home and her people” (40), but “even [seeks] to emulate many of the attributes of the subordinate classes” (Arnold, “Gramsci,” 29). Initially, she feels ashamed because of her father’s ragged appearance, and she has dispatched him out of the Lodge: “You’ll get no drink in this house. Off you go now!?” (38–40). Then, she ignores her relatives and community. Her behaviour with Con ratifies this:

CON: And how are you,

Maggie: MARGARET (Icily) Well.

CON: Haven’t seen you for ages (53)

Later in the play, she describes him as a “wastrel” and accuses him of “trespassing” on Lodge land. More importantly, she remains detached, observing from within the house how Richard Gore examines the peasants who present themselves for his experimentations (46). So, many characters describe her as a class traitor. Sally, the maid, hints to this by accidentally asking her: “Do you never go home now at all, Maggie?” (13). Ultimately, Sally directly criticizes Margaret for her behaviour in imitating and considering herself as a member of the gentry in The Lodge:

MARGARET: We’ll have afternoon tea outside today.

SALLY: Will ‘we’? You’d do anything to be one of the toffs,

Maggie, wouldn’t you?

MARGARET: Any more cheek like that from you, miss, and you'll  
be back down below herding your one cow (16).

In short, when Margaret claims late in the play that the Lodge “is my home,” she admits that she has changed her cultural allegiance (65). Indeed, though she admits to loving David (27–8), this kind of love might be taken as an entrance into the world of The Lodge.

Similarly, Christopher displays a sense of displacement, personified by The Lodge, as its name suggests impermanence, summarised in the name that the villagers assign to the Gores: ‘the Lodgers’ (62) to denote their status as being outsiders. Christopher uses the names ‘house’ and ‘home’ interchangeably to describe Ballybeg Lodge. “I love this place so much, Margaret. This is the only home I’ve ever known” (18). He, then, ponders, “[T]he truth is I hated being shipped over to the home place every damned summer” (17). At the same time, he displays nostalgic feelings to his original home place in York, “[a]ll those memories of Kent – they almost made me homesick” (19). Late in the play, he says to Margaret, in a nostalgic language:

I can't tell you how beautiful the home place is at this time of year. And how tranquil. And how - replete. The orchards; and the deer park; and the lines of bee-hives in the pampered walled garden; and the great placid fields of wheat and oats and barley. A golden and beneficent land. Days without blemish. Every young man's memory, isn't it? - or fiction? - or whatever Your father hasn't a monopoly on romance and easy sentiment. I'm an exile from both that memory and this fact now, amn' t I? (62-63)

The stage set used in the Dublin and London premieres externalises these images in theatrical elements. For example, as Charlotte Loveridge pointed out in her 2005 review of the play at London’s Comedy Theatre after its transfer from Dublin’s Gate Theatre earlier that year:

[t]he set is stunningly beautiful, portraying a parlour room on the periphery of an immense framed opening onto the outside land. This seems a visual reflection of England’s presence in Ireland – a partial and adequate colonization. Slightly asymmetrical parallel tree trunks dominate the background.

Thus, unlike Margaret, Christopher Gore develops a different understanding of Heimat away from territorial origin or adopted (future) attachments towards a “hybrid frame of mind” that allows him to create a “lived social space”. Understanding this lived space can then perhaps help to understand Christopher’s adoption of a sense of resilient to defy his dislocation. He asserts:

Just give me a little time; I'll rise above. The planter has to be resilient, hasn't he? No home, no country, a life of isolation and resentment. So

he has to - resile. Just give me a little time. And that resentment will stalk him - and never forget it - down through the next generation and the next and the next. The doomed nexus of those who believe themselves the possessors and those who believe they're dispossessed.  
(68)

While there is an acute sense of anxiety and estrangement in this speech, there is also an assertion that this resilience in the face of dispossession enables him to create "counter spaces" to rise above. Christopher has negotiated a new meaning of Heimat by transforming the concept. Thus, he creates what Soja calls a "third space" that not only incorporates mental and material dimensions of spatiality but is also open to new modes of spatial thinking.

## Chapter 6: Conclusion

Using geo-critical approaches, this thesis has examined how Brian Friel uses the stage space as a postcolonial space to represent home. His spatial representation of home indicates a steadiness of flexible, transformative power of space that moves from the psychic space, to the bodily space, to the domestic space and ultimately to spaces of homeland. It is observed that Friel does not reject the concept of home, but he shows how this concept becomes problematic if it is to be associated with fixed places with pre-given identities. So Friel's home spaces are always in conflict with external, social, political or colonial forces, echoing, mimicking or defying its biases. Assaulted by external space, the politicisation of home is foregrounded, creating counter-space of resistance for all its postcolonial residents, irrespective of gender. In adopting this spatial strategy, Brian Friel reverses the formula of home that is presented by the Abbey Theatre. In doing so, he replaces the nationalistic order of the traditional kitchen drama. Home in Friel's drama is not a neutral, apolitical or idealised space, it is obviously a political space. In this reversal, micro/macro spatiality of the home transcends the colonial/nationalistic model through its fusions of heimlich and unheimlich

that undermines the ontological connotations of home and allows us to entertain the possibility that home spaces are ultimately a matter of (theatrical) third space representation.



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