



---

# Universidad de Valladolid

FACULTAD de FILOSOFÍA Y LETRAS  
DEPARTAMENTO de FILOLOGÍA INGLESA  
Grado en Estudios Ingleses

TRABAJO DE FIN DE GRADO

The Irish Independence Influence on Current Irish  
Literature and Art

Juan Navarro Caballero

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'J. Benito S.', is positioned below the author's name.

Tutor: Jesús Benito Sánchez

2018-2019



Irish independence is one of the major themes that permeates Irish art and literature. This phenomenon influences the most relevant pieces of art in Irish society, presenting similar features in all of them. In this analysis, we present several examples of art and literature. Out of the Irish literature canon, we selected three examples from the three genres. In prose, James Joyce's 'The Dead,' from *Dubliners*; in poetry, William Butler Yeats' '1916;' and in drama, Brian Friel's *Translations*. These three present similar motifs in their representations of Irish independence used in literature and art. We include some of the Belfast murals that show these characteristics, even though street art is a different artistic modality from literature. The analysis explores the role of some features like the role of the Irish language or the presence of the leaders of the Easter Uprising and their influences in Irish art and literature.

Irish Art, Irish Literature, Irish Independence, James Joyce, W. B. Yeats, Brian Friel

La independencia de Irlanda es uno de los temas que más ha influenciado la literatura de la isla irlandesa. Durante el siglo XX, la independencia ha determinado el arte y la literatura más importantes de este país con patrones similares que se repiten en diversas obras. En nuestro análisis, incluimos tres ejemplos de cada uno de los géneros literarios: 'The Dead' de la obra *Dubliners* del novelista James Joyce (prosa), '1916' del poeta William Butler Yeats y la obra *Translations*, del dramaturgo Brian Friel. Los mismos patrones, o similares, relacionados con la independencia de Irlanda aparecen en estas obras literarias. También incluimos algunos ejemplos de los murales de Belfast, que también presentan los mismos patrones, aunque sea una modalidad artística diferente. Nuestro análisis incluye el uso del irlandés o la presencia de los líderes del Alzamiento de Pascua como elementos relacionados con la independencia en el arte y literatura irlandeses.

Arte irlandés, literatura irlandesa, independencia de Irlanda, James Joyce, W. B. Yeats, Brian Friel



## Index

<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter I: Historical Context. The Easter Uprising (1916) and “the Irish Troubles”.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Chapter II: Prose. James Joyce’s “The Dead” from <i>Dubliners</i>.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Chapter III: Poetry. William Butler Yeats’ “Easter 1916”.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Chapter IV: Drama. Brian Friel’s “Translations”. .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Chapter V: Belfast Murals .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Conclusion.....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Annex .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Works Cited.....</b>	<b>34</b>



## Introduction

A shared sense of history and culture is particularly relevant in the analysis of the literary tradition of a country. However, it becomes even more crucial in the long process of the birth of a new country. This thesis centres on the exploration of Irish cultural features present throughout the complicated process of independence the country went through. In this cultural analysis, some contextual elements become relevant in the process leading to the independence as well as afterwards. The historical context of our analysis focuses on twentieth century events. However, it also covers the very late 19<sup>th</sup> century, when there were the first glimpses of Irish people's will for an active action of independence, as it is seen in the first literary instance we include. Then, the analysis focuses on the Easter Uprising at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, an event that definitely marked Irish society in the fight for independence, and which is centre stage in the poem we analyse. This event was followed by the tense situation between the followers of the pro-Republican side and the pro-Unionist side, who were in conflict for almost the entire 20<sup>th</sup> century. It was during this period, that groups like the Irish Republican Army (IRA) carried out most of their actions. This permeates the artistic manifestations that portray all these events of the last century. Firstly, the thesis focuses on literary manifestations of different authors. James Joyce's 'The Dead,' from *Dubliners*, portrays the atmosphere in the country in the years previous to one of the main events that determined Irish society: the Easter Uprising in 1916. The atmosphere that we appreciate is tense, whereas the text is fraught with very significant symbology, which we will analyse and connect with the process towards Irish independence. Secondly, we move on to the analysis of a poem by the celebrated Irish poet William Butler Yeats: 'Easter 1916.' This poem shows Yeats' views in regard to the aforementioned event. This poem is one of the literary productions

that is most famous in contemporary Irish society, as testified by the number of experts that have analysed it. Therefore, we think it cannot be left apart from this discussion. In four stanzas, it portrays perfectly the events, the people involved in it and the author's point of view of the people who rebelled against British rule. Thirdly, we analyse Brian Friel's 'Translations.' The play is situated in one of the Ulster counties, which directly shows the conflict in the north of Ireland, a county that is in a province dominated by the United Kingdom but that belongs to the Republic of Ireland. This is a problem that marked the aftermath of Irish independence. Ulster became divided and the Irish Troubles began. This is known as a period fraught with social instability due to the conflicts between people following the pro-Republican side and those the pro-Unionist side. Furthermore, there were terrorist attacks from both groups in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland leaving deaths behind. This situation marked the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century until peace was signed in the 'Good Friday Agreement.' To get a broader understanding of this confusing period, this thesis begins with an overview of the historical context in which all of these artistic manifestations appear.

Finally, we focus on the Belfast murals, in which there are pictorial representations of features of both sides, the pro-Unionist side and the pro-Republican side. The fact that these murals are from Belfast, the Northern Irish capital, is particularly relevant inasmuch as the main issues regarding the aftermath of the process of Irish independence are evident in this province. This phenomenon happened in this region since Northern Ireland is the only area in the island that remained under the rule of the United Kingdom. Therefore, its situation during the last century was socially unstable as there were conflicts between the people of both sides.



## Chapter I – Historical Context

Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century there were certain events that inexorably marked Irish society and left an imprint in artwork pieces such as books or murals. These elements' relevance plays an important role even in contemporary Irish society, to such an extent, that native Irish people still link their literary productions in regards of this topic to the Irish literary tradition or express themselves in the Belfast murals, which are one of the main city's attractions for tourists. These elements were not only present during the 20<sup>th</sup> century but had started to be visible in the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the literary productions of important authors, such as James Joyce. Therefore, we will briefly overview the situation of Irish independence at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and how it developed throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, focusing in particular on the Easter Uprising and its consequences in the society at the time. After that, there was a consequent Irish War of Independence and a problematic process of country-formation with many disagreements that would lead into a Civil War in the island. This situation resulted in a split country, in which the counties of the northern province of Ulster were divided into the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom. The situation did not get any better in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when there were certain groups in the north that still wanted the rest of Ulster to join the Republic of Ireland. There were many violent actions during this period, from both sides. For instance, there were police charges against demonstrations in big cities like Derry/Londonderry or Belfast or the violent attacks of the Irish Republican Army (IRA). This situation went on almost until the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when the island underwent a process of peace and the IRA was dismantled. The consequences of these acts are still present in Irish society, as they are still drawn in

Belfast murals, one of the main attractions of tourists to Ulster, which is gaining popularity amongst popular tourist destinations.

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there was a tense situation in Ireland. There was no Parliament in Ireland like there were in other countries belonging to the United Kingdom, such as Scotland or Wales. The ruling of the island was managed directly from Westminster. This meant an 'economic downturn in Dublin. The Parliament sessions had drawn Irish peers, with their families and servants, to reside in the city for a portion of each year.' (Houses of the Oireachtas) Therefore, there was a demand for an Irish Parliament, as the Act of Union of 1801, had passed almost a century before and did no longer represent Irish interests. With the Westminster Parliament's denial to give the island authority to rule itself, the feeling for independence from the United Kingdom started to gain real weight in Irish society and would later develop into the events in 1916. A group of intellectuals, together with members of the IRB (Irish Republican Brotherhood) decided to organise themselves to rebel against British rule. Amongst these leaders were: Thomas McDonagh, Patrick Pearse, Constance Markievicz and many others. The first two men were writers. They had met in a trip to the Aran Islands, a trip that can be seen referenced by James Joyce's 'The Dead' in *Dubliners*. From then on, they became friends and 'joined the Irish Volunteers in November 1913 and in 1915 the IRB.' (TheIrishTimes.com) Pearse was the main orator during the revolt. His loss meant a huge strike to the rebels. After a week of fighting in Dublin streets, the revolt resulted in hundreds of deaths. 'The Easter 1916 rising provided a "blood sacrifice" for an Ireland that had become apathetic about Nationalism.' (Curtis 406) The rebellion was not seen with good eyes because it conveyed rising in arms. This violence was not supported in Ireland and connecting Nationalism with it supposed a decay in followers. This fact could be also related with Daniel O'Connell's strong influence. O'Connell was a pacifist politician who fought for Irish rights to be recognized in Westminster Parliament. Hence, since there was huge uncertainty regarding the number of people who would rise in arms, the Uprising was postponed. 'In the days before the Easter Rising there were three possibilities before the initiates: one, that a Rising would not take place at all, or would be indefinitely postponed; two, that it would take place on Easter Sunday; three, that it would take place on Easter Monday. Of these, the third came to pass, ousting the other two.' (Donoghue 39) After the revolt was suffocated, most of the leaders were executed. This provoked a complete change in Irish society. The leaders who survived, turned to

politics, like Countess Markievicz, 'who was the first woman elected to the British Parliament in 1918, though she refused to take her seat' (Eldridge *Encyclopaedia Britannica*) as she belonged to the Sinn Féin, the pro-independence party. This situation turned against the British government and it would develop into the 'Irish War or Independence.' After the war and the following two-year-long Irish Civil War, there was a period of instability for the country and the people living in it. The island had thus been divided in two different countries: The Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, which was still under the rule of the United Kingdom. This latter country could be maintained by the United Kingdom, as the majority of the population living there was Protestant. Religion was, and is, an important issue, since depending on whether a person is Catholic or Protestant, that person would be associated with being pro-Republican or pro-Unionist. However, during the 20<sup>th</sup> century his situation would experience a shift. The majority of the Northern Irish population would become Catholic and, would support the pro-Republican side. This caused a major conflict in the Ulster province, where no agreement was achieved out of the tense situation. Hence, violent actions occurred during the 20<sup>th</sup> century: The Irish Troubles.

This period stands for the violent events in Ireland during the 20<sup>th</sup> century related with pro-Republican and pro-Unionist conflict. This situation caused deaths in both sides as there were very tense situations, from demonstrations to bombings. 'The violence of the Troubles is usually explained as a resurfacing of ancient tribal hatreds or as another round in a timeless ethnic conflict, yet, [...], it was a modern political struggle.' (Prince 959) The dead resulting from this are still remembered as martyrs, for instance, in the Belfast murals. A mural that will be analysed in this paper reflects how there were many dead resulting from a pacific pro-Republican demonstration in Derry: 'The Bloody Sunday, 'in which 14 marchers against internment were shot dead by the British Army.' (theirishhistory.com) Nevertheless, the IRA's main violent activity also occurred during this period. This group carried out much of the activity in the pro-Republican side. Their actions mainly had violent consequences, 'devastating the centre of Belfast and Derry with car bomb attacks – notably on 'Bloody Friday' on 21 July when 9 people were killed and 130 injured by 26 near-simultaneous car bombs.' (theirishhistory.com) The conflict provoked by the division between Catholics and Protestants manifested as well in the Republic of Ireland, as some of the loyalist groups bombed cities south of the "border," (there is no physical border dividing Ireland) like Dublin. After decades of social

instability, there was an approach towards a peace treaty. The 'Good Friday Agreement' was a pact that could be signed due to 'demands that the cease-fires be declared permanent and weapons handed over, if the cessations of violence were to be trusted.' (McDonagh 18) In 1998, the pact was signed and peace imposed, the violent actions ceased and the protests in regards of either the pro-Unionist side or the pro-Catholic side are no longer repressed. This pact involved negotiation between the Unionist party and the Sinn Féin. There is uncertainty, however, in regards of the border affecting the Irish citizens with the Brexit issue. There are families that are divided geographically in the province, who would be affected. This situation is rising again questions from last century's distribution of Ulster.

## Chapter II – Prose: James Joyce’s “The Dead” from *Dubliners*

One of the best ways to analyse the impact of historical events on a particular society is to analyse the written productions of the time. The three following chapters explore different literary works, which were written by Irish authors in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This analysis explores the differences between the approaches given by three different authors. Furthermore, there will be an example of each of the main literary genres. That is, prose, poetry and drama. There are significant differences in the presentations of the authors' ideas, not just because their opinion or ideology are different but also because of the genre they chose to transmit them. The critiques represented in literature are different in poetry than in drama or prose. This section initially explores “The Dead,” a short story included in *Dubliners*, written by the celebrated Irish author, James Joyce. Then it focuses on, several poems will be extracted for the analysis from the collection *Selected Poems*, by the noble laureate in literature, William Butler Yeats. And it finally analyses the play “Translations,” by Brian Friel. All these works show common characteristics. Firstly, they are all set in an Irish environment. Furthermore, the characters that appear are Irish, except for the Englishmen in the play by B. Friel. Even in Yeats' poetry, there are real historical characters that are used to convey the message. In these literary works, as characters interact between themselves, they are used to portray political issues regarding the struggle with English rule. There are some that are less direct or radical, such as the play “Translations,” which intends to be conciliatory, rather than radical or revolutionary, as it will be later seen. Each of them portrays political issues, as it has been said, which will be analysed.

The late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century in Ireland was a period characterised for its instability in regards of the pro-Independence movement and how it engaged in conflict with the British government. There were authors in the 20<sup>th</sup> century that lived this situation in their own skin. This is the case, for example, of James Joyce, who was born in Ireland in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and knew first-hand how the social issues of the time affected the Irish society. This chapter will hence focus on the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, where there are examples of the Irish conflict portrayed in novels, or, in this case, short stories. This is relevant for this paper as these productions present the earliest portraits of the conflict. The presence of the Irish political issue in the short story “The Dead” included in the book *Dubliners*, written by celebrated modernist author James Joyce, is prominent. James Joyce’s literary productions are characterised for not being politically active. In fact, the author wrote an entire volume filled with short stories of everyday Dublin life and how *Dubliners* interacted with each other. However, he did not portray any issue regarding the Irish conflict until the very end. Nonetheless, the fragment in which Gabriel and Miss Ivors interact is quite important since it represents the social attitude towards the Irish conflict, in a social public environment. Gabriel and Miss Ivors come together and speak because they are together in a dance, a waltz, in which pairs interchange. They obviously know each other. Gabriel writes a column in the newspaper *The Daily Express*. This can be seen in how direct and critical Miss Ivors is. She immediately questions Gabriel’s political ideology, as she asks very complicated issues to which Gabriel struggles to answer.

Miss Ivors begins the conversation asking Gabriel about his work as a columnist in the newspaper *The Daily Express*. This is an issue for her as the ideology that was related to the writers and readers of the newspaper was that of a Unionist; ‘*The Daily Express*, a Dublin published newspaper of pronounced Conservative and Unionist sympathies.’ She seems to dislike that newspaper as she directly calls Gabriel a West-Briton, which was a term used in relation to ‘a member of the English nation in Ireland; an Anglo-Irishman who sympathises with the Unionist cause.’ Therefore, readers get Miss Ivors’ political ideology from the very beginning. She is a woman who is not afraid of criticizing the reading or writing for a Unionist newspaper, this is axiomatically connected with pro-independence ideology.

‘— Well, I’m ashamed of you, said Miss. Ivors frankly. To say you’d write for a rag like

that. I didn’t think you were a West Briton.

A look of perplexity appeared on Gabriel’s face. It was true that he wrote [...] in *The*

*Daily Express*, [...] but that did not make him a West Briton surely.’  
(Joyce 188)

This accusation is not well received by Gabriel, who does not approve of the newspapers’ ideology, but he does not think of himself as a pro-Unionist either. He is only interested in his job there because he gets to read and write about many books, so his interest is not political but literary. He states that ‘the books he received for review were almost more welcome than the paltry cheque.’ (Joyce 188) This could easily reflect the day-to-day life in Ireland at the time. If a person was somehow related to a pro-English institution, that person would be automatically defined as a Unionist despite the possibility that the political ideology of that person were not of that same tendency. Miss Ivors clearly represents the pro-Nationalist movement, which went on the rise at the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when the story is chronologically set. This movement criticized the British government and the ones who sided with it by calling them West-Britons, which could be understood basically as traitors to Ireland. There are other aspects that relate Miss Ivors with the Irish National Movement, as a description of her looks is included in the text. She is described wearing a ‘large brooch, which was fixed in the front of her collar bore on it an Irish device.’ (Joyce 187) Brooches are associated with the Bronze Age in Ireland, when the skill of the metalworkers could produce the incredible variety of golden pieces that are exposed in the National Museum of Ireland. For instance, a famous brooch that is valued and taught in schools as the main example of this type of craftwork is the Tara Brooch. Hence, Miss Ivors is linked with Irish tradition and Irish culture in the text, which will be very important as it relates with Ivors’ political ideology. In addition, there are other issues that relate Miss Ivors with that political tendency that will be seen in the following paragraph, also using the symbolism that characterised Ireland for many decades, and even nowadays, with the use of Gaelic.

In the second part of Gabriel’s interaction with Miss Ivors, the reference to the trip to the Aran Islands, in which Pearse and McDonagh met, can be seen. Despite her initial appearance despising Gabriel, Miss Ivors invites him to a trip to the Aran Islands, which are located in Connaught, the western Irish province.

‘— O, Mr. Conroy, will you come for an excursion to the Aran Isles this summer? We’re going to stay there a whole month.’ (Joyce 189)

Gabriel refuses alleging that he has other plans in mind for his summer, which include a cycle tour around Europe. Historically, the west of Ireland has been related with Irishness, the most traditional and the most folklorically influenced area. Hence, there would be a symbolism in regards of the political environment of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, being the west of Ireland, the farthest area from England, the one that would be more against British rule. Therefore, Irish is widely spread, which is directly associated to the feeling of belonging to Irish identity. Irish is a crucial aspect in the National Movement, as there are issues regarding how the language is in decline since it was not allowed to speak it during oppressive rule in the past centuries. Moreover, according to An Phríomh-Oifig Staidrimh (Central Statistics Office of Ireland), the percentage of population fluent in Irish increases in western counties. Therefore, the amount of people that can speak it is limited, but it is more abundant in the west of Ireland. The importance of Irish is also seen in this story, where Miss Ivors argues whether he should practise with Irish instead of other languages as an answer to Gabriel’s refusal to him going to the Aran Isles

‘— And why do you go to France or Belgium, said Miss Ivors, instead of visiting your own land?’

— Well, said Gabriel, it’s partly to keep in touch with the languages and partly for a change.

— And haven’t you your own language to keep in touch with — Irish? asked Miss Ivors’ (Joyce 189)

Miss Ivors is therefore criticizing the fact that Gabriel chooses other countries over his own to spend time in. Furthermore, she also states her opinion about which language he should practise, as Irish is not spoken by everyone in Ireland. The message hidden behind this statement tries to evoke Gabriel’s national feeling. She wants him to get interested in Ireland, and, by extension, to get involved in the Nationalistic movement.

There is one element that is referenced all throughout the short story: ‘snow.’ Ireland is a country that does not get a lot of snow, even in winter time. Therefore, the emphasis put on the fact that is snowing is to be remarked and analysed.

‘He stood on the mat, scrapping the snow form his goloshes.’ (Joyce 176)

‘He watched sleepily the flakes, silver and dark, falling obliquely against the lamplight.’ (Joyce 225)



The presence of snow in the short story symbolizes, we claim, the decadence of Ireland, which would end in the revolts of 1916, causing the death of thousands of Irish citizens. This image could be associated with the growing enthusiasm towards independence, which slowly grew in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. This association could be justified if readers analyse the geographical locations the author uses. A bog is an element that has been present all through Irish history, as there are Celtic mummies along with highly important artefacts that have been found in bogs. Moreover, there is the mention of the Shannon river. This river geographically divides Ireland, and it says on Terence Brown's notes 'to cross the Shannon is to enter or leave the west of Ireland.' (Brown 317) As previously mentioned, the west region of Ireland is assumed to be most closely in touch with the Irish traditions and folklore. Therefore, there could be an allegorical symbolism with the Shannon and Irishness. Joyce was not a political author, in fact, this is the most political writing by this author, but it only deals with political matters in six pages.

'snow was general all over Ireland. It was falling on every part of the dark central plain, [...] and, farther westward, softly upon the dark mutinous Shannon.'

(Joyce 225)

Therefore, symbolism prominent in the text. The Shannon river is mentioned together with the fact that it was snowing. The river could be used as a symbol, an image, to represent the moving to the pro-Republican side. The river divides Ireland from east to west and, by crossing it, one would enter the west of Ireland. The west of Ireland is associated with Irish values and the claim of Irishness. This can then be related to the pro-Republican side.

Covering all the aspects exposed above, it becomes clear that Miss Ivors is associated with the pro-Nationalist movement. She is associated with several issues that have been influential in Irish history, more specifically with the rising of the pro-Nationalist movement. These aspects include, firstly, criticizing Gabriel for writing a column about books he is told to read. The column has no political content, but Gabriel is judged because of the political ideology the newspaper is related to. Furthermore, there are other aspects that relate Miss Ivors with the pro-Nationalist movement. She asks Gabriel whether he would like to go on a trip to the west of Ireland in the summer. The west of Ireland has been and, still, is associated with Irish traditions, culture and customs. Therefore, readers get to see the association between politics and geographical distribution. The last symbolic element that relate Miss Ivors with her political ideology

is the importance she gives to visit Ireland instead of other countries and the use of Irish language. She criticizes Gabriel for choosing other countries to spend time in rather than his own, where he can practise and recover their old language, which is being lost. There is also the symbolism the author uses to exemplify the pro-Nationalist movement, as the crossing of the Shannon would be comparable to the ideology of the pro-National political movement that developed in Ireland at that moment, which would grow exponentially as decades went on. This change in ideology would be thus represented by James Joyce. Ireland has many features that have been used to represent this pro-National movement throughout history, such as the cases of Irish, geographical elements like rivers, etc. This will be also seen in other works by other authors, like in Brian Friel's 'Translations,' the issue of using of Irish instead of English is present all through the play, or the references to the streams in Yeats' '1916,' which are purely Irish landscape.

### Chapter III – Poetry: William B. Yeats’ ‘1916’

“Easter 1916” may be the most popular poem by W. B. Yeats. The poem has a four-stanza structure, which is divided by the different themes of the stanzas. Even though poetry is not the most common genre to analyse and somehow criticize historical events, there is a structure similar to an essay analysing the elements of the Easter Uprising in 1916.

The first stanza is made up of sixteen verses in perfect rhyme. The content of those verses is relevant for this analysis as it depicts usual Irish scenes. Yeats exposes his day-to-day life, which is seen in the use of the pronoun ‘I,’ and the Dubliners’. There are usual scenes such as greetings or talking in pubs by the fire. This may be seen in verses 5 to 12

‘I have passed with a nod of the head  
Or polite meaningless words,  
Or have lingered awhile and said  
Polite meaningless words,  
And though before I had done  
Of a mocking tale or gibe  
To please a companion  
Around the fire at the club.’

(Yeats 119)

This depiction illustrates the relaxed and harmonious society that could be found previous to the Easter uprising in 1916. However, there is a warning at the end of the stanza in which Yeats foresees what was about to come for Irish citizens ‘A terrible beauty is born.’ (Yeats 120). This means that a new process that would lead to the total independence from the Westminster Parliament was near its beginning, a conflict that would last several

years and that would carry the death of Irish people among which there were several of the most brilliant and promising personalities at the time. The main goal of the revolution would be achieved, getting a partial independence at first, and, after some years, total independence, but not without a great cost as two consecutive wars struck Ireland. Firstly, the War of Independence, then the Irish Civil War. This is the reason why Yeats calls this process a 'terrible beauty,' because the final aim was achieved but the cost the country paid for it was terrible for them. Furthermore, this verse is repeated in several of the stanzas of the poem, as Yeats' clear final statement.

In the second stanza, the author stops using pronouns to start using noun phrases that directly refer to relevant leaders of the Easter Uprising that made history "in other parts of the city, Eamon de Valera, Eamonn Ceannt, the Countess Markievicz and other commandants assembled their troops close to various target buildings." (Donoghue 46) Therefore, the author personalizes the rebels, which is seen in the very first verses i.e.: from verse 17 to 23 of the second stanza 'that woman's days were spent / In ignorant good-will...' (Yeats 120) This is a clear reference to the aforementioned Countess Markievicz, whom the author evidently knew, not only because of the way she is treated in the poem, which denotes a certain level of intimacy, but also because Yeats and the Countess were born in the same county, 'the county of Sligo, wherein Yeats lies buried under the stone [...]' (Quinn 449) Yeats criticizes how all her beauty disappeared when she entered politics, as a result of her 'nights in argument / until her voice grew shrill.' (Yeats 120) This woman was one of the few leaders who survived the Easter Uprising and is commonly used as a symbol in present day movements like Feminism or Irish Nationalism. She is still present, even a hundred years after the uprising in which she took part, in a statue right in the middle of Dublin City Centre. The following important personalities that are mentioned in the poem by Yeats are Pearse, MacDonagh and MacBride, in this order. The first one is still very important in Irish society since he was the main orator during the Easter Uprising. He is remembered for highly relevant events during the revolt, for example, 'Pearse, in effect the leader of the insurgents, came out of the G. P. O. and read a one-page document headed *Poblacht na hEireann*, followed by *The Provisional Government of the Irish Republic to the People of Ireland.*' (Donoghue 47) He pities the poet comparing him to a Pegasus 'And rode our winged horse' (Yeats 120) assuming he was to become one of the best poets in 20<sup>th</sup> century Ireland. However, Pearse died during the revolt against British rule. Yeats does a similar thing with the two

following authors. He states that MacDonagh 'was coming into his force; / He might have won fame in the end' (Yeats 120), so, basically, the author is telling the reader how he considered that MacDonagh was becoming better and better in his writings and predicting how successful his career would have been if he had not lost his life fighting in the Uprising. Finally, in regards of the last author, Yeats seems to be more critical with him as 'A drunken, vainglorious lout. / He had done most bitter wring.' (Yeats 120) This may be due to the fact that MacBride had an emotional relationship with Yeats' love, Maud Gonne. MacBride supposedly had an abusive relationship so that would be the main cause explaining what the critique is about. However, Yeats still mentions him in his poem because, even though he was evil, he played an important role.

'Yet I number him in the song;  
He, too, resigned his part  
In the casual comedy;  
He, too, has been changed in his turn,  
Transformed utterly:  
A terrible beauty is born'

(Yeats 120)

These four personalities play an important role in the poem. Yeats did not choose them randomly; the author chose them because they were important for the revolution and the four of them are still remembered nowadays, even a century later. The author repeats the famous phrase at the end of the stanza. These personalities are example of what the word 'terrible' in this phrase stands for. All of them, except for Countess Markievicz, were killed either during the uprising or in the aftermath. With that, the country lost several of its most promising writers and authors.

The third stanza is very different from the rest included in the poem. There is no use of pronouns, in contrast to the use of the pronoun 'I' in the first stanza, which directly relates with Yeats' personal experience of Irish day-a-day society or the use of the personal pronouns such as 'her' or 'him' in the previous stanza, which relates to the personalities that played an important role during and after the revolt in the Easter of 1916. There is a strong use of symbolism, which is related with the author's personal opinion towards the Irish independence from British rule. In this third stanza, Yeats shows his point of view of a pacific process of independence. This is seen via symbolism. There is a repeated element in the stanza: the stone.

'Hearts with one purpose alone  
Through summer and winter seem  
Enchanted to a stone [...]  
The stone's in the midst of all.'

(Yeats 120-121)

This stone symbolizes the thoughts of the patriots, showing how stubborn and hard they are. There is also an additional meaning to this symbol. A stone is an object that does not move, that is stuck. This could be also a point in Yeats' argumentation. The rebels wanted independence at all costs, even if it supposed to rise up in arms against British rule. Yeats' point of view would be that of a pacifist process of independence, like most people wanted at the time, which would have required much more time for negotiation, a time the rebels did not want to wait. 'Yeats presented a carefully designed camouflage. It worked not by making him inconspicuous, [...], discreet, invisible. It set up gaudy facades, behind which Yeats could remain inviolate.' (Maxwell 120) Hence, the author states his opinion of maybe not a pacific process of independence, but it is certain that Yeats does not share the same opinion of the rebels about the struggle, by disagreeing with the way it was done, but also without being directly clear.

In regards of the last stanza, there may be two interpretations. The first one could be condemning the actions of the rebels. It is true that because of their actions, many lives were lost during the Uprising consequently losing several of the most promising writers and important personalities. This could be seen in the multiple rhetoric questions throughout the stanza, which may symbolize if all these loses were worth it, as for example 'What is it but nightfall? / No, no, not nightfall but death;' (Yeats 121) There are other verses in which other interpretations are made. This is the case of how some of these verses may be a critique against the fanaticism of the rebels, as in 'When sleep at last has come / On limbs that had run wild.' (Yeats 121) The other possible interpretation presents a completely different point of argumentation. It could be also discussed that the last verses are written with the main goal of immortalizing the rebels. If the rebels are taken as the agents of change during the Uprising against British rule, it could be argued that in the last verses, the enumeration of the rebels' names, who died during the Uprising, symbolizes the change that shook the country. This did not happen during the revolt but during the aftermath, 'The general reaction to the Easter rebellion was initially negative and became positive only when the British executed the leaders.' (Frazier, 75)

MacDonagh and MacBride  
And Connolly and Pearse  
Now and in time to be,  
Wherever green is worn,  
Are changed, changed utterly:  
A terrible beauty is born.' (Yeats 121)

Furthermore, Yeats makes a specific naming of all these people as a way of remembering their names for what they did and fought for. There is a specific line that relates them to what they did. In verse 78, 'Wherever green is worn,' (Yeats 121) there is a clear relation with Irish patriotism and its identification with the green colour. This remarks their important role in regards of this matter and why they should be remembered in history by anyone who wears that specific colour with the aim of evoking Irishness.

Yeats political side comes out in this poem due to the impact of the events of 1916's Easter. In four stanzas, the author exposes how things were in Ireland before the Easter Uprising, and then makes an elegy about the participants in it. In his words, Yeats raises awareness to the voices of many Irish citizens at the time. He expresses what many people thought of the leaders, that their violent actions were not excusable and should not be followed, but at the same time, they encountered a terrible fate in the aftermath. This is what eventually gave the discontented pro-Republican sides the enough courage to rebel against the British and raise in arms for the independence. Therefore, "a terrible beauty was born," for Irish independence was achieved by fighting, and at the cost of having lost many of the most promising literate people of the time.

## Chapter IV – Drama: Brian Friel’s ‘Translations’

In the play ‘Translations,’ by the Irish author Brian Friel, there are multiple elements that are important for the analysis of the Irish conflict. There are issues related with the language, as it may be firstly drawn out from the title of the play. Even though the play is entirely written and played in English, the Irish characters, supposedly, speak in Irish. The issue of language is one of the main issues that are present in the play ‘Translations,’ in The Irish Troubles and in Irish society at present. ‘Translations’ was first performed in Derry/Londonderry, a city which faces problems, even regarding its own name, a type of situation that is evident in the play and that is still present nowadays. This chapter explores, firstly, the problems concerning the issue of language in Ireland. Languages highly influence identity and also determine how people see the world around them, as language predetermines human mind. This is definitely important in the society presented by Friel as a new language is being imposed by the English who are arriving to the island. Secondly, the chapter discusses the problem involving the translation of the names of Irish places into English. The chapter focuses on the topic of what naming is and what it supposes for humans, alongside the idea of identity. Thirdly, the analysis explores the presentation of a romantic relationship between two characters that belong to two different societies. What this relation between these people represents is transcendental and goes beyond the play itself. Friel presents a complex situation in a complex society. An Irish version of ‘Romeo and Juliet,’ in which none in the entire two societies approves the relationship between them, which eventually has consequences.

Language is the main issue the play resolves around. Firstly, ‘Friel was occupied with questions of language and translation at this time and shied away from the possibility



of propaganda' (Murray 86) The play is called 'Translations,' which gives a clue about how important translating and language are in the play. Indirectly, translations are the conductors of the action in the play. That is the reason why Englishmen come to Baile Beag / Ballybeg, to translate the names of the places of that part of county Donegal into English. Translations make Lieutenant Yolland enter in touch with the Irish community, which would eventually lead to him, an Englishman, falling in love with Maire, an Irishwoman. It also seems that the play was itself translated literally from Irish into English. There are sentence structures that are purely Irish, but the language used is English. This could also mean that the variety of English Irish people use is influenced by Irish somehow.

'JIMMY: I thought you had English?

MAIRE: Three words.'

(Friel, *Selected Plays* 388)

The quotation shows how Jimmy asks Maire whether she can speak English or not. However, he does not use the verb 'to know' but 'to have' instead. This is possible since 'to know a language' in Irish is made with the possessive: 'Tá Bearla agam,' which means I know English. Irish people do not ask others how many languages they know but how many languages they have. Secondly, the play was firstly performed on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 1980, right in the middle of The Irish Troubles. However, the author, Friel, always stated that the play did not include any political ideology or hidden message. He insisted in the play being only about language "What worries me about the play are [...] the political elements. Because the play has to do with language and only language" (Friel, "Extracts from a Sporadic Diary" 58) However, it cannot be denied that the play can be related with the Irish conflict and that it includes and portrays several aspects of it. Language in Ireland is certainly an issue as, before the English arrival to the island, there was a previous language, spread and spoken by the islanders. That language was Irish or Gaelic. However, with the arrival of the English people, they imposed their language, leading to its current situation nowadays. There are two official languages in Ireland: Irish and English. Besides the co-officiality of both languages, it is the latter, the one that is mostly used. This is the reason why the play is written in English and not in Irish, because English is the language the Irish use and speak the most. Furthermore, there is a significant percentage of the Irish population that cannot speak Irish, so it would have been very difficult for some people to understand the play, due to the very little amount of Irish language speakers. 'Translations is a play for modern Ireland.' (Pine 210-211) A

modern Ireland implies a very different amount of people being able to understand Irish. Therefore, the use of English and not Irish reflect how Irish people have been affected by the decline of their native language. Hence, the importance of Irish and its connection with an independent Ireland appears again here. The resulting society nowadays relies on both languages and is affected by them. It could not be thought to be the same if the influence coming from English had not happened so ‘the idea of the ‘both/and’ [...] is in its function, the membrane between the two worlds, which exclude it, but which depend on each other.’ (Pine 189) There was, and there is, a lot of rejection towards the English in contemporary Irish society as evident in the murals or in the literary instances that we have explored in this paper, remembering the people who lost their lives because of British police actions in the demonstrations in Northern Ireland or the actions that occurred during the Easter Uprising of 1916. However, it is true that the society in the British Isles is shaped and depends on one another. Specially, there is trouble nowadays with the Brexit dilemma, which presents physical problems with the border between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, two different countries that share a same society. This dual relation could be also present in the play, as there are instances of relations between characters that came from different societies but that apparently want to be together.

The relationship between two characters that even though they do not play an important role have their impact and strongly affect the plot of the play. This is the case of Lieutenant Yolland and Maire, who in the beginning do not interact or relate to each other but that apparently fell in love and wanted to be together in the end. This couple faces a series of difficulties beginning with the language issue, as, again, even though the play was written and played in English, supposedly, the characters speak different languages, that is, Maire speaks Irish, some Latin and only knows a few words of English and Yolland only knows English and some words in Latin.

‘MAIRE: Say anything at all. I love the sound of your speech.

YOLLAND: (Eagerly) Sorry—sorry? [...]

MAIRE: Tu es centurio in — in — in exercitu Britannico —

YOLLAND: Yes—yes? Go on — go on — say anything at all — I love the sound of your speech.’  
(Friel, *Selected Plays* 427)

This is an issue that affects the couple when they interact, which is at the end of the play, during a party. They also come from totally different societies as Maire comes from Baile Beag/Ballybeg, which is the setting of the play and Yolland comes from England. His

mission there is to translate and record all the Irish names on that area to English. To do this, he has to know the culture and understand the inhabitants, the society. Therefore, he gets the help of Owen, who knows a lot about the names of the area and their history. While he does this, he begins to fall in love with the Irish culture, wanting to learn Irish and wanting to know more about the history of the area. He admits, on several occasions to be enjoying his time there and praises how good people are there and what an interesting culture and history they possess.

‘YOLLAND: I mean –I feel so cut off from the people here. And I was trying to explain a few minutes ago how remarkable a community this is to meet people like yourself and Jimmy [...]. And your place names — what was the one we came across this morning? — Termon, from Terminus, the god of boundaries. It – it – it’s really astonishing.’ (Friel, *Selected Plays* 418)

In the end, it seems like he wants to live and settle there, to share a life with Maire. However, he disappears at the end of the play and he is thought to be dead or kidnapped. The English officials start looking for him and start interrogating the locals to look for whoever is responsible for his disappearance. Maire, however, denies both the fact that he might be dead and the fact that he might have fled. This situation could be related with the English people who settled in Ireland during the centuries Ireland was under the rule of British monarchs. This people stayed in the island and, inevitably, related with the locals through the centuries. These relations might have been difficult as they would have been judged by the locals and by the British. The formers would not have wanted their kin to mix with the ‘invaders’ and the latter would have considered it to lower oneself with people who were not British. Anyhow, this situation reminds of a sort of “Romeo and Juliet” with the added fact that language was an obstacle for them as ‘Friel’s continual concern in the theatre of language is obviously to reconcile, to whatever possible extent, two apparently irreconcilable elements, the Irish imagination and the English language’ (Pine 208) This could be extended to reconcile the two societies that have been in conflict in Ireland, more specifically Northern Ireland, which are influenced by the events that happened at the beginnings of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These events were the Easter Uprising and the following War of Independence, in which the pro-independence side did not end up conquering the North of Ireland, where society was left fragmented. Friel makes an attempt to reconcile these societies by presenting two people who ‘express their love for each other by trying to use, in so far as they are able, each other's language suggests the ideal of two cultures reaching out to each other, trying to communicate with each other and to understand each other.’ (McGrath 40) This play was performed last century when

the terrorist organization IRA was carrying its criminal activities in Northern Ireland, which again represented a divided society. Friel's intention was conciliatory by presenting this play. This is also strongly related with the contemporary situation and with movements like Brexit, which is provoking that parties such as Sinn Féin to disagree with what is said from Westminster Parliament. That is, creating a border in Northern Ireland. For this reason, 'party president Mary Lou McDonald called for a Border poll as part of the Government's no-deal Brexit planning' (Emerson irishtimes.com) This is the divided and confronted situation people who live in Northern Ireland must face. A division based on political ideology, a divided society and language.

To finish with, there are many possible interpretations that can be given to Friel's play, "Translations." Firstly, the issue of language is clearly present in the play. Both the implications of translations and the ones with the use of the two languages affect the characters and how action develops in the play but also in Irish society at present, in which both Irish and English are present and their use may be related with political ideology, as seen in the Belfast Murals, when the use of Gaelic means the will to be part of a "free Ireland." Secondly, the romantic relationship two of the characters have presents problems in the society they live in. Within Ireland, as stated before, the English and the Irish lived together, and that situation led to violent conflict, especially during the last century, when, in the beginning, there were wars of independence and revolts in Easter 1916, and, in the latter part of the century, when terrorist group IRA carried out their violent actions. This is all present or at least it can be related to one of the plays of one of the most important Irish playwrights in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Brian Friel.

## Chapter V – Belfast Murals

Belfast Murals are one of the main attractions to the Northern Irish city. Not many European cities can be analysed chronologically by paintings as ‘buildings and walls throughout the city are adorned with murals that reflect the city’s social, cultural, and political traditions and history’ (The Editors of *Encyclopædia Britannica*) These graphic representations portray the history not only of Belfast but of the whole of Ireland. As was presented in the historical context, the Irish independence and how it affected the Northern Irish community is still an issue as, despite the fact that there is no official border between both the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland, the division is present. There is a relevant amount of people living in the North of Ireland that want to be part of the Republic. This group of people increased over the years throughout 20<sup>th</sup> century. Traditionally, Catholic families that want the whole of Ulster to be in the Republic of Ireland have frequently been more prolific in number than the Protestant ones. Therefore, there is quite a number of these murals that represent this separatist pro-Republican side (people willing to get separated from the United Kingdom and join the Republic of Ireland) as well as another relevant amount of pro-Unionist murals (people willing to remain in the United Kingdom).

For the purpose of this study, this chapter will focus on murals extracted from the Belfast-murals website database, which includes a graphic image of each one of the murals that can be visited in the city. Furthermore, the murals that appear in the website are classified, according to the graphic content or the messages that appear in them, into three groups.

The first group is catalogued as social or cultural murals, which represent important elements related to the city. To illustrate this, two photographs are added to this chapter to facilitate the understanding of this classification. The first of the murals<sup>1</sup> represents one of the main issues for which the city is known worldwide: the building of the Titanic. The mural represents Belfast shipyard, with the date in which the ship sank: April 14<sup>th</sup>, 1912. This is one of the major historical events that have affected the city and remains relevant even a century later. The Titanic museum includes all the elements surrounding the ship, being one of Belfast's main tourist attractions. The second mural<sup>2</sup> represents C. S. Lewis and his masterpiece: 'The Chronicles of Narnia.' This is important for the city of Belfast as he was born in 'November 29<sup>th</sup>, 1898, Belfast, Ireland [now in Northern Ireland.]' (Schakel *Encyclopædia Britannica*) This is another element for which the city and its citizens are proud. They find pride in having been born in the same city as one of the most relevant British authors of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These two images are just illustrations of this group, in which more images can be seen, representing real murals in the city.

The other two groups are classified into loyalists and republicans according to the political ideology they represent. 'Typically, the murals have been understood as ideological expressions of either loyalists or republicans, an understanding that entrenches the prevailing two-communities thesis, so-called, and reduces the complex struggles of Northern Ireland to a simple conflict between two groups' (Lisle 27), these two groups still reflect the two sides battling in the war.

On the one hand, the pro-Unionist side represented those who wanted to remain in the United Kingdom, who, in their majority were Anglican. Therefore, the murals representing this group incorporate several elements regarding UK's symbology, added to the royal symbology. On the other hand, the Republican side represented those who wanted to get independent from Westminster Parliament and form a country of their own. Thus, they would establish their own laws and Home rule, which was a 'movement to secure internal autonomy for Ireland within the British Empire' (The Editors of *Encyclopædia Britannica*) Therefore, the symbology that is attributed to the murals representing this side of the conflict will represent the colours of the Irish flag or the faces

---

<sup>1</sup> See 'mural 1' in Annex (page 29), extracted February 25<sup>th</sup> 2019 from *Belfast Murals*, [www.belfast-murals.co.uk/single\\_mural.html?rms\\_titanic](http://www.belfast-murals.co.uk/single_mural.html?rms_titanic).

<sup>2</sup> See 'mural 2' in Annex (page 30), extracted February 25<sup>th</sup> 2019 from *Belfast Murals*, [www.belfast-murals.co.uk/single\\_mural.html?narnia\\_pansy](http://www.belfast-murals.co.uk/single_mural.html?narnia_pansy).

of the men who led the Irish Uprising in 1916, which commonly include ‘Patrick Pearse, Tom Clarke, and several other leaders of the Irish Republican Brotherhood’ (The Editors of *Encyclopædia Britannica*).

In the pro-Unionist side murals, as mentioned before, most of the elements that appear are related to a United Kingdom or British symbology. Therefore, emblems such as the national flags, flowers or colours representing each one of the countries that form the United Kingdom will recurrently appear. This may be shown in the mural<sup>3</sup>, in showing each one of the flags of the countries included in the UK: The Ulster Hand in the Northern Irish flag, the red dragon in Wales’ flag, the Saint George’s Cross in England’s flag and finally Saint Andrews Cross in the Scottish flag. Alongside each of the flags, just in the opposite side, the national flowers of each country appear, so following the previous enumeration, the shamrock, the thistle, the daffodil and the Tudor rose appear respectively. This symbolism represents United Kingdom’s elements, which are used at the same time as a reinforcement of the national feeling. This is meant to evoke people’s sense of unity towards the actual country that was left after the Irish War of Independence. There is an aim of everyone getting representation in the mural. This mural can be understood as a metaphor towards the Westminster Parliament, in which everyone gets representation and is given the importance they deserve now, thus establishing a difference with the political atmosphere that Irish citizens had to face at the beginnings of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This evoking the feeling of belonging to something else was, and sometimes is, one of the main resources used to persuade the population of Northern Ireland to keep from revolting and to minimize the desire to get independent from the United Kingdom.

Following this analysis of the pro-Unionist side, another issue used as a way of convincing people of the validity of their movement is the Irish Republican Army (IRA) attacks. This terrorist organization was dismantled last century but the activities this group carried out had terrible consequences for the population of Ireland ‘as its was to use armed force to render British rule in Ireland ineffective and thus to assist in achieving the broader objective of an independent republic, which was pursued at the political level by Sinn Féin, the Irish nationalist party’ (Arthur et al. *Encyclopædia Britannica*) There were bombings all over Northern Ireland that caused the death of hundreds of innocent

---

<sup>3</sup> See ‘mural 3’ in Annex (page 31), extracted February 25<sup>th</sup> 2019 from *Belfast Murals*, [www.belfast-murals.co.uk/single\\_mural.html?uk\\_history](http://www.belfast-murals.co.uk/single_mural.html?uk_history).



people. This is seen in the mural<sup>4</sup> with the headlines of many newspapers that show how there are news regarding all these bombings and assassinations of innocents. This denouncing of unfair events is linked to the pro-Unionist side as the IRA fought for the independence of Northern Ireland and its subsequent union to the Republic of Ireland. This is the reason why the pro-Unionist murals show how this organization acted and what it meant to agree with their actions: the death of innocent civilians. To do this, there is a collage made of the headlines where people are able to read how people died by IRA's hands. This association was rejected socially not only by pro-Unionist sides but also by part of the pro-Republican side, again, maybe influenced by Daniel O'Connell, as seen for example in the '20,000 Rally in Dublin for Peace in North and Against I.R.A. Killing' (Clarity *The New York Times*)

The last analysis involves the murals including content belonging to the pro-Republican side. Traditionally the Irish national feeling has been associated with elements that were opposed to English values. That is, the Irish language, Gaelic sports, the traditional Irish patterns in sculptures, historical and archaeological heritage, etc. Therefore, the elements used to claim and encourage the Republic movement are those of this kind, reminding of those that appear in some of the literary examples included in this study. However, these are not the only patterns and elements used to claim the Irish national feeling, which has as its final aim to convince people to separate from the United Kingdom and join the Republic of Ireland. The faces of the Easter Uprising leaders are used also as an emblem, relating as well to Yeats' '1916'. The revolution took place in Easter Monday of that year planned 'by Irish intellectuals and other leaders of the IRB (Irish Republican Brotherhood), a society within the nationalist organization called Irish Volunteers,' (The Editors of *Encyclopædia Britannica*) This is seen in the mural<sup>5</sup>, showing the four coats of arms of the four provinces of the island of Ireland, the colours of the Irish flag and above everything a phrase in Irish. This tries to evoke the Irishness in Ulster people. The four provinces are represented in the mural, thus giving importance and representation to all of them. This could be understood as the sense of not leaving Ulster behind, as remembering a province divided into two different countries. Furthermore, the colours of the flag of the Republic of Ireland represent that union

---

<sup>4</sup>See 'mural 4' in Annex (page 32), extracted February 25<sup>th</sup> 2019 from *Belfast Murals*, [www.belfast-murals.co.uk/single\\_mural.html?protestant\\_victims](http://www.belfast-murals.co.uk/single_mural.html?protestant_victims).

<sup>5</sup> See 'mural 5' in Annex (page 32), extracted February 25<sup>th</sup> 2019 from *Belfast Murals*, [www.belfast-murals.co.uk/single\\_mural.html?easter\\_lily](http://www.belfast-murals.co.uk/single_mural.html?easter_lily).



between Catholic (green) and Protestant (orange). And finally, the phrase in Irish carries a simple message: a language of our own, different from English. This phenomenon is a strategy the government of the Republic of Ireland puts to work in every place, not just in Ulster. Every official signal, traffic signal, etc. goes first in Irish, and, secondly, in English. Moving on to another part of the mural, the faces of people along with the slogan: “honour Ireland’s dead” are quite noticeable. This is a way to remember the people who led the Easter Uprising in 1916, who were executed because of treason. Almost every person involved in the Uprising was executed either during the revolt or after their defeat. This represented a final blow for the pro-Unionist side due to the cruelty with which these people were treated. Therefore, each Easter there is a memorial for these people who died for their country.

In the next mural<sup>6</sup>, there is a similar pattern that reminds of the previous one. The faces of several people appear under the slogan: “since 1970, seventeen people killed including children” The aim of this sentence is to denounce the brutality with which the people who supported the pro-Republican movement were treated in Northern Ireland. The police were tense due to the IRA conflict and, on several occasions, they had to act in order to suppress the pro-Republican side. This resulted in the death of many people, which was strongly criticised by the media as it happened during The Troubles. This mural is just a pictorial exemplification of what this criticism meant. This was also aimed to remember the people of Belfast that were being repressed, and, on certain occasions, killed because of their political ideology.

Murals are pictorial representations of the two sides in which the Ulster society is divided, and between which there is no apparent conflict nowadays. However, the Brexit referendum showed how a significant percentage of Northern Irelanders voted to remain within the European union. This may come from the fact that some families are divided between the two countries and separating could convey building a physical border between them. Also, it would be more difficult for the pro-Republican side to achieve their goal and join the Republic of Ireland.

---

<sup>6</sup> See ‘mural 6’ in Annex (page 33), extracted February 25<sup>th</sup> 2019 from *Belfast Murals*, [www.belfast-murals.co.uk/single\\_mural.html?civil\\_order](http://www.belfast-murals.co.uk/single_mural.html?civil_order).

## Conclusion

Common patterns used to associate with the Irish process of independence appear in different artistic manifestations. That is, for example, the faces of the leaders of the Easter Uprising in 1916, that have been referenced to or appear in almost every artistic work. In Joyce's 'The Dead,' the trip to the Aran Islands, in which some of them met, is referenced associating the west of Ireland with Irish tradition and Irishness, then in Yeats' 'Easter 1916,' the author comes across some of them to express his feelings and thoughts about them. Finally, these people serve as tool, nowadays, in Belfast pro-Republican murals, which use them as martyrs to express how the ones that want the independence are repressed and, at extreme points, killed. There are many issues regarded when speaking of Irish independence, such as the importance Irish language carries, as it is the main issue portrayed in Friel's 'Translations,' and it appears as well in Joyce's 'The Dead.' The current situation of the language results in not even half of the population of Ireland being able to speak it. This is in part due to the imposition of English during the centuries in which the British ruled the island. Irish is present also in the pictorial representations of the murals, which include phrases in Irish as an identifying national element. After what has been exposed, Irish independence is clearly still present in the most influential artistic elements of the current society. Not only this society is influenced by the writings of the past century, as many of these authors were recognized with international awards for their work, but also in Belfast murals, which serve as a means of expression for the people of both sides. The presence of the elements related to the independence cannot be underestimated and still influences current Irish society. Nowadays, with the Brexit approaching, it will become more and more clear how these elements might be used again to express the differences the Northern Irelanders present regarding the issue. The importance of the artistic manifestations related to the Irish process of independence we have covered is unquestionable.

## Annex — Belfast Murals

(all murals available at <http://www.belfast-murals.co.uk/>)



Mural 1



Mural 2



Mural 3





Mural 4



Mural 5



## Works Cited

- “1916 Rising | The Irish Times Easter Rising Commemoration.” *The Irish Times*, [www.irishtimes.com/1916](http://www.irishtimes.com/1916).
- Arthur, Paul, and Kimberly Cowell-Meyers. “Irish Republican Army.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 29 Jan. 2019, [www.britannica.com/topic/Irish-Republican-Army](http://www.britannica.com/topic/Irish-Republican-Army).
- Arthur, Paul, and Kimberly Cowell-Meyers. “Sinn Féin.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 18 Sept. 2018, [www.britannica.com/topic/Sinn-Fein#ref714621](http://www.britannica.com/topic/Sinn-Fein#ref714621).
- “Belfast Murals.” *Belfast Murals*, [www.belfast-murals.co.uk/](http://www.belfast-murals.co.uk/).
- Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. “Belfast.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 31 Aug. 2018, [www.britannica.com/place/Belfast](http://www.britannica.com/place/Belfast).
- Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. “Home Rule.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 15 Sept. 2010, [www.britannica.com/event/Home-Rule-Great-Britain-and-Ireland](http://www.britannica.com/event/Home-Rule-Great-Britain-and-Ireland).
- Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. “Easter Rising.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 22 Feb. 2019, [www.britannica.com/event/Easter-Rising](http://www.britannica.com/event/Easter-Rising).
- Clarity, James F. “20,000 Rally in Dublin for Peace in North and Against I.R.A. Killing.” *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 29 Mar. 1993, [www.nytimes.com/1993/03/29/world/20000-rally-in-dublin-for-peace-in-north-and-against-ira-killing.html](http://www.nytimes.com/1993/03/29/world/20000-rally-in-dublin-for-peace-in-north-and-against-ira-killing.html).



- Curtis, Edmund. *A History of Ireland*. University Paperbacks, UK, 1922.
- Donoghue, Denis. "EASTER 1916." *Yeats's Legacies: Yeats Annual No. 21*, edited by Warwick Gould, 1st ed., vol. 21, Open Book Publishers, Cambridge, UK, 2018, pp. 39–62.
- Eldridge, Alison. "Constance Markievicz." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 31 Jan. 2019, [www.britannica.com/biography/Constance-Markievicz](http://www.britannica.com/biography/Constance-Markievicz).
- Emerson, Newton. "Sinn Féin's Border Poll Behaviour Does Not Add Up." *The Irish Times*, The Irish Times, 13 Dec. 2018, [www.irishtimes.com/opinion/sinn-féin-s-border-poll-behaviour-does-not-add-up-1.3728965](http://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/sinn-féin-s-border-poll-behaviour-does-not-add-up-1.3728965).
- Frazier, Adran. "The Ascendancy Poetry of W. B. Yeats." *The Sewanee Review*, vol. 88, no. 1, 1980, pp. 65—85. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/27543656](http://www.jstor.org/stable/27543656).
- Friel, Brian. "Extracts from a Sporadic Diary." *Ireland and the Arts: A Special Issue of Literary Review*. Ed. Tim Pat Coogan. London: Namara, n.d. [1985]: (56—61)
- Friel, Brian. *Selected Plays*. London [etc.]: Faber and Faber, 1987
- Houses of the Oireachtas. "History of Parliament in Ireland." *House of the Oireachtas*, Houses of the Oireachtas, 17 Jan. 2019, [www.oireachtas.ie/en/visit-and-learn/history-and-buildings/history-of-parliament-in-ireland/](http://www.oireachtas.ie/en/visit-and-learn/history-and-buildings/history-of-parliament-in-ireland/).
- Lisle, Debbie. "Local Symbols, Global Networks: Rereading the Murals of Belfast." *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, vol. 31, no. 1, 2006, pp. 27–52.
- Maxwell, D. E. s: "Views of Yeats." *Mosaic: A Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature*, vol. 12, no. 3, 1979, pp. 115-128. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/24780342](http://www.jstor.org/stable/24780342)
- McDonagh, Philip. "The Good Friday Agreement: 1998." *India International Centre Quarterly*, vol. 31, no. 1, 2004, pp. 12–22. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/23005908](http://www.jstor.org/stable/23005908).
- McGrath, F. C. "Irish Babel: Brian Friel's 'Translations' and George Steiner's 'After Babel.'" *Comparative Drama*, vol. 23, no. 1, 1989, pp. 31–49. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/41153387](http://www.jstor.org/stable/41153387).

- Murray, Christopher. "PALIMPSEST: TWO LANGUAGES AS ONE IN BRIAN FRIEL'S 'TRANSLATIONS.'" *Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies (HJEAS)*, vol. 5, no. 1, 1999, pp. 85–95. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/41274033](http://www.jstor.org/stable/41274033).
- Pine, Richard. *Brian Friel and Ireland's Drama*. London [etc.]: Routledge, 1990.
- Prince, Simon. "Narrative and the Start of the Northern Irish Troubles: Ireland's Revolutionary Tradition in Comparative Perspective." *Journal of British Studies*, vol. 50, no. 4, 2011, pp. 941–964. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/23265542](http://www.jstor.org/stable/23265542).
- Quinn, M. Bernetta. "Yeats and Ireland." *The English Journal*, vol. 54, no. 5, 1965, pp. 449—450. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/811253](http://www.jstor.org/stable/811253)
- Schakel, Peter. "C.S. Lewis." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 6 Dec. 2018, [www.britannica.com/biography/C-S-Lewis](http://www.britannica.com/biography/C-S-Lewis).
- "The Northern Ireland Conflict 1968-1998 – An Overview." *The Irish Story*, 13 Dec. 2018, [www.theirishstory.com/2015/02/09/the-northern-ireland-conflict-1968-1998-an-overview/#.XJC6wSJKjIV](http://www.theirishstory.com/2015/02/09/the-northern-ireland-conflict-1968-1998-an-overview/#.XJC6wSJKjIV).
- Yeats, William B. *Selected Poems*. Penguin Classics, 2000.