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The Republic aims to provide a forum for discussion, debate and analysis of contemporary and historical issues. Irish and international matters across a range of disciplines will be addressed. Republican ideas and principles will shape and inform the contents of the journal. Our aim is to serve a general rather than a specialist readership.

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CULTURE IN THE REPUBLIC

EDITORIAL

Recently, the Deputy Leader of Fine Gael likened the position of his party to that of Birmingham City, a relatively obscure English football team—they were starting in a lowly position, reorganisation and advance would not be immediate, but they would improve gradually given time. It is interesting that a senior Irish politician felt that this comparison would be a meaningful and effective means of communication with the Irish people. It assumed that everyone would know what he was talking about and that it would be acceptable and unproblematic.

This cameo serves as an indicator of where we stand today. From one perspective, there is clear provincialism and cultural domination: not only is the comparison located within a narrowly English context, it is also with a comparatively minor team of little newsworthiness even in England. This pattern is repeated elsewhere in the Irish media, where the weekly turns in the Premiership are frequently headline items, displacing news about social, economic and political affairs in Ireland.

Yet, England and Britain are our nearest neighbours, and our history is intimately bound up with theirs, so that there is no escaping the mutual influences and interactions that have linked us to each other over many centuries. While these relations have often been difficult and problematic, involving power and domination, they cannot be contained in any one-dimensional narrative of 'eight hundred years of oppression'. Perhaps understandably, given the trauma associated with the efforts to carve out a sphere of Irish autonomy, and perhaps because of the seemingly 'obvious' correlation of political autonomy with cultural autonomy, an ideological drive for cultural separation was a feature both before and after 1922.

From another perspective, Richard Bruton's Birmingham comparison can be seen as a sign of increasing ease between the two islands and a greater maturity in our attitudes. It is not so long since soccer was frowned upon as a foreign sport, nor since there was a large degree of defensiveness surrounding Irish culture—the resulting protectionism (whether manifested in bans on foreign games or in notions of a pure Irish tradition) has faded to a large extent, although it may have

transformed itself into exaggerated ideas of Irish exceptionalism and uniqueness.

A different set of questions arises from the huge prominence now given to all sports in Irish public culture. Apart from displacing other news stories, there is a cumulative effect from treating sport and news as of equivalent importance and relevance. A news bulletin that includes items on war, international politics and economic affairs, on the one hand, and items on football matches, horse races and golf, on the other, is perhaps making claims about what is important to society and the relative weights it attaches to different categories of news. If the war on Iraq or the treatment of prisoners in Guantanamo Bay is of no more importance than the result of a football match, what does this say about society's priorities and its will to act?

Some of these matters are addressed in issues three and four of *The Republic*, both of which deal with culture and republicanism. Several of the writers insist that the cultural sphere is not autonomous and does not exist outside an economic, social and political context. Further, they argue, while culture occupies an increasing share of public discourse, culture is not determining of society or its other spheres. And if all the writers acknowledge the importance of culture, most of them are relaxed about it and suggest that if political solutions are found to political problems, economic solutions to economic problems, and so on, then culture will find its own forms and means of expression in a society at ease with itself.

Whether culture can play an integrative role in increasingly diverse societies is also discussed, and aspects of how culture deals with and affects groups such as children or Travellers and areas such as human rights and science are considered. Other essays address matters concerned with music and literature and republicanism. Issue four of *The Republic* will include articles that consider the changing global and international context as it affects culture, nations and republicanism.

It is not intended to present a comprehensive and systematic account of culture and its relationship with the republic. Instead, a broad range of issues are addressed, and somewhere in their scope and variety it is hoped that we will come to a better appreciation of the multi-faceted and complex relationships between culture and society.

Culture in the Constitution
of a Republic

PHILIP PETTIT

What should the state do to shape and sustain the society's system of culture? And, just as important, what should it not do? Is it to stay on the sidelines, allowing the system to evolve and take what form it will? Or is it to be an active player, with a firm and directive image of the way the system should develop and operate?

   I approach these questions in the step-by-step, unnuanced manner of the philosopher. In the first section, I characterise the republican tradition in its broad historical sweep, drawing on an earlier book on republicanism, and then, in the second section, I give an account of what the system of culture should be taken to encompass.[1] With those matters fixed, I go on in the third section to look at the role and significance of culture in the republican way of thinking. And finally, in the fourth section, I turn to the policy lessons for the state that this picture of the significance of culture would support. These lessons must be seen as important, I think, by anyone who embraces a republican philosophy, and they stand in conflict with the positions that might attract adherents of opposed philosophies, such as libertarianism and communitarianism.

The republican tradition, Irish and otherwise

Republicanism in the Roman form in which it passed down to the northern Italian states of the Renaissance, to England of the civil war period, and to revolutionary America and France—indeed, to Ireland of 1798 as well—was the creation of Polybius, an educated Greek who came as a slave to Rome about a century before the common era. Polybius did for republican Rome what Montesquieu was to do for England in the eighteenth century, and de Tocqueville for America in the nineteenth. He told the Romans how wonderful their way of doing things was and gave an idealised, beguiling account of their institutions that cast them as a model for reformers over the next two thousand years.

Polybius's enthusiasm was kindled by three features that he found in the Rome of his time. First was the fact that it had a mixed constitution in which no one individual or body—not a single monarchical ruler, not the aristocratic elite, not the people—had all of the power in their own hands. This, he thought, would guarantee a balanced representation of interests, while ensuring that bodies like the Senate and the Council of the Plebs and authorities like the consuls and the tribunes were able to serve as a check on one another, improving the chances that the cause of the common good—the *res publica*—would be advanced, rather than the cause of any particular class or faction. Second was the fact that the Roman constitution embodied a variety of further checks and balances against the arbitrary exercise of power, i.e. the exercise of power in the cause of a sectional or factional good, rather than the good of all. These checks included measures like the rule of law, regular election to office, enforced rotation in office, possibilities of challenge to those in power, and a variety of such devices. And third was the fact that this constitutional and institutional framework was reinforced and stabilised by long-established habits of vigilance in the scrutiny of those in authority, of bravery in speaking out against those in power, and of dedication to the constitution or *patria*, in short, the long-established habits of civic virtue.

Set in place among a people of civic virtue, what the mixed constitution and supporting checks and balances could achieve, according to Polybius, was to ensure the *libertas* or freedom of the *cives* or citizens. The *civis* would be a *liber*, so far as he—and the citizens were all male—was incorporated within the protective, empowering field of the Roman dispensation. He would be protected against private power or *dominium*, and, equally, he would be protected against that very protective agency itself, the public power or *imperium* of the state. This legal and civic ecology would ensure that each would know himself, and know himself to be known to others, as someone that no one could expect to push around with impunity: someone who had a protected place, an empowered presence among the denizens of that world.

Each citizen would have the status of being his own master, then, subject to the will of none of his fellows. And those citizens as a whole would be able to protect themselves against being pushed around by other peoples. The defence of their constitution and country was the most prominent element in the common good that they were meant to be institutionally and civically predisposed to serve. Individually and collectively, the citizens would enjoy freedom in the sense that requires the absence of subjection or *dominatio*: freedom as non-domination.

The Polybian ideas became themes on which many changes were rung among Roman writers like Cicero, Livy and Sallust; among Renaissance figures like Machiavelli—the 'divine Machiavel' of the *Discourses on Livy's History*, not the author of *The Prince*; among seventeenth- and eighteenth-century English radicals like James Harrington, Algernon Sidney, and the authors of *Cato's Letters*; among their contemporaries, French commentators like the Baron de Montesquieu and Jean Jacques Rousseau; and among the leaders of the American revolution like Thomas Jefferson and James Madison as well as its English supporters—radical Whigs—such as Joseph Priestley and Richard Price.

These figures all thought of freedom, in the way the Romans had thought of it, as a status in relation to his fellows which ensured that a person—a citizen—could walk tall amongst them, knowing himself, and knowing himself to be known, as someone that no one could expect to be able to obstruct or coerce with impunity. The freeman—women continued to be marginalised—would be subject to no master; no one would be in a position, emblematic of mastery, where they could interfere arbitrarily in his life or affairs. So long as he did not interfere with others, he would be able to pursue his business without fear or deference, and without a care for having anyone else's leave or permission. He would be able to look others in the eye, on equal terms.

Wolfe Tone, the first outstanding Irish republican—an 'independent Irish Whig', as he once signed himself—captured the idea nicely: 'true Republicans fight only to vindicate the rights of equality and detest ever the name of a Master'. Thus, he could write to a friend that he would not tolerate having to depend on the good will of the authorities, or of anyone else. 'I would live in no country *permissu superii*'—by the permission, and therefore at the goodwill, of a superior.[2]

But, not only did later republicans, Tone included, inherit this guiding idea of freedom from the Roman bequest, they also took on board the main constitutional and institutional themes: the emphasis on the need for democratic representation, of course—this became more and more prominent in later republicanism—but also the insistence that power must be divided up amongst contending bodies and hands, checks and balances put in place to ensure against the triumph of sectional or factional interest, and the constraints of a rule of law imposed on legislature and executive alike. Thus, in praising the way 'democracy is daily gaining ground' in America, Tone could argue in absolute fidelity to established republican themes: 'I am convinced of the wicked folly of entrusting power long in the hands of one man, no matter how virtuous or how able. Power long exercised would corrupt an angel'. He saw that

such corruption was rife in Ireland, where a parliament of 'placemen and pensioners' looked after their special interests only, and where the interest of government failed to be 'the same with that of the people'.[3]

But, later republicans, Tone included, also argued that in the last analysis there was no hope for any constitutional or institutional order that was not supported by political understanding, civic vigilance and a habit of forthright expression on the part of the citizenry. Tone railed at the failure of his fellow citizens to denounce the state of things in Ireland, where 'the fact of corrupt influence is fairly admitted'. 'What! are we become stocks or stones, that the hot constitution of corruption should thus throw off the last thin veil of decency, and walk, unblushing and unabashed, before the land?'. He looked for a shift in civic habits towards a pattern that he found better established in England—notwithstanding his unrelenting criticism of England's Irish policy—where radical Whigs like himself could speak up openly and with effect. The ideal would be a situation where 'constitutional liberty is studied and known, where the influence of the crown is comparatively much weaker than with us, and where there is, out of doors, a jealous vigilance, a fund of knowledge, and a spirit of resistance not yet found in Ireland'.[4]

The best way to understand any philosophy, political or otherwise, is to see what the alternatives are. So where should we situate republicanism, with its emphasis on freedom as non-domination and its insistence that such freedom is available only in a political world with certain constitutional, institutional and civic aspects? Where should we situate it today as a philosophy of government for an inclusive society, not a society that privileges only mainstream propertied males?

There are many philosophies of government that string a hodgepodge of ideas together, angling for the right policy results with little concern for the unity of the overall position, but, among purer philosophies, republicanism contrasts sharply with two: classical liberalism (or libertarianism) and what can be described as communitarianism.

The libertarian alternative focuses on freedom as non-interference rather than non-domination. While it inherits the republican fear of public power, even to the point of morbidity, it has no quarrel with life in the shadow of private power, provided the power is benignly exercised—provided it is in the hands of the Christian husband, in an image from early liberals, or the economically rational boss. The best early statement of this position is in the highly influential work of William Paley, where he acknowledges that the republican conception of freedom is the established and received one, but argues that it is too radical: it would 'inflame expectations that can never be gratified, and disturb the public

content with complaints, which no wisdom or benevolence of government can remove.'[5] His view, as I have tried to show elsewhere, seems to have been that if women and workers were to count in the new inclusive state, and if their freedom from domination was to remain the goal of government, then an impossibly radical revolution would be required: one involving the overthrow of existing family and master-servant law.[6]

If libertarianism is flawed by its lack of concern about the threat of *dominium* or private power—provided that the power-holder is benign enough not actually to interfere—communitarianism is flawed by a similar lack of concern about the danger of *imperium* or public power. For, according to this philosophy, a people are free just so far as they are enfranchised within a community that is licensed to impose the communal norm—in effect, the will of the collective majority—on those who would belong to it, including those of a minority provenance or persuasion.

Republicanism stands in contrast to both of those philosophies in so far as it equates freedom with not having to live under the threat of arbitrary power, private or public. In this respect, and in others, it occupies a middle position. It stands with libertarianism in emphasising that the individual is the primary locus of political concern, and it stands with communitarianism in insisting that only the communal ecology provided by a society with an appropriate constitutional, institutional and civic character can enable the ordinary person to enjoy freedom. The good of freedom is a good of the individual person, but it is a good that requires a setting among other people—it is not available to the solitary hermit—and, in particular, a setting in which the individual is empowered to the extent of being able to command the respect of his or her fellows.[7]

The system of culture

Assuming that a system of culture will inevitably emerge in any society, my aim in this essay is to look at what a renewed, contemporary republicanism would seek in such a system. The project requires us to have a sense of what constitutes a system of culture, however, and, by way of a further preliminary, I turn now to that theme.

Everyone who has written about culture tells us, correctly, that the word refers properly to all the folkways of the community, as they have materialised over the years and as they are reproduced in the imitative homage that later generations inevitably, and often unwittingly, pay the past. Culture in that wide sense encompasses the habits of speech and writing present among the people; the small behavioural modes in which

they present themselves to one another and establish mutual recognition; the norms they honour in matters of dress and habitation; the routines of labour and production and exchange whereby they secure their material existence, as well as their routines of leisure and enjoyment; the customs that dictate what they eat, how they eat and when they eat; the ceremonials in which they mark births, deaths, and marriages, as well as collectively important events and transitions; the procedures whereby they assume group identities, familial and local, religious and political, voluntary and commercial; and the state institutions whereby existing conventions are identified, altered, imposed, and contested. Culture in this sense is the sort of thing we want to be told about when the anthropologist or the travel writer returns from an unknown land.

It is well to be aware of culture in the broad, anthropological sense; for, while my topic is much narrower, it is certainly related. Culture as I will be talking of it refers to the conduits whereby a society in its full anthropological character is reflected back to its own members—and inevitably, in the global course of things, to those on the outside also. It is the system whereby people learn of what is happening among them and, indeed, beyond their shores; are jolted into an awareness of some aspect of that world that had passed unnoticed; gain a novel take on things they had become inured to in their lives and environment; or enjoy a release from the humdrum or hurly-burly in modes of entertainment that give it a frame or that provide it with a foil. Or at least, it is the system whereby these things are done, when they are done well; for, of course, information may give way to misinformation, illumination to obfuscation, and release to mere escape.

Culture in this narrow sense operates through the channels—the media, in our Latinate usage—of television and radio, film and theatre, concert hall, opera house and art gallery, cds, dvds and video tapes, newspapers, journals, and books. As it materialises in those media, it may take the form of news report, analysis or commentary; soap, thriller or drama; chamber, rock or symphony concert; art exhibition or installation; story or poem; essay or monograph. And, as if that's not enough variety, the cultural event or object may come in an open-ended number of modes. It may be straight or ironical, quizzical or didactic, celebratory or distancing; it may seek to represent what it explores in explicit detail, or to exemplify it in particular events, settings and personalities, or, indeed, in the sensuous presence of shape and colour, rhythm and harmony, timbre and melody; and it may attempt any of these things, of course, at Wagnerian length and intensity or with the precision and punch of the well-turned phrase, whether it be a phrase in language or music, or in one

of the other materials that art seeks to work and transform.

A good term for culture in this narrow sense would be reflective culture, since its various modes are reflective of ordinary life, and often on ordinary life. The reflection ranges from that which is purely informational at one end of the spectrum, through more analytical and philosophical forms, to reflection of a more properly artistic kind at the other extreme. It is well to keep this informational-artistic range in mind, as I shall not always be commenting on it and some of the phrases I use will, inevitably, answer better to one part of the spectrum than to others.

Why speak of a system of reflective culture, however, rather than just a battery of cultural phenomena? Reflective culture is subject in any society to various controlling elements, and the system of culture is nothing other than the pattern of controls that dictates its configuration there. Here is a simple taxonomy of the main factors involved:

- the educational elements that determine how far there will be people to work in reflective culture and how far there will be an audience for that work;

- the infrastructural resources, ranging from television and radio stations to concert halls, theatres and publishing houses, to studios and galleries for painting and sculpture, that are required for reflective culture to reach ordinary people in contemporary society;

- the personnel who direct or author what is broadcast and written, what is composed, painted and sculpted, and in what tone and voice all this is done: these are the directors, writers and artists themselves—the producers at the centre of the system;

- the parties who are in a position to regulate what those producers do, whether in the negative mode of censoring and perhaps penalising their work, or in the positive mode of fostering and rewarding it;

- the individuals and organisations that facilitate reflective culture, by providing commissions for work to be done, by subsidising work already in hand, and by protecting cultural work against alien pressures, for example.

I am sure that the system of reflective culture involves other elements too, but I shall concentrate on these five controls, respectively educational, infrastructural, productive, regulatory and facilitative. I now go on to ask about the significance for a republic of having a system of culture that assumes one or other form. The question is: how far does the system of culture matter from the point of view of republican ideals? I shall argue that the system has enormous significance for a republic, and

then, in the fourth and last section of the essay, I will try to sketch some policy lessons that this image of its significance supports.

The significance of culture in a republic

Reflective culture in this sense can be a source of personal enlightenment and entertainment, perhaps even of inspiration, for those who participate. The highest purpose of any cultural initiative—certainly any at the more purely artistic end of the reflective spectrum—is to engage the individual mind, moving the person to collaborate in making sense of the work and, through the work, of that to which it testifies. Working in this participatory way with the painting or sculpture, play or concert, novel or poem can jolt the person into fresh thoughts, new patterns of seeing things, and even new modes of imagination and feeling.

But, whatever its small-scale, personal effects, and however far the work of culture is shaped with a view to such effects, they are not at the centre of our concern here. The question we have to consider is whether, in addition to those effects, or in consequence of those effects, the system of culture can also have large-scale, social effects that connect with republican aspirations.

The system of culture will have effects of this kind in so far as it impacts on the way people conceive of freedom itself, or of the constitutional, institutional and civic means of promoting freedom as non-domination. And, equally, it will have such effects, pro-republican or counter-republican, to the extent that it impacts on how far people are motivated to develop or maintain the measures that protect and empower them in their freedom. Is the reflective culture of a society liable to have consequences—perhaps unintended consequences—that might reinforce or undermine such preconditions, conceptual and motivational, of a flourishing republican dispensation? I believe it is.

Conceptual effects

Take the possibility of conceptual consequences first. Under a republican vision of the polity—a modern polity that is inclusive of all adults—it is of the first importance that the image of normal human life which is projected and endorsed in the channels of reflective culture affirms the robust human capacity for independence—'independency upon the will of another'[8]—as well as the right of every member of the inclusive republic to such an independent standing.

This image can clearly be either compromised or reinforced in the reflective culture of a society. If it is compromised, that will bode very badly for the capacity of the society to provide for the enjoyment of

freedom as non-domination on the part of all citizens. In almost any society, the culture will affirm the capacity for 'independency' of some privileged class or classes as well as the associated right of class-members to a corresponding status, but it doesn't require much imagination to see that it may fail to provide this service for all. It may fail to do so for women as distinct from men, or for the working class as distinct from other classes, or for members of ethnic, religious or homosexual minorities. The possibilities are salient and numerous.

Consider the disservice done to women, for example, in all those pious novels and poems that endorse the sort of infantilising, maudlin image of their capacities and roles, which prevailed into the twentieth century, if not right through it. Or, consider the disservice done to women by those representations that accentuate their standing as the objects of sexual desire to the exclusion of their standing as agents, or, indeed, as the subjects of a reciprocal desire. And, by contrast, think of the service women enjoyed in the various works of reflective culture that began to make the prospect of enfranchisement and liberation inescapable.

Think in this vein of the irony with which George Eliot treats male presumptions about women, even in her most conservative moments. Dorothea, the protagonist of *Middlemarch*, makes her mistakes and achieves satisfaction in the underspecified, somewhat ambivalent future we are told she had as wife to Will Ladislaw and mother to his children. But, it is the presumptions that her uncle and first husband make about her that are truly ridiculous. Women, it is quite clear, are not uniformly light and frivolous, just as it is clear that men are not reliably sensible and intelligent. Think in a similar vein of the effect that Ibsen achieved in *A Doll's House*, where Nora lives under the gentle but dominating and infantilising rule of her husband, and where it becomes wholly intelligible that she should rebel. Or think, indeed, of O'Casey's *Juno and the Paycock*, where women are certainly cast in the role of victim, but where, nonetheless, they display a capacity and a resilience that would put their men to shame, if they had any. In such works, we go beyond gentle irony and approach the point of explicit protest.

Just as women have routinely been ill served by literature—and, indeed, the other arts—so, some works stand out for the conceptually liberating effect that they must have had, and the same is also true for other groups: the unemployed, the working class, the uneducated, and the disabled, as well as those in a variety of religious, ethnic and other minorities. Reflective culture may serve such classes ill, and has often done so in our societies, but, equally, it may do them a great service, providing the intellectual and imaginative underpinnings for self-

asserting and recognition.

The potentially liberating effects of culture in this conceptual dimension are not confined to high art. The common currency of film and photograph, story and verse, popular song and newspaper headline can be even more deeply liberating, or indeed demeaning. Think of the tone of 'A Bushman's Song', a ballad in which Banjo Patterson gave expression to an assertive Australian attitude to the pretensions of private power.

> I went to Illawarra, where my brother's got a farm;
> He has to ask his landlord's leave before he lifts his arm:
> The landlord owns the country-side—man, woman, dog, and cat,
> They haven't the cheek to dare to speak without they touch their hat. [9]

I have been illustrating the conceptual effects that make the system of reflective culture potentially significant in the republican audit of a society. While I have concentrated on how the culture can undermine or reinforce the idea of freedom as non-domination, and its status as an ideal in human life, the system may also serve people well or badly in how it leads them to conceive of the civic, institutional and constitutional means whereby, according to republican thought, individual and collective freedom is ensured.

The system can obviously fail in this way if it does not provide a reliable and comprehensive source of information about the way things are going in the society. Let people be convinced that all is fine with the public world, when truly it is not—when politicians are in the pocket of business, for example, or abuses against the vulnerable are rife—and opportunities for manipulation and domination will be massively increased. Let people be convinced that the public world is in jeopardy when it is not—that crime is on the increase, or hostile presences under every bed, when actually things are quite good—and almost as much damage can be done.

But, the system can also fail, not through failing to provide information, but through failing to support and nurture a proper understanding of how things should be organised and configured if freedom is to prosper. The reflective culture that critiques adversarial politics in the name of a romantic ideal of national cohesion, for example, that suggests that the voice of the latest public opinion poll has oracular authority, or that questions the democratic credentials of duly appointed but unelected judicial or bureaucratic figures is unlikely to serve well the purposes of a vibrant republic. It will promulgate an image of social and political life that misinterprets the requirements of freedom as they are understood in the tradition.

Motivational effects

I turn now to the category of motivational effects. Is the system of culture liable to impact on how far people are motivated to sustain the constitutional, institutional and civic measures needed for the widespread enjoyment of freedom as non-domination? The answer, as clearly as in the other case, is that yes, the system of culture is liable to have an impact on people's motivation on this front. There are many ways in which it may fail the republican cause of freedom as non-domination and equally, of course, many ways in which it may advance it.

Thus, a culture that is excessively reverential or deferential in its attitude to dominating authorities and powers, or that is paralysingly sceptical about the motives of anyone who would seek to curtail the domination practised, will tend to sap people's will, credence and energy in public matters. It will reconcile people to a fate in which the mighty or the manipulative always succeed, so that they had better keep to their own corners and make the best or it.

Equally, a culture that is assertively privatistic and atomistic in the images and values it endorses, or that is utterly pessimistic about the possibility of anyone escaping the hold of their own egoistic concerns, will encourage a general apathy about political matters. It will surrender the vision of a society where everyone can achieve a fulfilling independency and status thanks to the sustaining matrix provided by the civic, institutional and constitutional republic. The retreat advocated may be towards the cult of the commercial market, the more alluring charms of the aesthetic life, or even the high-flown isolation of the spiritual or philosophical guru.

Again, a culture that promulgates a conservative religious vision in which subservience to one's superiors or one's betters is held up as a great virtue is going to be deeply in tension with the republican vision. In the republican vision, freedom can be won from under the very shadow of power, provided that the appropriate civic and public dispensation is supported by all. But, in the sort of picture I am envisaging here, such freedom will be denied any value, being inconsistent with the hierarchical order that is supposedly proper and right. The order hailed may be one in which priests rule over people, husbands over wives, and employers over employees, for example.

The picture of the oriental despot—no doubt of questionable ethnocentric provenance—was used throughout the modern history of republicanism to combat such a conservative hierarchical ideology. The oriental despot served as a safely remote model, in which people were

invited to see the profile of priest, aristocrat or king, or even, as the theory developed feminist and socialist forms, husband or master. The feminist potential of the doctrine, already obvious in the work of Mary Astell and Mary Wollstonecraft, gave rise to the metaphor of women as slaves of their husbands, no matter how kindly and placable husbands might prove. The socialist potential appeared in republican authorship of the metaphor, so important in later socialist writings, of industrial workers as 'wages slaves'.[10]

I have been illustrating how the reflective culture of a society can corrode the motivational underpinnings of republicanism by being reverential and deferential towards the powerful, by being atomistic and privatistic, or by being straightforwardly conservative in its view of the prevailing power structure. There are many other ways in which the culture can have a similarly corrosive or corrupting effect, and I mention two further dangers.

Not only may the reflective culture of a society be too deferential, atomistic or conservative for republican tastes; it may also be excessively moralistic. The moralism I have in mind is that which would pin on the individual the responsibility, or part of the responsibility, for every ill that is evident in the society or in the world at large. It argues that the way to respond to the problems people suffer that might interfere with their enjoyment of the life of independency—problems of hunger, home-lessness or lack of education—is to give to benevolent causes and relieve oneself of personal guilt. And, it suggests that the way to respond to the problems that some impose on others—problems of crime and corruption, for example—is to join in the chorus of punitive moralistic condemnation that a sensational press will always find profit in orchestrating. While these may be understandable and useful responses, they are inappropriately moralistic in taking the focus off the main resources for dealing with such issues: the resources activated under a republic that has the right civic, institutional and constitutional character.

An additional danger to the motivational underpinnings of republican life is represented by complacency, or, if you prefer, credulity. By this, I mean complacency about how the abstract structures of the society—optimistically assuming that they are well designed—work in ensuring that no one is vulnerable to the arbitrary influences of self-serving elites or powerful lobby groups. There is no abstract structure that is proof against corruption and faction, and so, it is important that people remain alert to this possibility. It is important that they remain vigilant in the efforts they make—individually or through social movements and non-governmental organisations—to keep the workings of power in the public view. And, as this is clearly important, it is also important that the

this is clearly important, it is also important that the reflective culture of the society gives support to such an invigilation of the powerful.

To sum up this discussion of the conceptual and motivational effects that make reflective culture relevant to republican life, there are two demands republicans will expect a culture to satisfy: first, that it keeps alive a way of thinking that makes freedom as non-domination important for all and that holds out a real hope of achieving such freedom by public means; and second, that it fosters attitudes that are not so deferential, conservative, atomistic or moralistic that they alienate people from those public instrumentalities. What reflective culture is required to support is, in Tone's words, a world 'where there is, out of doors, a jealous vigilance, a fund of knowledge, and a spirit of resistance not yet found in Ireland'.[11]

The policy lessons

The conclusion of this discussion is that there are clear *desiderata* that republicans will have for how the system of culture should work in their society. The hope must be that there is:

- an educational pattern that ensures an audience for reflective culture and a supply of candidates to work within the system;
- an open infrastructure of resources whereby directors, writers and artists are assured of accessible channels of communication;
- a population of cultural contributors who have the taste, the talent and the temperament to produce work whose net effect is to sustain the conceptual and motivational requirements of a vibrant republic;
- a regulatory system that encourages work of this kind, eliciting and fostering the sort of work that serves the republic well;
- a facilitative set of arrangements which means that there are commissions, subsidies and protections enough to promote work of the desired kind.

With these *desiderata* sketched, it might be tempting to move straight away to a programme for what government should do on these different fronts. But this would be a mistake, for *desiderata* are one thing, policies another. I do not mean that policies have to be more specific; specificity is not something we can hope to achieve here. What I have in mind is that policies need to take account of real-world constraints in a way that *desiderata* do not. They have to allow for constraints on financial and human resources, of course, but, in particular, they have to recognise that sometimes the attempt to achieve the best can work, paradoxically, against the achievement of the good. They need to see that this policy

paradox may strike against the best-intentioned plans, and they have to try to ensure that the danger is avoided.

The threatening paradox has long been recognised in the old republican question: *Quis custodiet ipsos custodes*? Who will police the police; who will watch the watchers? It represents a particular challenge for republican policies, for it is manifest that should the state have the control that is needed to reduce the degree of domination suffered as a result of private power (*dominium*), it may itself constitute a public power (*imperium*) that exercises more domination than any private masters could ever have imposed. It is because they recognise the threat from the very *imperium* that is designed to redress forces of *dominium* that republicans have always emphasised those constitutional, institutional and civic measures required to block the government itself from becoming an arbitrary, dominating power: to channel it into becoming an agency that can be called to book by the people, both as individual contestors of policy and as a collective electorate.

Republican thought in any policy area, then, is bound to be driven by two factors. One, crusading, will look for a pattern that is capable of protecting, empowering and energising people, so that they can walk tall, knowing that they are known as men and women of standing: people who, regardless of class, creed or gender command the respect of their fellows. The other, cautionary in character, will be alert to the need to examine all political initiatives to ensure that they do not themselves create unchecked centres of power and bring new sources of domination into play. The policy programme has to work in a generate-and-test routine, with the crusading motor proposing potential new ways of politically securing results of the kind that might promote the enjoyment of non-domination, and with the cautionary filter operating to weed out those proposals that carry any danger of doing more harm than good.

The generate-and-test routine applies fairly readily to the policies that we might hope to develop for promoting the cultural republic. The *desiderata* sketched above point us towards the sorts of thing that, in the abstract, the policy generator will propose. And so, the question is how far the policy filter will call for them to be trimmed back and reshaped?

I cannot try to run that policy dynamic here, following the back-and-forth pattern in which generator and tester are likely to operate, and I hope that it will be enough to point up three lessons for policy that I think it is almost certain to support. Republican policy-making, whether in cultural or other areas, requires time, data and engagement with a specific milieu, and these lessons should be taken merely as indicators of where, in one person's view, cultural policy is likely to be driven by a republican

agenda.

Lesson 1: the limits of the free market

The free market, on its own, cannot be relied upon to ensure a system of reflective culture that will serve republican purposes, upholding people in a sense of what they can achieve for their own freedom and that of others. One reason for this is that, in quite a number of areas, those countries with larger home markets (most notably the United States) will be able to undercut and undermine local competitors, introducing at best a facile cosmopolitan diet of culture. Another is that the free market will tend to generate covert monopolies of power—in the ownership of crucial media, say—which will represent a powerful manipulative threat. And a third is that the pressures of the market are not always well designed to ensure the emergence of a reflective culture with a robust republican aspect. The urgent often drives out the important in private life, as we all know, and a similar rule applies in public life, where the sensational news item sells more readily than the substantive, where the sugar of situation comedy is a better commercial bet than the salt of irony and satire, and where the new label and fashion can always be marketed to advantage against anything more traditional and (as it can always be stamped) more staid.

   This lesson shows a need to bolster reflective culture on such fronts, softening the blast of the unfettered market. There is also a need to protect a minimum level of local cultural activity from the predations of a global economy. There is reason to guard against monopolies, ensuring that there is always an opening—however that is to be ensured—for the smaller, more innovative ventures that are slow to get off the ground, but that often win an important public of their own. And, equally clearly, there has to be a way of ensuring that what proves urgent on the market does not drive out that which is ultimately of greater social and political importance.

Lesson 2: the limits of the benign state

If the first lesson points up ways in which the market is not likely to work for the republican good, the second emphasises that we should not harbour any facile optimism about the ability of the state to do the job better. The state claims a normally unchallenged monopoly of the use of legitimate force, and any agency that has such coercive power and authority is bound to be a potential source of domination; hence, as we saw, the republican emphasis on the need to hold its power in check. If we allow the state to step in and control the operation of the cultural

system so that the limits of the market are overcome, then we may end up in a worse pass than before.

Let the state have unrestricted power to protect local cultural activity, for example, and it may end up producing a backwater of North Korean dimensions, say. Let the state have such power in restraining the growth of market monopolies, and it may promote those in favour with the government of the day or with important electoral lobbies. Let it have the authority to decide what is important and worthy of support, and it may use that power to bolster its preferred ideas and interests and mobilise the system of culture as an arm of government policy.

Lesson 3: the hope of civic power

The dangers of the free market give rise to a need to wrest control of the cultural system away from profit-maximising businesses; the dangers of the benign state give rise to a need to avoid control being left to vote-seeking representatives. Those are the instrumentalities favoured, respectively, by the opposing philosophies of libertarianism and communitarianism. The only hope of having a robust republican system of culture, I would argue, lies in the possibility of a civic society that is sustained by state support, but not compromised by it, and that sponsors free market activity without allowing economic powers and priorities to dictate the overall pattern of things.

But, is such a civic society as elusive as Lewis Carroll's snark? I hope not; and I think not. For, if we look again at the five elements that we identified in the system of culture, it is not difficult to see how the state might help to create a civic power of the desired sort.

On the educational and infrastructural front, the state might clearly work to establish and maintain the opportunities necessary for a reflective republican culture, without taking over in a politically-controlling manner. There are precedents aplenty for the operation of a subsidised, but relatively hands-off, system of general education and of education in areas of particular cultural relevance. Equally, there are precedents for national systems of hands-off management in maintaining radio and television networks, in providing for national film and theatre production, and in making various musical and artistic events possible.

Something similar holds, I would say, in regard to the regulatory and facilitative programmes that the state is in a position to put in place. A regulatory system need not be designed to censor out of existence those works that displease the political authorities, or the lobby groups to which they are sensitive. Such a system, no matter how hands-off, carries with it an inherent threat of inhibition and domination, but the system can

be designed to foster work of a desirable sort, without risking that oppressive effect, by providing scholarships, prizes and other positive rewards. At least, it can do this provided that the committees that determine who shall receive such rewards are staffed by members who are chosen according to an agreed, representative formula and for agreed terms of office. They must not be staffed by, in Tone's words, placemen and pensioners who will heed the nods and winks of their political masters.

These comments on the regulatory framework associated with the system of culture apply equally well to the facilitative framework. By recourse to suitably appointed committees that work at arm's length from government and with the independence that we generally accord the courts—this is part of the broader republican heritage—there is every reason that it might prove possible to protect local cultural products against predatory levels of foreign competititon. And there is equal reason that a suitable pattern of national commissions and subsidies might work in beneficial support of the cultural system.

But, I have said nothing about the central element in any system of culture: the directors, writers and artists who are actually responsible for the works of reflective culture that are produced. What is there, if anything, to ensure that they have the taste, talent and temperament to produce work the net effect of which supports the conceptual and motivational requirements of republican life? Nothing can be done about talent over and beyond the educational and other provisions mentioned already. But, what about inducing the taste and the temperament—in particular the courage, which it will often require—to work in desired modes? It is clear that neither the invisible hand of the market nor the iron hand of the state is going to be of any utility in fostering the taste and temperament required. So, can we do nothing as republicans, then, but pray and hope that the muse will work to good effect?

We certainly have to rely on the whims of the muse for the emergence of cultural greatness; there is no planning for a Yeats, an O'Casey, or a Joyce. But, is there any basis for confidence that a culture will materialise in which the directors, writers and artists, however varied their output, work with the net effect of sustaining the conceptual and motivational preconditions of republican life?

There may not be grounds for the sort of confidence that will appeal to the managerial mentality. But, there are grounds for a different sort of confidence: that which is associated with the notion of trust. I argue that as republican theorists and planners we should place our trust in the directors, writers and artists themselves, inviting them to follow their

own instincts and inspirations and welcoming the challenge they will inevitably bring to various aspects of the status quo.

That challenge, it should be stressed, will often be very uncomfortable. It is as certain as night follows day that much of what the producers in the system of reflective culture do will offend those individuals—and *we* may be those individuals—with more settled, satisfied views of society's achievements. Reflective culture at its best has little truck with celebrating what has already been achieved, for that task can be safely left to other hands. The leading practitioners in literature and the arts will usually prefer to probe at everything complacent and clichéd in the world about them, undermining its assumptions and evoking the sort of discontent in which new growth can start.

Why trust the directors, writers and artists, especially in view of the inherently irreverent momentum to cultural life? For one thing, because we have no other choice; any attempt to control them or suppress them would certainly be counterproductive; but mainly because such trust is grounded in a republican article of faith that has been tried and tested in practice. That faith is that the society as a whole will prosper just so far as the different sectors and streams do not disdain one another's challenges or despair of their effects, but persevere in the ever renewed attempt to achieve understanding and coexistence.

The republic does not promise the sepulchral quiet of the marriage bed, in Oscar Wilde's wicked metaphor, but rather the hurly burly of the chaise longue. It answers to the image in which Machiavelli saw the greatness of republican Rome: an image of a finely balanced equlibrium, wrested continually from the conflictual, contesting instabilities occasioned by differences between nobles and plebs, consuls and tribunes, Senate and Council. The pattern of the healthy republic is to have no settled pattern, to be a world always in the making, where there is no threat of apathy among ordinary people and no danger of a comfortable dominance on the part of the major stakeholders.

But, what are republicans to think of the prospect of directors, writers and artists being seduced into ways of thinking—aestheticist, rationalist, or postmodernist, for example—that threaten to undermine the conceptual and motivational foundations of the republic? Shouldn't something be done to create a barrier against that possibility? No, I would say, it should not. The only hope of a healthy republic lies in our recognising the independence of those who work in the cultural realm— as well as the independence of those who work elsewhere—and in our sustaining a level of trust that truly enfranchises them.

This trust, I should say, need not have the cast of blind faith.

Republicans have routinely held that, while it is necessary to trust in people to have the civic virtue that the tradition praises, there is one important safeguard that may help to sustain such virtue. This is the force associated with the natural human desire to win opinion and status in the eyes of one's peers, particularly the peers who fully understand the constraints and challenges one faces. It is something that I have elsewhere contrasted with the iron hand of the state and the invisible hand of the market, describing it as the intangible hand whereby civic society exercises a firm but respectful control on those who would find a place amongst their fellows.[12]

If a civic world is established 'where there is, out of doors, a jealous vigilance, a fund of knowledge, and a spirit of resistance', as we saw Tone put it, then there is every hope that in this world the intangible hand will operate to provide a particular reward for the sort of work that answers to the central value of freedom as non-domination and that incorporates a recognition of the dangers of private and public power. The hope is that the civic world necessary under any republican dispensation will be a world sufficient to ensure the sorts of standards, and the sorts of attitudes, that will reward and reinforce the initiatives in reflective culture that a thriving republic requires.

The reflective culture is a many-faceted reality, of course, and works of culture should not generally be expected to answer to republican needs; if they did, then the culture would constitute a wasteland, repulsive to the human spirit. What may be expected is only that the reflective culture that emerges in a republic should not undermine the republican value of independency or weaken the republican spirit of resistance. Its net effect, materialising in all the colour and motley of a varied culture, should be to keep the republic alive in the habits of mind and heart where, in Yeats's phrase, all ladders start.

Notes

[1] P. Pettit, *Republicanism: A Theory of Freedom and Government* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1997). P. Pettit, *A Theory of Freedom: From the Psychology to the Politics of Agency* (Cambridge and New York: Polity and Oxford University Press 2001). The historians of thought who had a big influence on my work are Quentin Skinner and Maurizio Viroli. For recent work by them, see Q. Skinner, *Liberty Before Liberalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1997) and M. Viroli, *Republicanism* (New York: Hill and Wang 2002).

[2] S. Cronin and R. Roche (eds.), *Freedom the Wolfe Tone Way* (Tralee: Anvil 1973), pp. 86, 78, 162, cf. 199.

[3] Ibid., pp. 159, 87, 153.

[4] Ibid., pp. 87, 88, 87.

[5] 'The Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy', in W. Paley, *Collected Works*,

vol. 4 (London: C. and J. Rivington 1825), p. 359.

[6] P. Pettit, *Republicanism: A Theory of Freedom and Government* (op. cit.), ch. 1.

[7] Communitarianism in this sense is sometimes described as republicanism. It surfaced in the nineteenth century, with new romantic enthusiasms for the Athenian *polis* that had been rejected among ancient, Renaissance and modern republicans on the grounds that, in Polybius's famous metaphor, it was a ship without a captain, buffeted by the winds of public opinion: it was not a mixed constitution, but one in which power was exercised more or less absolutely by the collective assembly. Such neo-Athenian communitarianism appealed to nationalists bred in the spirit of German romanticism and would have repelled someone like Wolfe Tone. For more on this theme, see P. Pettit, 'Reworking Sandel's Republicanism', *Journal of Philosophy* 95, 1998, pp. 73–96. The sense I give to the term 'communitarianism' would not be endorsed by all those who use it to characterise their own position. Thus, what Philip Selznick defends in the name of the communitarian persuasion is quite congenial to republican sentiments. See M. Krygier, 'Philip Selznick, Normative Theory, And the Rule of Law', in R. A. Kagan, M. Krygier and K. Winston (eds.), *Legality and Community: On the Intellectual Legacy of Philip Selznick* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield 2002).

[8] A. Sidney, *Discourses Concerning Government* (Indianapolis: Liberty Classics 1990), p. 17.

[9] A. B. Paterson, *The Collected Verse of A.B. Paterson* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson 1921).

[10] The point is made in M. Sandel, *Democracy's Discontent: America in Search of a Public Philosophy* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard Universty Press 1996); P. Pettit, 'Reworking Sandel's Republicanism', op. cit.

[11] S. Cronin and R. Roche (eds.), op. cit., p. 87.

[12] P. Pettit, *Republicanism: A Theory of Freedom and Government* (op. cit.), chs. 7 and 8; G. Brennan and P. Pettit, *The Economy of Esteem* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2003).

The Cultural Foundations of a Republican Polity: Culture as Communication

GERARD DELANTY

Republican thought is based on the idea of the essential equality of all members of the political community. In the republican tradition—in contrast to its main classical rivals, conservatism and liberalism—the people are a self-governing body who can never be replaced by elites or by an abstract edifice such as the state or a church. Republicans therefore distrust liberalism, with its characteristic assumption of the priority of the individual, and conservatism, with its respect for established authority and institutions. For this reason the republican tradition has held to a strongly social view of the nature of people, believing in the power of community instead of either the individual or the state. Republicans have always believed that a society is held together by the power of its public culture. Culture—the symbolic forms in which a society represents its values—is enacted in public and has a social function, as well as being a social creation. Since the 'republic' was a clearly defined domain—the Greek *polis*, the Roman *civitas*, the renaissance city-state, the modern constitution—the problem of its representation could, with difficulty, be solved. The republican polity could symbolically represent itself in a great variety of forms—as captured for instance by the ideals of fraternity, equality, freedom—which could be the source of public loyalties and national identities. It is precisely this assumption that is in question today: culture and society have separated. The result of this bifurcation—the 'tragedy of culture', as Georg Simmel called it in a classic essay—is that contemporary society no longer can create a representation of itself.[1]

   In the last few decades, republican philosophy has entered into a deep crisis because culture is no longer coeval with society and may, in fact, be a kind of 'anti-society'. Where classical republicans saw a shared public culture lying at the heart of society and as the basis of politics, today, in the eyes of many commentators, there are incommensurable publics based on different forms of life, contested politics, and multiple

and competing conceptions of the common good. Daniel Lazare complains that America has become a 'frozen republic'.[2] Multiculturalism, postmodernism, postcolonialism, cultural politics, and identity politics of various kinds have all announced the demise of a shared public culture in favour of a diversity of cultures. The problem, however, is more severe than a simple separation of culture from society: both culture and society have become fragmented. A fragmented society can no longer be symbolically represented by cultural forms that have lost the capacity for integration. Does this tendency towards the fragmentation of culture mean the obsolescence of republican political philosophy? Has the apparent fragmentation of culture amounted to the end of the social? Is there a way culture can be reconciled to a conception of the social appropriate to the current situation? This question will be addressed in this essay.

Public culture and contemporary thought

There are three broad positions on public culture in contemporary thought against which a new republicanism must define itself: liberalism, communitarianism and postmodernism. Let us briefly look at these.

For liberals, culture is essentially private and the property of individuals who consume culture as private persons. Culture, thus, has been seen as self-cultivation (*Bildung*), as in the neo-humanist tradition associated with von Humboldt, or detached bourgeois contemplation, something to be collected and privately appropriated. In one of the most famous statements of liberal thought on culture, the mid-nineteenth-century writer Mathew Arnold described culture as an antidote to anarchy.[3] Culture represented the stable and fixed values of the past, with which the present could be defined. For Arnold, culture was the opposite to anarchy—a uniform domain of ideas and values—while politics was a realm of anarchy. In the idea of a 'liberal arts' education, culture reflected the received wisdom: a canon of ideas which cannot be criticised because it is the basis of all evaluation. While classic liberals differed from conservatives in championing the inquisitive spirit of individualism, they became increasingly indistinguishable from conservatives in their desire to keep politics and culture separate. Today, there is no essential difference between neo-liberals and neo-conservatives.[4] The turn to the market that is the defining tenet of liberalism today in effect reduces culture to privatistic consumption whereby culture loses its political character (that is, its capacity to provide a basis for action), its social character (that is, its shared nature), and its creative possibilities. At the most, as in rational choice theory,

culture is a residual category that does not impinge on individual preferences. For these reasons, liberalism has become a politically, socially, and culturally bankrupt discourse. Yet, it is one of the most influential ways of thinking.

As a reaction to neo-liberalism, a second position can be identified: communitarianism. Largely a modification of liberalism, communitarianism has become a distinct approach since the early 1980s. Where liberalism rejects a belief in the inclusive nature of culture, communitarianism demands the recognition of culture as defining of a people: the *demos* is based on an *ethnos*. Rejecting, too, the exclusive preoccupation with individualism and liberalism's 'thin' conception of culture, communitarians argue for a conception of society based on an underlying cultural identity and the recovery of shared values. Thus, political community must rest on a prior cultural community, defined in terms of common bonds, collective values and a shared sense of the common good. For some communitarians, liberalism must be adapted to a belief in community; for others, of a stronger persuasion, it is the belief in community that is prior. For this latter group, communitarianism and nationalism are very close; but for most, the challenge is simply to reconnect culture, in the sense of cultural community, with political community. This reconnection of culture with politics is supposed to re-inspire a faith in society that has been killed by the liberal ideology of possessive individualism. But, communitarianism with its 'thick' conception of culture has not found a viable answer to liberalism: its vision of culture is far too de-politicised and based on a pre-existing consensus that cannot accommodate the fact of diversity and conflict. Communitarianism, too, like liberalism, presupposes the autonomy of the national state and views the modern polity as based on a dominant cultural community. Perhaps the greatest weakness of communitarian thought is its backward looking view and tendency towards nostalgia, seeing the present in terms of the decline of traditional values.[5]

Postmodernism has emerged in opposition to both liberalism and communitarianism in rejecting all attempts to found a political order on a foundational principle. Its anti-foundational animus is also anti-representational: it rejects the capacity of culture to offer a representation of a social reality. In that sense, its conception of culture is one of 'irony' rather than symbolism, since the cultural form of the symbol contains a moment of truth that postmodernism believes must be renounced in favour of the recognition of the impossibility of shared meaning. In other formulations, such as Jean Baudrillard's, culture is itself a form of reality and cannot, therefore, represent something outside itself since there is no

outside other than simulations.[6] However, translated into more concrete political terms, postmodernism amounts to the claim that culture, like all language and meaning-creation, is, in fact, what divides people. Where communitarianism holds to a strong view of culture as integrative and based on shared values, postmodernism sees only diversity and, increasingly, divisiveness. To a degree, a kind of postmodern liberalism has emerged with a retreat into private values and away from universalistic moral values, and postmodernism has also found its way into a kind of radical communitarianism that has given up all hope of a common community. However, what concerns us here is the view that culture has lost its symbolic and cognitive capacity to shape a society.

   Each of the three positions on culture discussed so far—culture as individual consumption, culture as shared values, and culture as a domain of division—is inadequate. Public culture is not something that can be reduced to 'thin' values, as in liberalism or to 'thick' values, as in communitarianism, nor can it be seen simply as a domain of incommensurable divisions.[7] The challenge for republican thought is to recapture a link with culture and society. Of what might this consist?

Transformations in culture and society

The argument made here is that republicanism must rethink the category of culture in light of some of the major transformations in contemporary society. Let us first consider how the current situation necessitates such a redefinition of culture.

   Until recently culture was neatly separated into separate spheres. On the one hand, culture had an integrative role to play in affirming the dominant ideas of the status quo—of bourgeois society, of national states, of western civilisation—while, on the other, being simultaneously an instrument of differentiation, that is, a means of social ordering. By imposing evaluative criteria, cultural codes, and modes of distinction, culture was a convenient means of creating systems of classification by which self and other could be distinguished. It was also a powerful means of protecting social institutions from critique: cultural critique, in fact, had to be compromised. For example, it was modern societies—and generally republican orders—that invented the principle of secularism, by which religion must be taken out of the public domain (although in practice often reorganised into national churches) in order to protect it from the critique of the intellectuals. Shifting critique to the margins of society, when it did not impose cultural censorship, modernity created regimes of representation on culture that ensured compliance with power. The two faces of culture—its capacity for representation and classifica-

tion—were further organised into various dualisms. Looking at the current situation, these functions and the dualism that sustained them are in crisis. We can mention at least six ways in which culture has undergone major transformation.

One of the major distinctions in the nature of culture was its division into high and low cultures, with high culture having a largely legitimating function for bourgeois society, while a de-politicised low culture served to entertain the masses. Today, as a result of changes in the nature of capitalism and new kinds of alternative and popular culture, this distinction has become blurred and is largely meaningless. It has also been undermined by the blurring caused by the extension of education to all classes. Mass education brought about a corresponding erosion of the distinction between knowledge and opinion. The result is that culture is not the property of an elite, codified by science, but is essentially democratic and revisable.

An older distinction, going back to the eighteenth-century European Enlightenment, between civilisation and culture has also been called into question. Especially in the German tradition, culture—the high *Kultur* of the cultivated bourgeoisie—served as a point of unity beyond the material forms of life associated with the term civilisation. The decline of civilisation—a theme in much of early twentieth-century cultural criticism—might, thus, be resisted by a higher order of culture, where the most exalted values might be preserved by a cosmopolitan elite. However, in time, culture became overshadowed by cultures in the plural, and a progressive universalism crept into culture. The decline in universalistic ideas about civilisation helped to make this all the more possible.

A third dualism inherited from the modern period has also disintegrated today: the separation of the private and public. Largely as a result of feminism and its idea that the 'personal is political', the separation of the public realm from the private world of the household can no longer be maintained. Culture is not confined to a public domain untouched by a pre-political private domain but is 'everywhere'. Some of the main expressions of contemporary culture concern the collapse of the distinction between the private and the public.

As a result of several decades of multiculturalism, cultures now exist in the plural and, moreover, the distinction between a majority culture and a minority culture is less credible. All cultures, whether majority or minority cultures, have been transformed by cultural mixing. Until quite recently, ethnic groups and immigrant groups were seen as being 'cultures' that had to be managed by official multicultural policies to

ensure their 'integration' or, as the case might have been, their isolation from the dominant 'society'. This distinction between incoming cultures and a majoritarian society has been undermined by cultural pluralism.

A further change in modern systems of cultural classification is in the relation between nature and culture. A basic assumption of modern western culture was the belief that culture was superior to nature (often associated with primitivism). In order that they might not regress to the 'state of nature', modern societies devised ways to purge nature from their cultures. Human society was believed to be characterised by the capacity to create symbols and engage in non-purposive communication. Nature lay outside the domain of culture. Today, in the age of the new genetics, post-human scenarios, cyborg culture, the risk society, and the socialisation of nature, this is no longer credible: nature has been conquered by society.[8]

Finally, we can mention that the separation of the world into discrete national cultures is no longer credible in the era of globalisation.[9] The separation of national cultures was one of the means by which modernity reconciled the contradiction of universality and relativism. While participating in the universal order of civilisation, the belief that national cultures were internally unique was a basic assumption of the modern period. Once the belief in the universality of western civilisation collapsed, so, too, did the assumptions of national distinctiveness. Today, in the allegedly global age, the local and the global have been connected in many ways, allowing local cultures—under the rubric of hybridisation—to reinvent themselves in numerous ways. And, there is also an emerging world culture, sustained variously by global capitalism, information and communication technologies, and different orders of cosmopolitan politics.

In the light of these developments, culture has become a highly complex field. We can certainly say it does not easily offer a system of classification or a social representation that is rigid or compelling for all groups. This cognitive function is weakening, or, rather, different forms of classification are emerging in contemporary society. Yet, culture is one of the vital areas where societies are redefining themselves. With the break-up of the older codifications of culture, the new expressions appear to be diffuse: they are sites of resistance and are lacking in authoritative definitions of meaning. It is this situation that has led to false solutions, as in the three scenarios sketched above. Thus, culture retreats into personal forms of meaning (liberal pursuits, consumption, spiritualism), the false promises of a comforting illusion (communitarianism, nationalism, ethnicity, tradition), or aesthetic constructions (postmodernism). In

all cases, the possibility of connection with a belief in the social is sundered.

The idea of a public culture

In view of the foregoing analysis, what might constitute a republican theory of culture? To begin with, a republican position on public culture must accept the fall of culture and the end of all dualisms, many of which were central to earlier republican philosophies. Culture is inextricably bound up with politics. However, this does not mean that culture can no longer express shared values or that we have to give up all hope of a public culture. The argument proposed in this essay is that republican philosophy must evolve a conception of public culture that has a capacity to express divisiveness, differences and conflicts. Unless societies have a cognitive capacity to articulate their problems, they become sterile and cannot accommodate social change. Culture is not a public statement of what is shared in some simple sense of common values or consensus on the common good. Modern societies are too complex in their cultural composition and in their organisation for this to be possible. Given the huge diversity of contemporary societies, their overlapping nature, their technical complexity, the impact of globalisation and transnational processes, and the contingency of political and economic decision-making, culture cannot be based on an underlying consensus. Instead, culture must be seen as a domain of reflexive and critical communication. This communicative conception of culture needs to be affirmed by republican theory in order to respond to the crisis of meaning in contemporary societies. In essence, then, public culture in the republican polity is not based on consensus but on the capacity of a society to negotiate differences.

The communicative conception of culture regards culture as essentially public rather than private as in liberalism. The public dimension of culture entails a communicative component that is all the more significant today when everything is played out in the public domain. Cultural creation is taking more and more the form of public discourses in which societal issues and problems are thematised. The discursive nature of this is the defining feature of culture rather than a sign of the malaise of public culture. Such a communicative view of culture necessitates taking seriously at least four aspects of public culture: reflexivity[*], critique, diversity, and the negotiation of difference.

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[*] Reflexivity is used in the sense of something turned back on and applied to itself, e.g. cultural critique is applied to itself first and foremost; it implies a self-referential and critical attitude. [Ed.]

It is in the dimension of reflexivity that the distinctively transformative nature of culture is most apparent. Contemporary culture is highly reflexive where in the past it was relatively rigid and often tied to a representative function (to represent clerical or royal authority). Today, culture does not simply represent values or a higher aesthetic. The reflexive nature of contemporary societies makes this impossible. Reflexivity, meaning the application of something to itself, has entered many domains: including education (transferable skills), health and life-styles (dieting, self-monitoring), work (flexibility), and communication (the medium is the message). Reflexivity has become one of the most important forms of cultural reproduction that problematises the act of cultural creation and representation.

A second form of cultural reproduction is its critical function. The critical impulse has always been central to modern cultural formations. Beginning with the critique of religion and all forms of political censorship, the project of modernity defined itself by reference to the self-questioning and sceptical values associated with intellectuals. Critique stood for self-confrontation and anti-dogmatism; the autonomy of science and art from ecclesiastical and royal authority. Originally an activity associated with intellectuals and professional cultural producers (artists, writers, intellectuals and academics), it gradually became more and more a part of the wider culture of modern societies. Due to the mass media, mass education, popular culture and social struggles, the values of critique have become central to the cognitive structures of modern society.[10]

The third dimension of culture is its diversity. In our multicultural societies, culture is plural rather than singular. To be sure, cultural pluralism is not necessarily something new, as societies have always been plural in their composition. The formation of the modern nation state in the nineteenth century—and its ideology that a state must be based on a nation—tended to homogenise the older regional and ethnic diversities. In most countries, the nation imposed a rigid cultural form on diverse populations. Today, this is being reversed as a result of world-wide migration, multiculturalism, tourism, new popular cultures and cultural hybridisation. Republicanism has historically neglected this question of cultural pluralism, based as it was on a unitary view of the polity. The question of diversity leads to the challenge of finding common ground. If there is so much diversity, can there be common ground? Can people be equal and at the same time different?

The fourth dimension of culture can thus be formulated as the negotiation of difference. Despite the obvious fact of cultural diversity—

as well as other kinds of diversity that are related to the spread of post-material values: gender, generations, class, life-styles—most societies have a means of reconciling their differences.[11] This is one of the most difficult challenges for the republican polity. Especially when it concerns fundamental differences over conceptions of life and death—as in conflicts over euthanasia, abortion, cloning—the differences will be very great and will call into question the very cultural foundations of society. In these and other cases, secessionism and many religious conflicts, for example, common ground cannot be found since the conflict is of a zero-sum nature. Indeed, the preservation of difference may often be what the conflict is about. However, while these are serious conflicts for a republican polity to address, most conflicts are of a negotiable nature. One of the tasks for a republican conception of cultural conflict is to convert zero-sum conflict into negotiable conflicts. Where this is not possible, it may simply be a case of living with contingency. But, in the majority of cases, cultural diversity does not necessarily lead to cultural divisions, as communitarians believe. Nor does cultural diversity lead to an extreme and destructive relativism, as liberals fear. In actual practice, most cultures accommodate universalistic principles and, conversely, universalistic cultures—such as liberal and cosmopolitan values—are increasingly open to particularistic interpretations.[12] Ever since the anthropologist Ruth Benedict introduced the term in the 1930s, we are all cultural relativists.[13] Difference and, more importantly, the accommodation of difference are partly accomplished fact in many societies today, and the recognition of diversity is an essential part of democracy.[14]

The analysis so far is that culture must be seen as fluid and open to different codifications or classifications. Culture is negotiable because it is not fixed or rooted in immutable principles. In this view, then, culture is not defined by reference to territory, the state, an elite, a church or a party. Culture consists of different forms of classification, cognitive models, narratives, forms of evaluation, collective identities, values and norms, and aesthetic forms. Some of these will be shared, others will not, but the critical issue is that culture does not have to be shared as such, since it is composed out of shifting frames and modalities which are appropriated in different ways. In other words, culture is defined by use rather than by inherent properties and always requires interpretation.[15] Culture is thus pragmatic—as in *pragma*, or action—in that it is articulated by social actors in everyday life. This view of culture suggests that a pragmatic hermeneutics for culture must interpret culture within the context of social action. We are thus moving away from a view of culture as that which divides to a view of culture as a domain of diverse

interpretations that are appropriated by social actors who must constantly negotiate the contradictions both within and between the different orders of interpretation from which they draw.[16]

Where communitarianism reduces culture to an underlying consensus, republican theory sees conflict as part of a strong polity where differences are made central to the public culture. It is in this respect that culture and individualism can be seen as reconcilable. According to an influential thesis, associated with Robert Putnam's book *Bowling Alone*, modern individualism has eroded the ability of contemporary American society to generate social capital.[17] Civic engagement, voluntarism, and associational membership—epitomised in declining membership of bowling clubs, the quintessential feature of white Anglo-Saxon America—are in decline due to a nascent individualism, he argued, and consequently democracy is undermined. What makes democracy flourish is the stable core of a cultural tradition based on common values. This thesis must be rejected. Putnam ignores the reality that modern cultural values are, in fact, often sustained by a high degree of individualism and that conflict is not corrosive of but essential to the modern polity, which cannot rest on the traditional cultural ethos associated with the bowling clubs of Jeffersonian agrarian republicanism. Moreover, it was a view of culture that accepted the exclusion of large segments of the population—women and minorities—from the polity, the values of which were narrow, gendered, and closed to the reality of diversity.

Conclusion: culture as communication

A sociology of culture today does not accept the view that culture is a form of integration. An older sociology and much of classical anthropology were based on the belief that culture offers a model of cohesion for society, which otherwise would fall apart due to its conflicts. While this was heavily criticised by both the Marxist theory of culture and by critical theory—from Adorno to Marcuse—the assumption remained that culture was a form of legitimation, even if it was distorted by ideology and class power. The argument advanced in this essay is that culture is primarily a system of communication rather than a form of integration. While culture may indeed serve to anchor systems of legitimation, culture is fundamentally anarchic. It is always open to different interpretations and to new codifications.[18]

The most significant expressions of cultural creation in contemporary society are communicative ones. We have only to consider the role of the internet and more generally information and communication technologies to see that culture cannot be separated from its modes of communication.

Thus, culture is not private contemplation, the representation of authority, or a domain of decentred simulations. It has a public dimension, but one that is not simply suspended between the private domain and the state, as was characteristic of an earlier phase of the project of modernity. Public discourse has a self-creating, autopoetic nature that is constitutive of the social bond and its cultural forms. Culture is also a medium in which citizenship is expressed.[19] In addition to the classic social, civic and political rights, citizenship concerns cultural rights—relating to language, information, heritage, memories, and what in general concerns cultural, symbolic expression.

Integration, today more than ever before, is sustained by forms of communication, rather than by a stable system of cultural values and norms. Ideologies, too, have become unable to provide enduring systems of integration. Increasingly, a whole range of philosophers and sociologists have argued that societies are ultimately to be seen in terms of the modes of communication, rather than in terms of territory, juridical systems, and class structures, for example. Major epistemological shifts have occurred in science itself and more generally in knowledge, making the condition of uncertainty and contingency central to the contemporary mode of cultural consciousness.[20] The cultural form of modern society is responding by becoming more and more discursive, for this is the only way it can accommodate the crystallisation of the cognitive order and the new modes of communication. A republican polity must evolve the cognitive capacity to cope with the increasing volume of communication.

Jürgen Habermas has analyzed modern societies in terms of the progressive extension of communication to all parts of society. Communication is now integral to all forms of cultural reproduction, he argues in several major works.[21] No society can circumvent the critical and reflexive forces at work in modern culture, which have 'rationalised' societies' modes of legitimation to the point that communication is now the cultural form of societal reproduction. The result is that a 'postnational' polity can only be based on cultural forms of commonality that can accept certain basic principles, such as procedural rules for the resolution of conflicts, the need for communicative solutions, and the limited patriotism of an identification with the constitution—a 'constitutional patriotism'—rather than with territory, cultural heritage or the state.[22] Habermas's argument is an important one for republican theory. It shows how cultural forms of identification and loyalty are still possible and that, therefore, culture is reconcilable with diversity and is not threatened by conflict, but, in fact, is sustained by the constant negotiation of conflict.

A final point in conclusion is that the public culture of the republican polity is not to be identified with the state. This has been the fate of much of the republican tradition, as is evidenced by many countries, ranging from Ireland to France and the United States. Originally an expression of the autonomy of civic culture, democracy and the public domain, the republican values became increasingly identified with the state tradition and in many cases with nationalism. The result has been a loss of what Cornelius Castoriadis has called the 'radical imaginary' that lies at the core of every culture, defining its capacity to reproduce itself.[23] One of the tasks of a republican conception of public culture is the recovery of the radical imaginary component of the public, which this essay has associated with a notion of communication.

Notes

[1] G. Simmel, 'The Concept and Tragedy of Culture', in *The Conflict in Modern Culture and Other Essays* (New York: Teachers College Press 1968 [1914]).

[2] D. Lazare, *The Frozen Republic: How the Constitution is Paralysing Democracy* (New York: Harcourt 1996).

[3] M. Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1960 [1869]).

[4] In North America neo-conservativism is the preferred term for what in Europe is generally called neo-liberalism.

[5] See G. Delanty, *Citizenship in a Global Age* (Buckingham: Open University Press 2000) and G. Delanty, *Community* (London and New York: Routledge 2003) for further discussion of the limits of communitarianism.

[6] J. Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press 1994).

[7] This is the stark choice that is found in, for example, M. Walzer, *Thick and Thin: Moral Argument at Home and Abroad* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press 1994).

[8] P. Strydom, *Risk, Enviornment and Society* (Buckingham: Open University Press 2002).

[9] G. Delanty and P. O'Mahony, *Nationalism and Social Theory* (London: Sage 2002).

[10] P. Strydom, *Discourse and Knowledge: The Making of Enlightenment Sociology* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press 2000).

[11] N. Smelser and J. Alexander (eds.), *Diversity and Its Discontents: Cultural Conflict and Common Ground in Contemporary American Society* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1999) and A. Touraine, *Can We Live Together? Equal and Different* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000).

[12] J. Cowan, M.-B. Dembour and R. A. Wilson (eds.), *Culture and Rights: Anthropological Perspectives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2001).

[13] R. Benedict, *Patterns of Culture* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul 1935).

[14] W. Kymlicka and W. Norman (eds.), *Citizenship in Diverse Societies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2001).

[15] See A. Swidler, 'Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies', *American Sociological Review* 51, 1986, pp. 273–86.

[16] See L. Boltanski and L. Thévenot, 'The Sociology of Critical Capacity', *European*

Journal of Social Theory 2 (3), pp. 359–77.

[17] R. Putnam, *Bowling Alone* (New York: Simon and Schuster 1999).

[18] This has been elaborated in G. Delanty, *Social Theory in a Changing World* (Cambridge: Polity Press 1998).

[19] N. Stevenson (ed.) *Culture and Citizenship* (London: Sage 2000).

[20] G. Delanty *Challenging Knowledge: The University in the Knowledge Society* (Buckingham: Open University Press 2001).

[21] J. Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, vol. 1: 'Reason and the Rationalisation of Society' (London: Heinemann 1984), *The Theory of Communicative Action*, vol. 2: 'Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason' (Cambridge: Polity Press 1987), and *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Cambridge: Polity Press 1989).

[22] J. Habermas, *The Postnational Constellation* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001) and *The Inclusion of the Other* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998).

[23] C. Castodiadis, *The Imaginary Institution of Society* (Cambridge: Polity Press 1987).

An Poblachtánachas Cultúir (Mar Réiteach ar Fhadhbanna an Domhain)

ALAN TITLEY

Slí amháin le féachaint ar stair an domhain ná múscailt na bpobal beag a tháinig amach as faoi bhun na n-impireachtaí móra. A fhianaise chomhthacaíochta sin, tráth dá raibh, bhí impireachtaí na Róimhe, na bPeirseach, Attila, na mBiosantach, na Seiliuc in airde a réime, agus ar aghaidh linn siar amach ar aon iúl leis sin. Iarrachtaí ba ea gach aon cheann díobh ar phobail éagsúla a stiúrú agus a choimeád faoi smacht. Dá olc maith gach ceann díobh—agus déanaim amach gur olc is ea gach impireacht go bun—b'é an dílseacht do thuairim éigin aontaithe a choinnigh le chéile iad. Dílseacht chláimh i ndeireadh thiar thall ba ea é sin. Níl feidhm dom a rá nár coinníodh aon impireacht le chéile gan fuil agus foréigean agus síorbhagairt á cur i gcrích.

Is de shuimiúlacht nár dhaonlathas é aon impireacht ar bith. Is d'inneach an daonlathais é cothromaíocht idir daoine, agus séanann an impireacht sin. Is d'inneach an náisiúnachais é cothromaíocht idir pobail (nó náisiúin), agus séanann an impireacht sin, leis. D'fhás an daonlathas agus an náisiúnachas stáit i dteannta a chéile mar is ina seasamh ar cheart an duine mar indibhid, agus mar bhall de phobal, a bhí siad leith ar leith.

Is é atá sa phoblachtánachas cultúir aitheantas ar an gcéad dul amach go bhfuil gach saoránach cothrom agus cearta doshannta aige. Sin oidhreacht an phoblachtánachais. Laochra iad gach duine sin a ghearr airde rí nó banríona nó prionsa nó barúin nó caesair nó cúnta no diúic nó sabhdáin pé acu Cromail nó Robespierre nó Gavrilo Princip nó Henri Pohl nó an prionsa gan choróin Dipendra féin a bhí ann. Is é gnó an chultúir sa chothromóid seo ná aitheantas ar dhínit an duine ina phobal féin, agus ar an dínit sin ina cáilíocht féin gan beann ar a bhfuil á shairsingiú air. Dá réir sin tá an poblachtánachas mar thuiscint ar chearta an duine mar shaoránach, agus an poblachtánachas mar thuiscint an duine i gcomhthalán níos leithne nasctha le chéile in aon bhall neamhuamach ó bhonn go scolb.

Tá, gan amhras, fadhbanna móra ag leanúint na polaitíochta. Níl báirí ná críocha déanacha na polaitíochta aontaithe ag cách. Is amhlaidh gur tionscal seirbhíse féinfhreastail atá ann do roinnt, baineann le heacnamaíocht go príomha dar le go leor eile, cuid de chóras na n-aicmí, d'fhonn cumhacht a bhaint amach, mar áis mhargaidh dá thuilleadh fós de réir cuma. Is amhlaidh atá mar nach ionann bairí ná críocha déanacha na beatha do dhaoine seachas a chéile ach oiread. Agus tharlódh go mbeadh smut de na críocha polaitiúla sin ar snámh a bheag nó a mhór ar fud anamnacha an uile dhuine. Ach is deimhnitheach nach sealbhaítear leis an díocas céanna iad. Neachanna polaitiúla is ea roinnt daoine, agus ealaín í ar bheag is miste le daoine eile fúithi. Pé sa domhan scéal é, tá toise phoiblí i saol gach aon duine, toise náisiúnta fiú, a shloinntear agus a nochtar ar shlite éagsúla, mura bhfuil ann ach cluichí spóirt, comórtais amhránaíochta nó róiseanna áilleachta ar stáitse.

Is aníos as an toise phoiblí seo, áfach, a éiríonn an chuid is sofheicthe den pholaitíocht náisiúnta sa bhith críoch fad a ritheann. Agus is anseo, leis, a chaithfear slán go deo a fhágáil ag teoiric Benedict Anderson agus a chamthaí, gur 'comhthionóil shamhlaitheacha' iad na náisiúin.[1] Ní tógtha ar 'dhifríochtaí' atá náisiún, is amhlaidh gur soiléire an difríocht nuair a chuimilíonn dhá chéannacht le chéile. Mura bhfuil de fhéinaithne ann ach nach ionann tú agus an duine thall, níl in aon aithne ar bith ach rud diúltach, séantach. Mura bhfuil ionainne ach neamhsibhse, agus ionaibhse ach neamhdhaoine eile, agus iad siúd ina neamhdhaoine eile fós ní bheadh ann d'aon toise féinchothaithe ar bith. Agus nílimid ceangailte ar a cheapadh gur mar sin atá. Ligeann gach feiniúlacht tríd is fíor, tá an braon anuas trí gach córas agus comharthaíocht shiombalach. Ní hionann seo is nach ann dóibh. Is féidir le teorainneacha idir náisiún, idir comhthionóil, idir na slite a shloinneann siad iad féin, nó a nochtann siad a bhfuil acu a bheith doiléir, ar snámh, éiginnte, ar bogadh, so-ghluaiste agus mar sin de ar aghaidh, ach is fada buí é sin ón tuiscint nach ann dóibh. Mura mbeadh ann dóibh bheadh gach cultúr mar an gcéanna, agus is follas nach mar sin atá. Ní hé nach ndlúitear le chéile iad mar náisiúin le scéalta miotaseolaíochta, le siombail bhuile, uaireanta le deargbhréaga, ach *ní as neamhní* a thagann siad. Go deimhin, gabhann támhchodanna na náisiún uile siar na céadta, agus go minic na mílte bliain, pé cócaireacht a dhéantar orthu ina dhiaidh sin. Dá bhféadfaí náisiúin a tháthú le chéile neamhspleách ar theanga, ar sheanchuimhne, ar litríocht, go minic ar chreideamh, is deimhin linn go mbeadh náisiúin déanta fadó as na himpireachtaí sin ar fad a mhair ar feadh na gcianta. Na hOttomain, na hOstarUngáraigh, na hAztaic, an túisce is a scaoil siad a ngreim is

aníos a phéac na pobail bheaga.

Is é atáim á mhaíomh gurb iad na pobail bheaga seo solas agus lóch-rann na saoirse, is iad dúshraith an daonlathais iad, is iad croíchnóta na gcultúr domhanda iad. *Tugtar* saoirse do gach mionphobal *a bhfuil sé ag teastáil uathu*, *nuair a bhíonn sé ag teastáil uathu*, agus is gairid uainn clár síochána eadrainn ar domhan.

Nuair a luaitear é seo, is gnách go dtagann alltacht ar dhaoine, go bhfásann muc ar gach mala agus go dtagann gal fholaigh amach as cuaisíní coirp nach bhfeadair daoine iad a bheith ann. 'Conas is féidir saoirse a thabhairt do gach aon mhiondream' a fhiafrófar díot. B'shin go díreach an argóint a bhí in aghaidh saoirse na hEastóine, na Laitvia, na Liotuáine, na Slóivéine, Bosnia, na Cróite, na Macadóine, Timor Thoir (nó *Timor Lorasa'e*, le ceart), na Táidsíceastáine, an Asarbaiseáin, gan dul níos sia i ngabhlánacht, agus gan trácht ar a bhfuil de mhiontíortha níos lú ná sin fós a bhfuil guth agus suíochán agus seasamh anois acu sna Náisiúin Aontaithe le beagán os cionn deich mbliana anuas, Liechten-stein (1990), Na hOileáin Marshall (1991), An Mhicrinéis (1991), San Marino (1992), Monaco (1993), Andorra (1993). Cén duine a sheasfaidh i lár an aonaigh in Taillinn nó Vilnias nó Rige nó Cisineá nó Ashgebat nó Tashkent nó Almety nó Mionsc nó Cív agus a déarfaidh os ard, 'Ba cheart go mbeadh sibhse fós faoi chrúba na Rúise?' Nó in Dili adéarfadh go raibh an ceart ag na hIndinéisigh na fodhaoine sin ar fad a mharú? Ba dhána an mhaise é. Mar is é fírinne an scéil, in ainneoin gach séanta, go gceaptar coitianta go bhfuil pobail áirithe i dteideal a gcuid saoirse, agus daoine eile nach fiú dóibh drannadh leis. Ceaptar seo i bpobail nach raibh aon traidisiún impiriúlach acu chomh maith céanna le pobail a bhfuil an t-uaslathas ginte iontu. Nó tá tuairimithe go bhfuil pobail ró-bheag le go bhféadfadh siad maireachtaint beo, amhail is nach raibh gach tír ar domhan spleách ar a chéile. Agus in ainneoin a bhfuil de thíortha beaga éiritheacha, abhacthíortha nach dearóil, ar fud na cruinne. Tuilleadh: go deimhin is tearc tír bheag a ghabhann sáite i muineál a chomharsan, agus is tearc tír bheag a bhfuil a gcuid tancanna réidh ullamh chun gluaiste trasna na machairí.

Fairis sin ar fad, is fánach í an fhadhb pholaitiúil nach bhfuil cúrsaí 'náisiúnachais' de shórt éigin laistíos de. Sa pholaitíocht shíochánta fein, deir Amin Maalouf,

> nowhere on the whole map of the world can I find a single country where the religious and ethnic affiliations of all the candidates is regarded by the voters as irrelevant.[2]

Is é sin le rá is beag fadhb a bhaineann le teorainnacha fearainn, le haighnistí inmheánacha nach bhfuil deacracht 'eitneach' éigin á comáint. Is de dheasca géar-leanúna agus easpa aitheantais atá na Curdaigh suaite sna críocha a bhfuil siad iontu. Ceist náisiúntachta is ea is bun leis an troid sa tSúdáin, mar a bhí sa chogadh idir An Nigéir agus Biafra, nó idir Eritrea agus An Aetóip. Is ar bhonn eitneach, is é sin, náisiúnta an t-aighneas fíochmhar sa Chósta Eabhair faoi láthair, ní idir an 'tuaisceart' agus an 'deisceart' mar a mhaítear linn, ach idir an Bété atá dílis don Uachtarán Gbagbo ar díobh é agus na Dioula a fhaigheann tacaíocht óna gcomhmhuintir trasna na teorann in Buircíne Fasó. B'fhéidir go bhfuil teidil bhreátha ar gach dream díobh seo ar nós *an Patriotic Movement of Ivory Coast*, nó *Ivorian Popular Movement of the Far West* nó *Movement for Justice and Peace*, (sna leaganacha Béarla dá n-ainm) ach is bunaithe ar 'náisiún' atá siad mar atá gach páirtí polaitiúil ar fud na hAfraice ar fad. Dhá chine atá in adharca a chéile in Sri Lanka. Easpa féinrialach, agus easpa deiseanna d'fhonn é a phlé fadhb na mBascach. Na hOgoni faoi dhaorsmacht na Nigéire. Na hAcéhanna ag iarraidh scarúint leis an Indonéis. Oileán Basilan ag iarraidh scarúint leis na críocha Filipíneacha. An tSeoirse in earraid leis an Rúis mar gheall ar cheantar Paincísí. Stát Seain in Maenmar gan a bheith sásta lena mbraighdeanas. Caismír a bheith sa stát mícheart. An Tiobóid gafa go hiomlán ag na Sínigh. Dá scaoilfí leo, le gach cine díobh, agus le gach cine eile nach bhfuil iontu ach sop tuí i lár na tuile idirnáisiúnta, is síochánta agus is suairc a bheadh scaoba móra den chine daonna agus is mó sin duine a chodlódh níos báine ina leaba. Eascraíonn formhór mór d'fhadhbanna polaitmhíleata an domhain as daoine a bheith faoi smacht. Sin uile.

Is é atá sa phoblachtánachas cultúir ná tuiscint chaoinfhulangach. Mar atá an chaoinfhulaingt idir daoine mar neacha ar chomhchearta daonna sa phobal náisiúnta, tá an chaoinfhulaingt chultúir agus comhmheasa mar cheangal idir náisiúin. Ní cultúir ar deighilt iad seo, gan amhras, sula ndéarfaidh cúrchloigeann éigin gur ag iarraidh ballaí a thógáil idir daoine atáim. Is duine gach duine i measc daoine, agus is náisiún gach náisiún i measc náisiún. Ní príosúnach faoi ghlas é an náisiún, ach duine ina áras féin mar atá an duine ina cholainn féin, agus adaítear amach as sin. Tugtar a bhfuil le tabhairt agus fachtar ar iasacht a bhfuil le fáil. Dá séanfaí sin dob ait an mac an saol. Tá na prionsabail an-soiléir. Ná cuireadh aon náisiún/pobal/grúpa iachall ar ghrúpa/phobal/náisiún eile nach bhfuil uathu a dhéanamh. Tá sé chomh simplí leis sin.

Ní mhaím nach teidil gan deacraí iad 'pobal' ná 'cine' ná 'náisiún' ach oiread le 'cultúr' arbh fhearr gan dul ina aice den turas seo. Tá teorainn-

eacha mós ceomhar acu. Tá gach tuairim díobh ag ligean tríd, tá an braon anuas astu, iad ag sileadh ar nós caicíní caorach. Ná ní mhaím nach tábhachtaí ná a chéile iad ó dhuine go duine. Agus is tábhachtaí ó am go ham iad ó dhuine go chéile ag brath ar cad tá sa treis. Is deimhin linn nach féidir a mhaíomh nach n-athraíonn siad ina gcumraíocht agus ina gcruth ó am go chéile. Ach ní samhlaíocht bhuile iad, ná ceapadóireacht as fhuil fhuar. Ní féidir a áiteamh ar Arabaigh gur Inuitigh iad, dá mhéid é an fuacht, ná ar Mhaoraigh gur Maoigh aduaidh iad, dá mhéid é an bhagairt. Ní hionann sin agus nach féidir le daoine aistriú ó áit go háit, ná clasú le pobail éagsúla, ná assamhlú oiread agus is mian no is feidir leo le buíonta atá in aice leo, ná dílseacht a athrú. Ná ní hinargóinte nach bpáirtíonn daoine go lántoilteanach sa saol réadach iarmhír tráchtála iltíreach cosmapalatanach macdomhnailliúil oiread agus is mian leo.

Ach ní hinséanta mar sin féin gur aníos agus aniar as gile gheal dhorcha na staire a thagann an toise pholaitiúil sin a áitíonn seo nó siúd orainn—*agus a éilíonn sásamh iomlán*—sula ngluaisimid ar aghaidh go dtí an chéad chéim eile, pé ní é féin. Is é an toise seo a lorgaíonn éisteacht sa saol polaitiúil mar eachtra phoiblí ar shlí go lorgaíonn an toise an éisteacht chéanna sa tsaol pearsanta, sna healaíona agus san litríocht. Is é toise seo an náisiúnachais is doimhne a ghabhann siar sa duine, '*anti-Cartesian atavism*',[3] mar leis an duine mar ainmhí polaitiúil de, an t-aitheantas céadraí seo nach bhfuil teacht thairis. Dar le Isaiah Berlin:

> … even in its moderate forms, nationalism springs from feeling rather than reason, from an intuitive recognition that one belongs to a particular political or social or cultural texture, indeed, to all three in one—to a pattern of life that cannot be dissected into separate constituents, or looked at through some intellectual microscope; something that can only be felt and lived, not contemplated, analysed, taken to pieces, proved or disproved.[4]

Ní náisiúnstáit iad formhór na dtíortha ar domhan, ach a bhfuil d'fhadhbanna polaitiúla céannachta acu, is de dheasca *nach* náisiúnstáit iad. Na coinbhleachtaí atá á gcrá is coinbhleachtaí náisiúnstátúla iad. An áit a bhfuil scáileanna náisiún, leathann siad ar fud na haimsire atá anois againn ann. Fadhbanna na réamhstaire féin b'fhadhbanna prótanáisiúnstátúla iad.

Ceann de bhréaga móra na staire ba ea nárbh ann do náisiúin go dtí an seachtú nó an t-ochtú haois déag. Is é sin má chúngaíonn tú go caol cad is brí le náisiún ann. Ach is róchuma an lipéad: treibh nó cine nó grúpa nó buíon nó dream nó slua nó cuallacht nó pobal nó treabhchas nó conlán nó eile, mar atá foilsithe agam lastuas. Daoine a shainigh iad féin ar shlite

áirithe comhchoitianta ar leithrigh ón gcuid eile den saol atá i gceist agamsa—agus de ghnáth bhain na slite sin le teanga, le sinsearacht, le creideamh, agus le tairisí áirithe a d'fhás astu sin. Bhí na slite agus na tuiscintí sin i gcónaí ar bogadh agus claochlóideach agus ag fás agus ag meathlú de réir an tsaoil mhóirdtimpill. Ní timpistghlantseansúil í gur thug na Rúisigh a gcuid bá do na Seirbigh sna cogaí le déanaí. Is amhlaidh gur de bharr an ghaoil i bhfad amach atá eatarthu, nó a shamhlaítear eatarthu, a tharla sin. Ná ní timpist í gurb iad na Meiriceánaigh gheala waspúla agus na Sasanaigh agus na hAstrálaigh atá chun tosaigh i dteannta a chéile sa chogadh ar son an ola sa Mheán-Oirthear. Ar leibhéal áirithe samhlaítear gurb aon treibh mhór amháin iad, na Glóbanglacánaigh, agus cé déarfadh a mhalairt. Fág sonraí áirithe i leataoibh, níl sna Stáit Aontaithe ach oidhre 'dhlisteanach' Impireacht na Breataine. Ná ní timpist é go bhfuil dlí tagtha i bhfeidhm sa Spáinn a éascaíonn an bealach do shinsir a muintire a theich go Meiriceá Theas filleadh anois, bealach atá i bhfad níos fusa ná bealach na gcomharsan is gaire dóibh trasna chaolas cúng na meánmhara a dtarlaíonn go bhfuil teanga eile á labhairt acu, agus éadaí fada róbacha ar a gcolainn. Inár stáitín beag féin is fusa do gharmhac nó iníon duine a d'fhág an tír trí ghlúin ó shin saoránacht a bhaint amach, ná athair nó máthair saoránaigh a rugadh anseo. Síneadh ar an náisiúnachas is ea gach ceann díobh seo, nó síneadh ar an tuiscint gur aonad tábhachtach tuisceana pobail is ea pé ní a thuigimid le 'cine', nó 'treibh' nó pé focal is áin leat, bíodh siad ceart nó éagórach go minic.

In aimsir chogaidh agus éigeandála vótálfaidh daoine ar son an 'náisiúin'. Caitheadh Churchill amach sa Bhreatain nuair a bhí sléacht an dara domhanchogaidh thart agus síocháin i réim. Thug na Seirbigh lántacaíocht don bhúistéir Mhilosovic ina chuid búistéireachta, agus go háirithe nuair a dhein na Stáit Aontaithe agus a gcuid giollaí ionsaí ar an tír; ach dhíbríodar ina dhiaidh sin é nuair a bhí an chruachéim thart. Thit eacnamaíocht Iosraeil as a chéile le linn do Sharon a bheith ina phríomhaire, bhí amhras mór go raibh a chrág sa scipéad, ach toghadh arís é le linn a chuid catha leis na Palaistínigh. 'It's *not* the economy, stupid' mar is féidir a rá, ag baint casadh as nath úd na toghchánaíochta.

Is amhlaidh gurbh iad, agus gurb iad na hImpireachtaí móra faoi dear an chuid is mó ar fad de shléachtaí is de dhúnmharuithe oifigiúla cogaíochta an domhain. Is é sin le rá, an tslí nach mbíonn cumhacht amháin sásta ligean le daoine atá in aice leo, ná go deimhin ar an taobh eile den domhan. Dá gcuirfí deireadh le gabháil, críoch le concas mar atá mar idéal i mbunreacht na Náisiún Aontaithe, bheadh cuid mhaith mhór

d'fhadhbanna 'náisiúnta', agus dá réir sin, polaitiúla an domhain réitithe. Tuairim is 190 de thíortha neamhspleácha atá anois ar domhan; níl cúis ar bith nach méadófaí seo faoi dhó, faoi thrí, faoi iolrafhigiúr dá mba ghá. Cuirtear daoine faoi leatrom agus faoi ghéarsmacht ní toisc gur daoine aonair indibhidiúla iad, ach toisc go mbaineann siad le náisiún. Is féidir go mairfeadh comhfhlaithis, ar ndóigh. Maireann comhfhlaithis, nuair is *comh* fhlaithis iad, is é sin le rá, nuair atá meas ar chách agus cearta ag cách. Nuair nach mar sin a bhíonn tosaíonn siad ar a bheith ag titim as a chéile, nó ag teacht faoi bhrú. Maireann 'náisiúin' éagsúla go sítheoilte, a bheag nó a mhór, san Eilvéis, mar shampla, mar is mór acu an tsaoirse áitiúil agus an chothromaíocht chultúir. In ainneoin an teann-ais sa Bheilg socraíonn an bunreacht agus an córas dlíthiúil nach féidir go bhfaighidh dream amháin an ceannsmách ar dhream eile. Deacair linn a shéanadh ná gur coinníodh an tSeanIúgsláiv le chéile, in ainneoin an uile ní, mar bhí córas bunreachtúil agus cearta idirfhite a d'oibrigh go casta chun leasa gach n-aon; nuair a baineadh na teanntaí cothromaíochta sin d'éirigh an bhéist aniar as a phluais le binb.

Músclaítear an cheist, cad mar gheall ar na mionlaigh sin atá teanntaithe laistigh de náisiúnstát, mionlach a fágadh ar an trá fholamh, b'fhéidir, nuair a d'imigh saighdiúirí an Impire? Is é freagra na ceiste sin, ná go mbeadh idir chearta aonair *agus* chearta pobail le haithint laistigh d'aon chóiriú poblachtánach. Ní foláir don phoblachtánachas déileáil le daoine mar neacha daonna singilte *agus* mar bhuíon de chomhthalán náisiúnta cultúir. Ná beirimis linn go bhfuil an dá sheasamh sin glan i gcoinne a chéile; is amhlaidh gur ag comhlánú a chéile atá siad. Mar i gcónaí riamh, tá cearta doshéanta againn toisc gur *daoine* sinn, gurb ainmhithe déchosacha réasúnta faoi spéartha neimhe sinn, agus toisc gur *baill de náisiún* sinn—agus ní féidir gur gá tairne a chur sa chloigeann lena mhíniú gurb é is 'náisiún' anseo arís, mar atá siar amach sa trácht seo, buíon daoine a shamhlaíonn gur buíon daoine iad chun críche cultúir agus eagrúcháin polaitíochta agus a shamhlaíonn nach ionann iad agus muintireacha eile in aice láimhe nó i bhfad i gcéin. Is túisce cearta an duine, gan amhras, ná cearta na buíne, ach de bhíthin gur i bhfoirm na buíne sin a ghabhtar i ngleic leis an duine is minic go léir nach inscartha iad.

Baolach, contúirteach, leis, é an focal 'indibhidiúil.' Ritheann dhá bhrí éasca chun na teanga, mar atá (a) brí leithleasach shuarach féinleasmhar, agus (b) brí níos leithne a aithníonn an duine mar bhall amháin singilte de shaoránaigh an domhain. Is é an chéad bhrí díobh sin a chomáineann an caipitleachas corparáideach ar láidre go minic anois é ná formhór de stáit

an domhain, agus is é an dara brí atá laistiar den phoblachtánachas a aithníonn cearta gach duine ina phearsa aonair agus chomhchoiteann. Aithníonn an poblachtánachas '*the ineluctable interdependence of human beings*'.[5]

B'é laige an Mharxachais—nó leagan amháin de—ná gur aithin sé cearta an duine (go teoiriciúil) ar aon nós, ach gur fhág sé an toise 'náisiúnta' seo amuigh ar an gcarn. Go deimhin, is féidir a áiteamh go láidir mar a dhein Durkheim gur paisean morálta seachas taighde córasúil a bhí mar inneall laistiar den Mharxachas.[6] B'é an paisean morálta sin a rinne inneall chomh cumhachtach sin as ar feadh i bhfad go dtí gur sheargaigh na hidéil agus gur tháinig prionsaí prumpúla isteach in áit na mbráthar. Níor tugadh uisce ná aer do na fásraí úd, don ghas céadraí sin as a dtagann oiread sin de shúlach an duine. Leagan aichearrach é seo, gan amhras, ach cuireadh treise leis an duine mar neach ábhartha, in ainneoin na cainte ar bhráithreachas, ar bhráithreachas teibí a bhí ann go minic ceal ceoil, ceal scéalta, ceal filíochta, ceal seanaigne. Ní hé nár uiscigh an Marxachas dioscúrsa intleachtúil, polaitiúil agus sóisialta na cruinne. Dhein agus go domhain. Ach ní ghabhann smaointe polaitiúla ar deoraíocht de réir na líne dírí go ceartumhal mar is mian linn. Gabhann siad isteach i ngabhdán cultúir atá ann cheana, agus is as sin a thagann pé gal a leathnaíonn ar fud na críche. Spor sé mórán de na gluaiseachtaí neamhspleáchais ar fud na hÁise agus na hAfraice, bíodh gurbh í an dúil i ndíbirt na coise a bhí ar an mbolg agus an draothadh drochmheasúil gháire ón teach mór ba thábhachtaí seachas an idé-eolaíocht féin. Mar a chéile lena anáil intleachtúil dhaonlathach shóisialta ar fud na hEorpa. Is é a thug a shuaithinseacht dó gur ghlac cruth nua chuige féin gach áit dá ndeachaigh. Ach is dual d'idé-eolaíochtaí a bheith íonghlan más féidir agus ní fhulangaíonn bliodarnuisciú le foighne. Is dual, leis, dóibh a bheith i gcontrárthacht shoiléir leis an namhaidsmaoineamh eile, agus ní foláir do cheann acu géilleadh. Agus féach ar deireadh, a fhusa is a d'imigh an Marxachas as, fág Cúba agus Vítneam cróga as an áireamh, agus dúntar ár súile ar an gCóiré ó thuaidh.

B'é an náisiúnachas a tháinig ina áit. Tíortha iomadúla ag péacadh aníos ar fud na gcríoch a bhí faoin mbrat dearg roimhe sin. Polaiteoirí ag dul a chodladh ina gCumannaigh dhílse agus ag múscailt ar maidin ina Náisiúntóirí cruthanta. Níor mhar sin do na daoine, áfach, a bhí ina dTuircméanastáinigh, nó ina nÚisbéiceastáinigh, nó ina gCirgisteánaigh, nó ina dTaidsíceastáinigh, nó ina Slóivéinigh—nó ina gciníocha 'cúil' eile fós gan aitheantas agus ar glas ár n-eolas orthu—roimh bhunú gach stáit díobh. Aníos a tháinig an dúil ag na daoine seo gan a bheith faoi

bhráca socraithe nár oir dóibh féin. Oireann socrú ar bith don státaicme, agus is iad a bheidh i gceannas beag beann ar pé córas atá suas.

Agus sin é an baol diachrach i gcónaí. Beidh i gcónaí ann teannas, nó go deimhin féin sáraíocht agus coimheascar idir na daoine a bhfuil airgead agus cumhacht acu, agus na daoine nach bhfuil ach vótaí beaga acu. Iarracht atá sa chaipitleachas idirnáisiúnta teacht aniar ar an daonlathas agus é a scothadh. Tráchtann Chomsky ar '*corporate globalisation*' mar '*reversal of social democratic programs*'.[7] Is é sin le rá, gurb iarracht iad ar an daonlathas a chur ó rath, agus dá réir sin, toil na ndaoine a chealú. Beidh bearna ann idir na daoine sa chaisleán thuas na leacracha sleamhaine agus na cosa neamhnite thíos ag faire orthu, fiú san daonlathas is oscailte. Is beag rialtas náisiúnta in oirthear na hEorpa, mar shampla, nach bhfuil i bpóca Impireacht na Stát Aontaithe in ainneoin nach é sin mian a bpobal. Is mó sin státcheannaire a thuirling anuas, go fiú le sciatháin an náisiúnachais, ach nár fhéad teanga na tíre féin a labhairt. Cuid den chontráil gaoithe chéanna is ea an cultúr domhanda tráchtála a lagaíonn na dílseachtaí áitiúla agus logánta. Agus cé gurb é dícheall an tsaoil é cuid de seo a mhaolú, níl aon chúis nach féidir le duine é a chur chun leasa a mhuintire féin chomh maith. Is é an chuid den chultúr domhanda tráchtála seo a fhágann na cultúir 'thraidisiúnta' faoi tháir an chuid is mó contúirt, mar is amhlaidh go réitíonn an bealach do shaol ina gcaillfidh go leor daoine smacht ar a mbealaí féinstiúrtha féin idir pholaitiúil agus sainéargna.

Cé ea, ní miste ach oiread a admháil go lom amach go leor den amaidí a bhain agus a bhaineann i gcónaí leis an náisiúnachas féin, mar theagasc, mar idéal, nó mar réaladh. An t-eisinteachas buile a cuireadh abhaile go minic, an chúngaigeantacht a chuir naimhde an náisiúnachais in airde ar an bhaigín d'fhonn é a chrústáil le clocha nimhe, an tuath-ánachas simplí rómánsúil, adhradh na cré beannaithe, an t-eitneachas fola chomh mearaitheach is a bhí teaghlaigh ríogúla riamh faoina gcuid fola goirme, an doras iata in aghaidh na héagsúlachta, an t-ionannú idir am éigin éiginnte fadó agus saol idéalta éigin éiginnte amach anseo, móradh an mhaoloideasa, an t-inbhéirsiú meabhrach, an t-easpa caoin-fhulaingte le daoine eile, an diultú don earra iasachta. Dá leanfaí go loighiciúil den cheann deiridh sin, deir an scríbhneoir Arundhati Roy, is í ag trácht ar eisinteoirí na hIndia:

> They could begin by banning a number of ingredients from our cuisine—chillies (Mexico), tomatoes (Peru), potatoes (Bolivia), coffee (Morocco), tea, white sugar, cinnamon (China) … All hospitals in which medicine is practised or prescribed should be shut down. The railways dismantled. Airports closed.[8]

Is ea, is beag peaca in aghaidh an tsolais nach raibh an náisiúnachas ciontach ann uair éigin, agus an náisiúnachas cultúrdha chomh holc ná cách. Is beag idéal nár chuaigh thar fóir, ná nár baineadh mí-úsáid as. Is de spéis an phlé gur tháinig ann do Nicolas Chauvin, barrbhuaic na náisiúntachta dar leis an slua, nuair a bhí An Fhrainc i mbarr a cuid míleatachta agus i mbun gabhála ar fud na cruinne. Bhí an fealsamh Naitsíoch, Heidegger, chomh tugtha don chré agus don choncas is mar a bhí sé do chnocáin samhlaíochta scamallacha na meitifisice idéalaí.[9] Ach is cóir deighilt ghlan neamhghéilliúil a dhéanamh riamh is choíche idir an náisiúnachas mar áis inspioráide agus féindínite, agus an náisiúnachas borrtha ataithe ardséite forghabhálach, ar leagan den impiriúlachas le ceart é. Dá réir sin, impiriúlaigh den dath sin ba ea Chauvin agus Heidegger araon.

Ní cosaint ar an leagan mallaithe sin, an bréagleagan greannán-choimiciúil den tuiscint náisiúnta atá i gceist anseo. Glam ar son na náisiún mbeaga é seo, a bhfuil ann cheana, agus a dtiocfaidh inár ndiaidh. Mar is ag balcanú agus ag cantonú ar na déanacha i lár an idir-náisiúnaithe atáimid. Níl aon chuma air go bhfuil maolú ag teacht ar iomadú na mionstát, ar fhéinriail, ar neamhspleáchas na muintireacha atá ag teacht aníos as faoi bhun na mórstátnáisiún ilchiníocha. Is faide siar a théann na miondaoine guthmhúchta ná guthaí ramhartachtaithe an tí mhóir. Is cuí agus is cóir níos mó aitheantais a thabhairt don rud a dtugann Goran *Therborn 'the cunning survival capacity of historical traditions'* air.[10] Is baoth ar fad an bheachtaíocht adeir gur ag iarraidh mairiúint ar leithrigh ón saol atá gach drong a lorgaíonn neamhspleáchas dóibh féin, agus an méid seo ráite le seanbhlas agus le draothadh gáire go minic. Leagan é seo den *autarky* a bhí thuas idir an dá dhomhanchogadh a mhaígh gurb é an féinchothú eacnamaíochta an cuspóir ar cheart a bheith os comhair gach tíre a raibh meas acu orthu féin.[11] Go deimhin, is féidir a mhaíomh gurb é a mhalairt sin ar fad a chomáineann eacnam-aíocht cuid de na mionstáit is lú ar domhan, ar nós Liechtenstein, Monaco, nó stáit áirithe sa Mhuir Chairb agus sa Mhuir Chiúin. Pé ní mar gheall air sin, is mó atá na mórthíortha i dtuilleamaí na trádála agus an chaipitleachais chorparáidigh ná mar atá tíortha beaga ar bith.

D'fhocal gearra, is é atá á lorg ná *náisiúnachas idirnáisiúnta*. Go deimhin arís ar ais, ní idirnáisiúnta go h*idir*-náisiúin, is faoi lúba a chéile a mhaireann siad. Cuimsíonn an t-*idir*náisiúnachas an náisiúnachas agus tógann isteach faoina fhallaing é. Dá mhéad a bhfuil de náisiúin ar fud na cruinne is ea is *idir*náisiúnta a bheidh an saol. In aon áiteamh mar seo, bíonn an claonadh ann go meallfaí duine go dtí taobh amháin nó taobh

eile de mhol dénárach ina bhfuil neachanna dífhréamhaithe cosma-
palatanacha os cionn gach tíre atá in ann gluaiseacht go réidh ó chathair
go cathair ar fud na cruinne agus a bhfuil a n-anam glanta den fhíoch
bhuile a thagann le bheith i do bhall de náisiún nó cine ar leith amháin,
agus ainmhithe allta cúngbhácha iata isteach ina gcoinicéar teoranta
neamhsholasmhar féin ar an leith eile. Mar is eol dúinn go maith is cartún
gan dealramh é seo. Níl na neachanna is 'cosmapalatanaí' amuigh saor
óna dtreibh bheag chlaonta féin bíodh nach féidir leo a leithéid sin a
admháil, agus níl aon 'chultúr', dá bhreáthacht, nó dá 'iargúlta' nár
ghaibh frídíní ón iasacht tríd, á shaibhriú nó á mhartrú, ach is go
deimhnitheach, á athrú. An traidisiún mór a fhéachann ar an duine mar
dhuine amháin—agus a fheicimid i ngnéithe den 'Idirnáisiúnachas' nó
den Mharxachas mar a bhíodh—is amhlaidh go ndéanann sé dearmad go
maireann formhór na cruinne ina mbotháin bheaga féin agus go saolaítear
an duine, leis, faoi spéir logánta lena chuid déithe áitiúla. Ní féidir le
haon duine againn, dá leaisteach solúbtha sinn, abair, Pushtúin nó
Xingúaigh a dhéanamh dínn féin. Is féidir linn an teanga a fhoghlaim, dul
chun cónaithe ina measc, a gcuid fear/ban a phósadh, an creideamh a
chraos-slogadh, agus gach béas a chleachtadh, ach ní bheimid choíche ná
go deo mar dhuine díobh mar atá duine díobh féin. Nó is féidir linn dul
leis an státaicme idirnáisiúnta ar chor gur chomhgheal linn agus gur
chomhshocair dúinn a bheith in Tóiceó agus Phoenix agus Amman, ach
fós féin beidh clupaireacht an charbaid ar léimeamar de ag sonadh inár
gcluasa. An traidisiún a mhaíonn iad a bheith ar deighilt ón saol mór, ní
hea amháin gur baoth mar argóint í, ach is siabhránach gealtach, leis í.
'*What culture today*,' áitionn Edward Said, '*—whether Japanese, Arab,
European, Korean, Chinese or Indian—has not had long, intimate, and
extraordinarily rich contacts with other cultures? There is no exception
to this exchange at all.*'[12] Agus féach gurb iad na mórchultúir inaitheanta
amháin is mó a luann sé sa sliocht sin, agus féach fós a bhfuil de gach
uile shórt eile dínn ann. Agus laistigh de gach cultúr sin—mura bhfuil
'laistigh' féin róchluthar mar thuairim, bíonn an díospóireacht, agus an
chargáil, agus an t-aighneas, agus an cur trí cheile, an suaitheadh sin go
léir as a dtagann an gníomh cruthaitheach agus thugann brí agus
fuinneamh don saol.

Is ar bhonn an idirspleáchais seo—ar leibhéal na polaitíochta go
ngéillimid an oiread den cheannas flaithiúnta sin ionas gur féidir linn
comhoibriú le gach stát eile, ach an méid sin, *go toildeonach*, agus *nuair
atá sé againn le tabhairt sa chéad áit*; agus ar leibhéal an chultúir go
leanaimid ag cothú ár ngairdín cabáiste féin chomh torthúil agus chomh

cruthaitheach agus is féidir, ach go dtabharfaimid thar fhál isteach gach cleas is leasú agus galar agus grásta a rachaidh chun fónaimh dúinn. Is é sin an t-aon mhá amháin atá le tabhairt chun cláir ag gach buíon ar domhan. Beidh na himpireachtaí móra agus na comhghuaillíochtaí i mbun tátha agus díscaoilte go deo. Ach mairfidh an náisiún, nó leagan de, mar is é sin nádúr an duine. Is é a thiocfadh de shocrú leorfhiosach mar seo, slabhra nó súgán nó teaglaim nó míreanna comhfhite de thíortha is de stáit a mbeadh comh-mheas ar a chéile acu, a chomhoibreodh de réir an chomh-mheasa sin, a chabhródh le chéile de réir na comh-thuisceana sin, is a d'fhágfadh a gcuid amhas ar pá gona ngléasanna marfacha go daingean ina gcuid dúnta dá réir. I ndeireadh na mbeart, ní bheadh rud ar bith le cailliúint acu ach an impireacht.

Nótaí

[1] Tá an litríocht níos fairsinge agus níos ilchasta ná Anderson, gan amhras. Cuid den chanóin seo leabhair Ernest Gellner go háirithe, *Nations and Nationalism* (1983), *Nationalism* (1997), agus Eric Hobsbawm *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* (1993). Saothair níos stairiúla, is é sin níos doimhne, is ea leithéidí John A. Armstrong *Nations before Nationalism*, agus Anthony D. Smith *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (1986).

[2] Amin Maalouf, *On Identity* (London: The Harvill Press 2000), lch 127.

[3] Edward Said, 'Vico on the Discipline of Bodies and Texts', in his *Reflections on Exile and other literary and cultural essays* (London: Granta Books 2001), lch. 85.

[4] Isaiah Berlin, 'Kant as an unfamiliar source of nationalism', in his *The sense of reality: studies in Ideas and their History* (London: Chatto and Windus 1996), lgh. 232–3.

[5] Iseult Honohan, 'Freedom as Citizenship: The Republican Tradition in Political Theory', *The Republic,* no. 2, (Summer 2001), lch 7.

[6] Féach, mar shampla, H. Stuart Hughes, *Consciousness and Society*: *The reorientation of European Social Thought 1890–1930* (St Alban's: Paladin 1974), lch 70.

[7] Noam Chomsky, *9-11* (New York: Seven Stories Press 2002), lch 19.

[8] Arundhati Roy, 'The End of Imagination', in her *The Algebra of Infinite Justice* (London: Flamingo 2002), lgh 32–3.

[9] Michael E. Zimmerman, *Heidegger's Confrontation with Modernity* (Bloomington 1990), lgh 69–71.

[10] Goran Therborn, *European Modernity and Beyond* (London: 1995), lch 359.

[11] Robert Skidelsky, *The World after Communism* (London: 1995), lgh 62–3.

[12] Edward Said, 'The Clash of Definitions' in his *Reflections on Exile and other literary and cultural essays*, op. cit., lch 583.

ABSTRACT

Much of the history of the modern world is a history of devoiced peoples gaining a measure of freedom of expression from their masters in the great empires. All empires are, by definition, anti-democratic. The nationalism of submerged societies grew apace with democracy. Nationalism among the community of nations is the equivalent of democracy among the community of individuals. Cultural republicanism recognises the equality of citizens as individuals, but also recognises the rights of peoples as members of communities. These communities are not 'invented' or 'imagined' (in Benedict Anderson's terms), nor have they been utterly assimilated (as desired by the empires). They inhere because of a vast network of symbolic meanings that have been lived and sensed through time. They are not merely economic in the capitalist sense, nor do they override the rights of man in the universalist sense. But this sense of identity—national, local, regional, communal—is what drives politics, more than class, or economics, or simple self-aggrandisement.

All such groups should be given whatever automomy they desire. This is the basis of democracy, against international corporate capitalism whose disdain for the individual is only matched by its disdain for the local gadfly polity. This democracy is the beginning of a better world, where people can make a difference free from a political control that despises them both as individuals and as members of a nation.

The imperial mind may reside in the most well-meaning and liberal thinkers. Certainly, Marxists did not want such meaningless entities as Estonia to gain their independence, while the idea of a Basque state provokes righteous anger, even if this is what a majority of Basques desire. We make some quiet noises about Tibet, but the Kurds can remain split among the nations. It is as if some peoples deserve freedom, while others do not—which is precisely what the imperial anti-democratic project was about in the first instance.

There is virtually no border dispute in any part of the world without an 'ethnic' dimension—an element of one group thinking that they are superior to another. This imperial implant is the biggest barrier to complete tolerance among peoples. National communities, of course, have responsibilites as well as rights, but these are met by incorporating international human rights law into their legislation, and historical memory, their own history of subjection, can play a huge part in the healing imaginative process.

The argument about small nations being locked away and isolated from the rest of the world is patently absurd: no nation is ever isolated from another because of the normal intercourse of culture and commerce; more saliently, the smaller the nation the more open it is. It is the big empires of the world who are narrow because they do not have to look outside themselves; it is the small nations who are the most cosmopolitan, because they have to be.

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Several cultures and several understandings of culture come into play when we consider the place of science in culture. At least some of those cultures and understandings make the reflection, never mind the negotiation, of possible new relations difficult. One received view of science sees it as universally valid and located outside the messiness of national, linguistic and popular cultures. One received view of culture sees it as co-terminous with creative arts and the associated intellectual and critical disciplines.

These mutually reinforcing and restrictive views of science and culture underlie a long-standing discussion about 'two cultures'—a phrase most often associated with the lectures and writings of the scientist-novelist C. P. Snow over forty years ago. Snow commented that 'the number two is a very dangerous number',[1] but, in the political culture, in the culture of the universities, in the cultures of science and of the humanities, the production and reproduction of knowledge continue to be represented—and experienced—as taking place in two worlds, two paradigms, or two cultures. The institutions, lifeworlds and discourses of the professionals involved all contribute to these representations of polarity.

Even a cursory comparison with neighbouring countries indicates that Ireland has an especially bad case of the cultural splits. In many of the languages of Europe, the disciplines that are here encompassed under arts or humanities carry names containing 'science', as in *sciences humaines*, or *Literaturwissenschaft*. In France, many scientists are public intellectuals, alongside philosophers, authors and social theorists. In Britain, playwright Michael Frayn and novelists Ian McEwan and A. S. Byatt have explored, in their different ways, the ideas emerging from natural sciences.

In Ireland, the gaps between natural sciences and other aspects of intellectual culture and between sciences and popular culture are large and may be growing, even as the public policy commitment to scientific research increases. As I shall explore, the weak connections may have benefited scientists in the short term, but in the bigger picture the gaps

are to the detriment of the sciences as much as of the general culture.

Historical narratives on the status of science in Ireland have critically influenced how we see the contemporary cultural reception of science. The scientific heritage movement argues that the misconception that Ireland has not generated significant science in the past contributes to young people's lack of attention to contemporary science. This underlies their efforts to mark symbolically the birthplaces, residences and workplaces in Ireland of leading historical scientists and engineers.

One version of the story about science's changing status draws attention to a 'golden age' of science in Ireland from the late eighteenth century to the late nineteenth century in order to highlight the claimed rapid decline of science after that period. Trinity College geographer Gordon Herries Davies noted that 'Ireland's scientists were in the past overwhelmingly drawn from the protestant, Anglo-Irish ascendancy stock, and within the Republic of Ireland it has been customary to play down, and even to dismiss as non-Irish, the notable achievements of that particular ethnic group'.[2]

This view is echoed in a post-colonial analysis from physicist Roy Johnston, who also has an affiliation with Trinity College. Johnston writes, 'The "indigenous stream" [of science] got going only somewhat late in the [nineteenth] century, thanks largely to Cardinal Paul Cullen blocking access for catholics to the Queen's Colleges in Cork and Galway … Science remained in colonial hands; it had a protestant image; the people who staffed the civil services in the 1920s and 1930s had little time for it'.[3]

Another analysis goes to the character of the religious belief systems in Ireland. Cultural historian John Wilson Foster asserts that 'the catholic church in Ireland has not on the whole encouraged science or explicitly entertained scientific explanations of cosmic mechanisms and the evolution of life on earth. That church has been a counter-enlightenment force and has generally obstructed the introduction and development of enlightenment values in Ireland long after they became part of the common intellectual currency of protestant Europe and America'.[4] However, Foster acknowledges the scientific tradition of the catholic seminary at Maynooth and the need for further study of the relations between science and catholicism in Ireland.

Writing from the perspective of the history of science, Nicholas Whyte points to the long-standing exclusion of catholics from higher education and the 'gatekeeping' role of the Anglo-Irish ascendancy in scientific institutions as the most significant explanations of the low standing of science among Ireland's majority population.[5] He states that there is no

evidence for any intervention by the catholic church in Ireland to deter scientific investigation. Rev. Nicholas Callan, professor of mathematics and natural philosophy at Maynooth for nearly forty years, won international recognition for his work on electro-magnetics. But, Callan was never invited to present his work at the ascendancy-dominated Royal Irish Academy. Nor was he much appreciated by his seminary colleagues; there was no monument at his grave for forty years after his death in 1865.

Those who influenced educational and cultural policy in the young Irish Free State may not have been outwardly hostile to science, but nor did they help it take root. Timothy Corcoran, the Jesuit professor of education at University College Dublin, was a major influence, advocating a conservative view of teaching and learning in which learning by rote was central. '[Developing] manipulative skills is not the aim, or even necessary adjunct, of general education through science … Training in the use of a textbook is the basis of all progressive education in science'.[6]

In the mid-1930s, the small element of primary education devoted to developing manipulative skills in physical sciences was displaced to make way for the teaching of *Gaeilge*. This substitution has been frequently recalled in recent public discussion of the place of science in Ireland, often with an implicit or explicit commentary that something useful gave way to something useless in the project of developing a national culture.

Eamon de Valera, an emblematic figure in republicanism, is perhaps most centrally associated with this project. More than that, the values with which he is most commonly associated, expressed in shorthand by reference to Gaelic Ireland or 'comely maidens', are often regarded as antithetical to rationalist thought and scientific endeavour. But, de Valera combined with his commitment to the Irish language and the agrarian community a passionate interest in mathematics and science. This dimension of his work and personality is systematically omitted or downplayed in accounts of his life.

De Valera was a lecturer in mathematics when he became involved in the volunteers. As president of the executive council in the war years, he was able to give concrete expression to his enthusiasm for the work of the nineteenth-century mathematician William Rowan Hamilton by rescuing from neglect the Dunsink Observatory, of which Hamilton was once director. If commemorative postage stamps can be taken as one index of how a country sees itself, then Irish stamps appear to indicate that high-level mathematics was especially appreciated in this country.

William Rowan Hamilton is the only person to have twice been the subject of commemorative stamps. This anomaly undoubtedly reflects Eamon de Valera's particular interest.

As the Nazis' power grew in central Europe, threatening independent scholarship, de Valera personally invited the distinguished Austrian physicist Erwin Schrödinger to come to Dublin to establish the School of Theoretical Physics within the new Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies. Thanks largely to Schrödinger's presence, Dublin became an important centre for physics in the 1940s and 1950s. The leading international physicists of the day attended the summer seminars at the Institute, as, indeed, did Eamon de Valera. De Valera's confidant for forty years on the board of the Institute was fellow Hamilton enthusiast Albert McConnell, a northern protestant of unionist background and sometime provost of Trinity College.

Just as this dimension of de Valera's life and work is occluded in biographies or in histories of the new Irish state, so works of cultural history and analysis are also largely silent on science. Declan Kiberd's magisterial work defines the project of 'inventing Ireland' largely in terms of literature and language.[7] When he comes to discussion of Brian O'Nolan (Flann O'Brien), Kiberd focuses on the author's tussle with Irish-language culture in *An Béal Bocht* and omits any reference to his encounter with contemporary physics in *The Dalkey Archive*. The massive *Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing* found no place for scientific texts or writings about science.[8]

A few works of cultural recovery have sought to take account of scientific investigation and thought as part of Irish intellectual traditions. The 1985 collection of papers *The Irish Mind*, edited by Richard Kearney, gave space to consideration of scientific thought.[9] Expanding on this endeavour in his recent *History of Irish Thought*, Thomas Duddy includes consideration of Robert Boyle, often regarded as a founding figure in modern science.[10] Boyle was an aristocrat with an 'orientation … towards English life and culture', but, for material and historical reasons, Duddy argues, he is 'indisputably an Irish thinker'. Duddy explores the fascinating case of John Tyndall, educated in County Carlow, an internationally acclaimed physical scientist, a proponent of Darwinism, and an 'adversarial' protagonist in the science versus religion debates of the late nineteenth century. He also surveys the writings of some of those who defended religion against scientific incursions and rejected Darwin, but proposed another version of evolution.

A recent collection of papers, *Reinventing Ireland—culture, society and the global economy*, is presented as an update on Kiberd and a

riposte to those who claim that Ireland has been significantly reinvented in recent years.[11] The editors and authors explore the culture of the Celtic Tiger in terms of religion, cinema, television and newspapers, and of the commonly used definitions of who we are and what we are about. It is remarkable that none of the contributors refers to the central position accorded to science and technology in the dominant policy discourses of the Celtic Tiger. At that level, there is significant evidence of an attempted 'reinvention' of Ireland as a 'knowledge economy' in which science and technology play a key role.

Reinventing Ireland misses a story that properly belongs in a treatment of Irish culture in a global context. From the 1980s on, a technology imperative was argued with increasing force, requiring policy-makers, educators and citizens to apply themselves to the collective task of making this country fit for high-technology companies. Latterly—and largely due to the success, in its own terms, of this strategy—the technology imperative has given way to the knowledge, or research, imperative.

Before 1987, science and technology had sporadic recognition in government administration and policy. When significant amounts of EU money became available for research and development, Irish institutions quickly became adept at securing these funds. The strong emphasis of government programmes was on applied science and technology, which led to the establishment in the early 1990s of scientist lobbies in support of threatened basic science. The Irish Research Scientists' Association, established in 1993, played a leading part in persuading government to review scientific activities and to produce the first-ever extended statement of formal science policy in the history of the state.

On the basis of that 1996 white paper, a new policy advisory body, the Irish Council for Science, Technology and Innovation (ICSTI), was established in 1997. Just over two years later, ICSTI produced the 'Technology Foresight' report that led directly to the allocation by government of €711 million over five years to research in biotechnology and information and communication technology. In 2000, a new institution, Science Foundation Ireland (SFI), was established to oversee disbursement of these funds.

By any standards, this is remarkably rapid policy formation and implementation, and it marked a historic departure. In the name of a commitment to developing a knowledge economy, the long-standing assumption that Ireland could not reasonably expect to be a home for advanced research has been reversed. In 1995, a leading biomedical researcher could claim that 'the philosophical, religious and cultural

climate in Ireland is so hostile to the scientific method that research can never thrive here without a complete reorientation'.[12] Now, nearly €2.54 billion is due to be spent on supporting research and development over the lifetime of the National Development Plan. That this was achieved with minimum public participation, and almost no formal political debate, is further testimony to the separation of science and (political) culture in Ireland.

The 'knowledge economy', in whose name this effort is being undertaken, is a much-abused term, but it does represent some significant part of a present or emerging reality. Mental work in general and intellectual work in particular have an increasing weight in economic production; increasingly-specialised knowledge and skills are required to maintain economic processes. The production of knowledge itself assumes greater prominence and takes on new, more inclusive forms.

In the Irish government version of this thesis, the connections are made in a particular way. Announcing €71.1 million worth of SFI awards to ten principal investigators in biotechnology and information and communications technologies in July 2001, Mary Harney, Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, said:

> The underpinning of economic development by a commitment to research has been a fundamental part of industrial development strategy, and has become even more important as we enter the knowledge age. It underlines the government's commitment to achieve sustainable economic development through innovation and the creation of international competitiveness in the enterprise sector in Ireland.

Here, the production of knowledge is encapsulated in formal scientific research and its translation into technical innovation. The prevailing form of knowledge economy policy statement identifies a set of necessary and causal connections and, in the name of national competitiveness, exhorts the country to make these connections deliver the anticipated benefits.

The knowledge at issue is neither the intuitive knowledge that the arts bring nor the critical knowledge of history, philosophy, and social sciences. Rather, the knowledge economy privileges scientific knowledge. In so doing, it takes a restricted view of the possible contributions of science. In concentrating on wealth generation and national competitiveness, it downplays the possible contribution of science to improving the quality of life. Similarly, in insisting on public support for science as a means to an economic end, it ignores the contribution a greater awareness of science can make to a more active citizenship. The knowledge economy model also takes an instrumentalist

view of education, of social participation in science and technology, and of scientists' engagement with the public. Finally, the knowledge economy thesis plays down the intellectual and aesthetic stimulation of scientific activity; astronomers, oceanographers and entomologists are at least as likely to speak of the beauty of what they study as of its economic use value.

The Higher Education Authority (HEA), in a recent submission to a commission on science policy established by the ICSTI, attempted to strike a more harmonious set of notes.[13] It chose to define the national aim as an 'innovation society', relating innovation to the 'economic domain', 'social gain', and the 'personal domain'. The HEA stressed, on the one hand, the need to 'build competitive advantage based on the skills and knowledge of our people', but, on the other hand, 'the importance of investment in the creation of a vibrant research community in the humanities and social sciences, in helping us to understand and interpret our changing society'. The HEA insisted on the co-existence of utilitarian and cultural objectives for education and research.

Recent developments illustrate how far we are from such synthesis. The report of the Technology Foresight panel, which considered opportunities and needs in the biological sciences, recognised the public dimension of scientists' work in this field and called for a 'national conversation' on the applications and implications of biotechnology. By common consensus, some very difficult ethical challenges are presented by developments in human genetics. Almost equally widely shared is the view that researchers in the field are not well prepared to address those challenges. But, this awareness of the significant social aspects of developments in biotechnology has not been reflected in the SFI research programme. Similarly, the case to propel forward research on information and communication technologies is often based on the claimed social benefits of more advanced communication technologies, but research on the social adoption of these technologies is inadequate and the SFI programme makes no formal provision for it.

This fragmentation of intellectual effort is to everybody's long-term cost, although it is not unique. Carl Boggs has observed that 'the technocratic, yet fragmented world of academic life militates against development of a common public discourse within which intellectuals could address the larger philosophical and social concerns which have preoccupied human beings throughout history'.[14]

However, not all scientists and, presumably, not all academics in humanities and social sciences wish to be so constrained. The 1999 World Conference on Science, meeting under the auspices of UNESCO,

agreed a declaration on science in the twenty-first century that called for 'a vigorous and informed democratic debate on the production and use of scientific knowledge' and for 'greater interdisciplinary efforts, involving both natural and social sciences'. These were, according to the declaration, 'a prerequisite for dealing with ethical, social, cultural, environmental, gender, economic and health issues'.[15]

Internationally, scientists today show increasing interest in relationships between natural sciences and the humanities, arts and public culture. The evidence is found in papers, essays and correspondence in scientific journals and magazines, dealing with ethical, sociological, political, creative and other aspects of science. Plant scientist Nick Battey wrote that scientists should 'remember … that what we know and consider valid knowledge is dependent on language, culture, our time in history, and society'. He suggested that scientists have failed to communicate what many of them are clear about, namely that 'science is not able to answer questions about "first and last things" … [and is not] a method for being right'. Battey identified a 'hard science' position that 'overstates the claims of science and does real harm … The world revealed by science has a fissure in its soul that must be filled by the products of other human activities including literature, music, art and religion'.[16]

The late Stephen Jay Gould, a paleontologist, revived the art of the essay with his 300 contributions to the journal *Natural History*. He has described how he moved from exploiting 'humanistic components' in order to tell his science stories more effectively to a view of 'the indivisibility of these two accounts and the necessary embeddedness of "objective" knowledge within worldviews shaped by social norms and psychological hopes'.[17]

Viewed from the perspective of literature, plastic arts and humanities, the poles also seem to be converging. One of the striking literary phenomena of recent years is the emergence and great success of popular science, which has generated new genres and revived old ones. Science-and-arts initiatives find support from institutions based in the sciences, such as the Wellcome Trust or the Royal Society of Chemistry, and from those based in the arts, such as the Gulbenkian Foundation. Dramatist Michael Frayn has had international success with a play about theoretical physics; poet and essayist Hans Magnus Enzensberger achieved best-seller status for his mathematical adventure for children; and chemist Carl Djerassi, inventor of the female oral contraceptive, has written a play about oxygen. Human genome pioneer and 2002 Nobel Prize-winner John Sulston has had his portrait done in a representation of his

own DNA and has co-written a book about the ethics and politics of the human genome project.

Art historian Lisa Jardine, daughter of pioneering science populariser Jakob Bronowski, explores the similarities of artistic and scientific processes in *Ingenious Pursuits*, a study of the simultaneous flowering of arts and sciences in the Renaissance. This historical study prompts Jardine to comment that art and science are not 'two distinct practices; rather, they comprise a range of perennially familiar practices in two largely distinct, but occasionally overlapping spheres'.[18]

Even the institutions of higher education are responding. Stanford University in California has introduced a course on science in fiction; the University of Glamorgan, in Wales, has started a degree programme in science fiction, based in its department of earth sciences. These developments reflect, not least in their accumulation, a remarkable dialectical process. As awareness grows of the impact of science on all of our lives, so too awareness grows of the limits of science.

There are aspects of science in more and more of our everyday choices. An increasing number of important public issues have an explicit scientific component; blood contamination, nuclear waste transport and disposal, and 'mad cow' disease are just some of those. Scientific developments present major public issues in ethics, law and governance. The big ideas of science challenge many of our received views—and it is not for the first time that novelists and visual artists have been quicker than most to recognise this.

In these circumstances, educational institutions have a particular responsibility to address the relations between science and the national culture. To achieve some rapprochement, there needs to be recognition of the diversity of research models and of paths to research achievement. Science education should be enlarged to include the history, philosophy and communication of science. Students of all disciplines should have the opportunity to take courses in science, technology and society, with particular reference to ethical issues in science. Scientists and engineers should be more ready to accept the contribution of the humanities and social sciences to locating their disciplines in relevant contexts. 'Scientists are hardly interested in their subject's history', writes biologist Lewis Wolpert, evidently with some satisfaction.[19] But, physicist Jean-Marc Lévy-Leblond insists that 'we cannot go on behaving as if science were different from art, philosophy or literature; that is, as if it could be taught independently from history'.[20]

Artistic activities become cultural activities through critique—it is a defining characteristic of drama, music, visual arts and literature that

their public reception is part-mediated through the critic; it may be that science does not find its place in culture because it lacks that critical dimension. 'We cannot put science back in the heart of culture if we shun any critical perspective,' writes Lévy-Leblond.[21] The notion of science critic has been resisted within science, partly on the basis that scientific method and peer review contain their own critical functions and that non-scientists do not understand adequately the scientific process. However, a claim to scientific method is by no means the reserve of the natural sciences, peer review is repeatedly shown to be faulty, and physicists may understand as little or as much about biological research as do sociologists.

The increasing public importance of science makes interpreters, mediators and analysts on behalf of the public necessary. Scientific research represents a significant slice of economic activity. Whether it is funded from public exchequer or from corporate sources, there is an obligation on those who manage such funds to account for their stewardship and to facilitate public scrutiny of and participation in the policies that determine the direction of funding. These obligations bring with them a need to find ways of talking about science in the public sphere that permit such scrutiny. Even if only on the grounds of democratic accountability, the yawning gaps in public culture need to be closed.

But, there is another, perhaps less tangible, reason for seeking to renegotiate the relations between the cultures. Biologist E. O. Wilson believes that 'the greatest enterprise of the mind has always been and always will be the attempted linkage of the sciences and humanities'.[22] An arts administrator who has actively promoted collaborations between science and the visual and performing arts has suggested that the fruits of these collaborations 'somehow make us feel more whole'.[23]

Notes

[1] C. P. Snow, *The Two Cultures* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1993).

[2] G. H. Davies, 'Irish Thought in Science', in R. Kearney (ed.), *The Irish Mind— exploring intellectual traditions* (Dublin: Wolfhound Press 1985).

[3] R. Johnston, 'The government must recognise the potential of scientific research', *The Irish Times*, 13 December 1993.

[4] J. W. Foster, 'Natural History in Modern Irish Culture', in P. Bowler and N. Whyte (eds.), *Science and Society in Ireland—the social context of science and technology in Ireland, 1800–1950* (Belfast: The Institute of Irish Studies, QUB 1997).

[5] N. Whyte, *Science, Colonialism and Ireland* (Cork: Cork University Press 1999).

[6] Quoted in ibid., pp. 175–176.

[7] D. Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland* (London: Jonathan Cape 1995).

[8] S. Deane (ed.), *Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*, vols. 1–3, (Derry: Field Day Publications 1991).

[9] R. Kearney (ed.), *The Irish Mind—exploring intellectual tradition* (Dublin: Wolfhound Press 1995).

[10] T. Duddy, *A History of Irish Thought* (London: Routledge 2002).

[11] P. Kirby, L. Gibbons and M. Cronin, *Reinventing Ireland—culture, society and the global economy* (London: Pluto Press 2002).

[12] B. Harvey, 'Making Knowledge Work for us—review of the STIAC report', *The Irish Scientist Year Book* 1995.

[13] Higher Education Authority, *Creating and Sustaining an Innovation Society* (Dublin: Higher Education Authority 2002).

[14] C. Boggs, 'Intellectuals', in G. Browning, A. Halcli, F. Webster (eds.), *Understanding Contemporary Society* (London: Sage 2000).

[15] Declaration on Science and the Use of Scientific Knowledge, adopted at World Conference on Science, 1 July 1999. 12 May 2003. <www.unesco.org/science/wcs/emg/declaration_e.htm>.

[16] N. Battey, 'Science with attitude', *Science & Public Affairs* (December 1999).

[17] S. J. Gould, *The Lying Stones of Marrakesh—penultimate reflections in natural history* (London: Jonathan Cape 2000).

[18] L. Jardine, *Ingenious Pursuits—building the scientific revolution* (London: Abacus 2000).

[19] L. Wolpert, 'Arts versus science: the critical difference', *The Independent*, 25 February 2000.

[20] J.-M. Levy-Leblond, 'Two cultures or none?', *Pantaneto Forum* 8 (October 2002). 12 May 2003. <www.pantaneto.co.uk/issue8/levyleblond.htm >.

[21] J.-M. Levy-Leblond, ibid. and 'Pour une critique de la science', in his *La Pierre de touche: la science à l'épreuve* (Paris: Gallimard 1996).

[22] E. O. Wilson, *Consilience—the unity of knowledge* (London: Abacus 1998).

[23] S. Ede, 'The Truth about Art-and-Science', *Science and Public Affairs* (October 2000).

Free Speech, the Common Good and the Rights Debate

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Introduction

Arguments around free speech continue to generate controversy in Ireland. Despite a long-standing constitutional guarantee of freedom of expression, highly restrictive censorship laws remain in place. Extensive restrictions on freedom of information and speech are permitted on grounds of state security and public morality, and a climate of moral paternalism holds sway, ostensibly justified on grounds of the common good. In this essay, it is proposed to examine these key aspects of the free speech debate in an Irish context.

The constitutional guarantee of free speech

The guarantee of freedom of expression set out in Article 40.6.1.i of the Irish constitution protects 'the right of the citizens to express freely their convictions and opinions'.[1] But, this protection is limited, since 'organs of public opinion' may not be used 'to undermine public order or morality or the authority of the State'. Moreover, the article further provides that 'the publication or utterance of blasphemous, seditious or indecent matter is an offence which shall be punishable in accordance with law'. The freedom of expression is thus significantly restricted; more severely, indeed, than most other constitutional freedoms guaranteed in Articles 40–44, the 'Fundamental Rights' provisions of the constitution.

  The grudging protection offered to this vital freedom in the Irish constitution may be contrasted with the clear statement in the First Amendment to the US constitution that 'Congress shall make no law … abridging the freedom of speech or of the press'. Closer to home, the European Convention on Human Rights provides at Article 10(1), in similarly clear terms, that '[e]veryone has the freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers'. While Article 10(2) provides for a range of

conditions to which the freedom may be made subject, the language of Article 10(1) is infinitely more generous than that of its Irish equivalent.

The freedom of speech is guaranteed in virtually every international human rights instrument and in the constitution of every liberal democracy, and the protection of this vital freedom is generally regarded as necessary in order for democracy to flourish. Despite this, the freedom is never guaranteed in an absolute form and is often seen as a negative freedom (i.e. an aspect of the private sphere, in which the state should not intervene) as opposed to a positive right (the exercise of which the state should actively facilitate and enable).

The debate around free speech, whether it is expressed as a freedom or a right, tends to divide along two broad political lines. On the one hand, liberals argue for the least restrictions possible upon individual freedom of expression. In the 1960s, particularly in the USA, liberals were united around free speech, arguing against state restrictions on civil rights protests. Since then, as Fiss writes, free speech controversies over complex issues like pornography and political campaign advertising have had the effect of dividing liberals among themselves.[2]

On the other hand, those who might broadly be described as having a communitarian political outlook argue that freedom of speech must always be seen in a social or community context, so that limits upon the individual freedom are justified in accordance with the common good. Like liberals, communitarians are politically divided. They may share a similar view on the need to restrict free speech in the interests of the common good, but they differ strongly on how to define the common good. Forty years ago, the communitarian argument for restricting free speech was often couched in paternalistic terms on grounds of public morality by those from a conservative political outlook. Now, arguments for restricting free speech are also made by feminists, anti-racist campaigners and those on the political left (progressive communitarians). The tension within and between the two broadly defined political positions over free speech is reflective of political tensions over concepts of human rights generally. Such tension is apparent in the ongoing conflict between two competing ideologies evident in the very language of the Irish constitutional rights articles themselves.

The rights articles

Articles 40–44 of the constitution adhere for the most part to the traditional civil-political model, with the individual having the right to take legal action to enforce binding rights to life, liberty, private property and freedom of religion, among others. By contrast, reference to

economic and social rights is relegated to Article 45 in the provision entitled Directive Principles of Social Policy, which, as its title suggests, does not bestow rights that are enforceable.

Article 45 expresses a commitment to ensuring that 'the ownership and control of the material resources of the community may be so distributed amongst private individuals and the various classes as best to subserve the common good', but this noble phrase has been largely ignored. No court has sought directly to hold the state to its pledge to 'safeguard with especial care the economic interests of the weaker sections of the community', nor to 'protect the public against unjust exploitation'.

Articles 40–44, the enforceable rights provisions, are thus based upon a different set of values to those underlying Article 45. The rights provisions are strongly influenced by liberal-democratic values, emphasising the autonomy of the individual and ensuring the protection of classic civil and political freedoms, such as freedom of conscience (Article 44.2.1). But, equally clear, particularly in the wording of Article 45, is the influence of communitarian values, prioritising the interests of the common good. However, these communitarian values are discernibly derived from a conservative theocratic ideology, rather than from a socialist tradition, so that their effect is to bestow group rights upon the (patriarchal) family (Article 41) and to recognise this family as the 'primary and natural educator of the child' (Article 42). Rights are not bestowed on any other social group in the same way.

Thus, as Quinn writes, '[o]ur constitution pays homage to the ideology of theocracy as well as to the ideology of liberal democracy'.[3] He asserts that while the ideological tensions between these competing belief-systems were only implicit in the past, they are coming increasingly to light as 'the economic conditions come into existence that make liberal democracy a credible ideology in this country … as a market society comes to maturity'.[4] Theocratic principles have, in short, become marginalised due to increased economic prosperity and greater acceptance of a market-generated philosophy of individualism.

The resulting change has meant greater emphasis on the rights of the individual, yet the text of the constitution remains defined by the values of the 1930s, with the family still the 'natural primary and fundamental unit group of Society' (Article 41). A conflict thus persists between the rights and freedoms of the individual and of the community; and this is particularly apparent in relation to freedom of expression. Here, as outlined below, especially on grounds of state security and of public morality, the theocratic model of restrictions has continued to eclipse the liberal prioritising of free speech. From any standpoint, other than that of

a religious conservative, it is clear that at present the balance is overly weighted against individual liberties and in favour of a narrowly moralistic view as to what represents the common good.

Article 40.6.1.i

Given the central nature of the guarantee of free speech in most human rights instruments, it is surprising that since the enactment of the constitution the guarantee in Article 40.6.1.i has only rarely been judicially considered. Even where the guarantee has been invoked, the imposition of extensive censorship has been upheld as lawful in a range of different areas by the Irish courts. McGonagle writes that '[t]here have been relatively few instances of the courts invoking Article 40.6.1.i in support of media freedom'.[5] Such limited Irish case law as exists under the article has tended to emphasise the restrictions permitted upon the exercise of the freedom of expression. In 1996, the Constitution Review Group reviewed the relevant cases, concluding that 'the relative paucity of case law in this area is such that not much would be lost if [the article] were to be replaced'.[6] The group thus described the wording of the article as 'unsatisfactory' and recommended that it be replaced by a new clause modelled on Article 10 of the European Convention.

Despite this strong recommendation, no change to the constitutional guarantee appears likely, and, so, the state of free speech law in Ireland remains unsatisfactory. Restrictions continue to be permitted in a range of areas. Some are relatively uncontroversial: libel laws protect individuals' privacy rights and private reputations; contempt of court laws and restriction on the reporting of criminal proceedings protect the individual's right to a fair trial. However, more contentious are the restrictions based upon two other grounds: state security or authority and public morality.

State security

Extensive limitations on free speech are contained in legislation purportedly justified in the interest of state security. For example, section 10 of the Offences Against the State Act, 1939 makes it a criminal offence to type, print, publish, send through the post, distribute, sell or offer for sale any incriminating, treasonable or seditious document. An incriminating document means any document emanating from or appearing to emanate from an unlawful organisation; a seditious document is one which contains matter attempting to undermine the public order or the authority of the state. In *People (DPP) v. O'Leary*, a poster of a man in paramilitary uniform bearing the slogan 'IRA calls the

shots' was regarded as an incriminating document within the meaning of the Act; the defendant was convicted of the criminal offence of possession of such documents under section 12 of the Act. [7]

Further, section 4(1) of the Offences Against the State (Amendment) Act, 1972 provides that 'any public statement made orally, in writing or otherwise … that constitutes an interference with the course of justice shall be unlawful'; such a statement is unlawful if it 'is of such a character as to be likely … to influence any court, person or authority' in the conduct of any civil or criminal proceedings.

Patrick MacEntee SC has described these provisions of the Offences Against the State Acts as having 'enormous powers of control and censorship of information'.[8] Apart from these provisions, the best-known example of censorship law under this heading is contained in section 31 of the Broadcasting Act, 1960 (as amended). Section 31 provides at subsection (1) that '[w]here the Minister is of the opinion that the broadcasting of a particular matter or any matter of a particular class would be likely to promote, or incite to, crime or would tend to undermine the authority of the State, he may by order direct the Authority [RTE] to refrain from broadcasting the matter, or any matter of the particular class, and the Authority shall comply with the order'. The constitutionality of this provision was challenged in *The State (Lynch) v. Cooney*, where the minister had used the section to prohibit the transmission of election broadcasts on behalf of Provisional Sinn Féin because of that organisation's association with the Provisional IRA.[9]

The applicant succeeded before the High Court in his claim that the section conflicted with the freedom of expression guaranteed in the constitution; but he lost in the Supreme Court, which held that the freedom could be lawfully restricted in this way. Then Chief Justice O'Higgins gave a trenchant judgment in defence of the restriction, saying that the wording of Article 40.6.1.i 'places upon the State the obligation to ensure that these organs of public opinion shall not be used to undermine public order or public morality or the authority of the State. It follows that the use of such organs of opinion for the purpose of securing or advocating support for organisations which seek by violence to overthrow the State or its institutions is a use which is prohibited by the Constitution. Therefore it is clearly the duty of the State to intervene to prevent broadcasts on radio or television which are aimed at such a result or which in any way would be likely to have the effect of promoting or inciting to crime or endangering the authority of the State'.[10] Given the context of the Northern Ireland peace process, no ministerial order has been made under this section for some years, but section 31 remains

capable of being reactivated by ministerial order at any time.

Apart from the restrictions on expression created in the name of state security, there are further restrictions imposed on the basis of official privacy. The Official Secrets Act, 1963 remains the principal statute in this area. It must be signed and complied with by all holders of public office or employees of the state (civil servants, gardaí, etc.). Section 5 provides that such a person should not communicate to any third party any information related to their contract with the state or expressed therein to be confidential. According to MacEntee, writing in 1993, this act 'is an Alice in Wonderland because, while it turns on the definition of what is official information, it provides that official information is what the Minister says it is. If the Minister says it's official information, then it is official information, and that is that. The Act is so broadly drawn that any document concerning the public service can be said to be an official document by the Minister and therefore is an official document'.[11]

The highly restrictive effect of the Official Secrets legislative regime has more recently been ameliorated by the passing of the Freedom of Information Act, 1997, which, in section 6, for the first time grants a right of access to records held by public bodies. Section 48 of the Act allows a defence to any prosecution under the Official Secrets Act to any person who is authorised to provide information under the Freedom of Information regime. While the new act has only been in force for a short time, it is bringing about a change in the secretive anti-information culture previously dominant in so many government departments and public offices.

Public morality

Extensive restrictions on free speech are also permitted on public morality grounds. Article 40.6.1.i itself places great emphasis on 'public order and morality', even containing within it the extraordinary acknowledgement that '[t]he publication or utterance of blasphemous, seditious or indecent matter is an offence which shall be punishable in accordance with law'. The inclusion of a penal clause within a guarantee of free speech 'seems inappropriate', to say the least;[12] but, due to a lack of blasphemy prosecutions, this tailpiece to the article appeared to be of academic interest only until the recent case of *Corway v. Independent Newspapers*.[13] This concerned an application by the plaintiff to commence a private prosecution for blasphemous libel against the *Sunday Independent* newspaper for publishing a cartoon in the wake of the successful referendum introducing divorce in 1995 showing a priest offering communion to three government ministers, each of whom was

rejecting it. The caption read 'Hello Progress—Bye-bye Father?', a play on the anti-divorce campaigners' slogan 'Hello Divorce—Bye-bye Daddy'. The Supreme Court, however, rejected the application, holding that '[i]n the absence of any legislative definition of the constitutional offence of blasphemy, it is impossible to say of what the offence of blasphemy consists'. This decision had 'the effect of removing blasphemy from the Constitution by silent amendment'.[14]

More importantly, beyond the arcane law on blasphemy, extensive statutory restrictions on free speech on grounds of public morality also exist in the Censorship of Films Acts, 1923–70 and the Censorship of Publications Acts, 1929–67. In relation to films, the Official Censor may refuse to grant a certificate that a film is fit for public exhibition on grounds that it is 'indecent, obscene or blasphemous or because the exhibition thereof in public would tend to inculcate principles contrary to public morality or would be otherwise subversive of public morality'.[15] Under the Video Recordings Act, 1989, the censor has similar powers relating to the certification and classification of video recordings. Similarly, the legislation provides the Censorship of Publications Board with power to prohibit the sale and distribution of publications that are 'indecent or obscene' or that advocate the unnatural prevention of conception or the procurement of abortion or miscarriage.

This legislation has had a long and ignominious history, resulting in the censorship of over 1,000 books and other publications a year, among them novels by Kate O'Brien and, as recently as 1990, the English children's book *Jenny lives with Eric and Martin*.[16] It brought about the cutting and banning of countless films, including *Natural Born Killers* (refused a certificate in Ireland in October 1994, despite having been passed uncut and granted an over-18s certificate in Britain) and Monty Python's *Life of Brian* (banned in 1979 on grounds of blasphemy, but released some years later following resubmission to the censor). Infamously, a prosecution was even brought to prevent the staging of Tennessee Williams' play *The Rose Tattoo* in 1957, on the grounds that it was an 'indecent and profane' performance.[17]

Despite the highly restrictive nature of the legislation and the often absurd consequences of its application, during the years when censorship was at its height, its constitutionality was only challenged on one occasion, in *Irish Family Planning Association v. Ryan*.[18] The plaintiffs challenged a decision by the Censorship Board to ban an information booklet on birth control; the Supreme Court held against the Board, although on the narrow ground that by failing to communicate its decision to the IFPA, it had not observed the principles of natural justice.

The legislation has been applied in a particularly persistent way in the censorship of publications dealing with women's sexuality and reproductive health. Mary Kelly argues that its aim is 'to curtail the representation of female sexuality and fertility within circumscribed limits, and to control access to alternative information, images and hence choices apart from those tolerated within the relatively narrow world-view of nationalist and Catholic ideology'.[19] In 1987, the Censorship Board banned Dr. Alex Comfort's educational book *The Joy of Sex*; and, in 1989, the Board ordered the British women's magazine *Cosmopolitan* to withdraw its advertisements for abortion clinics or face a ban on distribution in Ireland. This latter ban led to a rash of self-imposed censorship, with another English magazine removing an information supplement on abortion from its Irish editions in 1990 and public libraries removing books on women's health from their shelves.[20] Other censorship was judicially imposed: in the Open Door Counselling case, the Supreme Court held that where counsellors gave pregnant women in Ireland information about abortion services lawfully available in England, they were breaching the constitutional right to life of 'the unborn'.[21] This decision led to further self-imposed censorship, so that students' unions were for many years the only agencies providing such information to women, until the law was finally changed following political campaigns around the X case.[22]

In more recent years, as social attitudes towards sexuality have changed and information on abortion has been made more widely available, the censors have become less proactive in imposing such outlandish bans. The issue of moral or sexual censorship has effectively gone off the political agenda, although information on reproductive health remains difficult to access for many women. However, the debate resurfaced briefly in the summer of 2002, when the Butler Gallery in Kilkenny was told that, under the Censorship of Films Act, 1923, it would need a censor's certificate before an exhibition of well-known artist Paul McCarthy's sexually explicit video works could be shown in public. In order to get around this problem, the gallery closed the exhibition temporarily, then reopened it as a 'club' for members only.

This ludicrous case has very disturbing implications for the public exhibition of art in the medium of film and video in Ireland. The 1923 Act provides that '[n]o picture shall be exhibited in public by means of a cinematograph or similar apparatus unless and until the Official Censor has certified that the whole of such picture is fit for exhibition in public'. The censor may refuse a certificate if, in his or her view, 'such picture or some part thereof is unfit for general exhibition in public by reason of its

being indecent, obscene or blasphemous or because the exhibition thereof in public would tend to inculcate principles contrary to public morality … '.

Thus, according to a strict interpretation, the need for censor's certification applies to all public film showings, whether in cinemas or galleries. Although the application of censorship law in arthouse cinemas had already been an issue at the time of the ban on *Natural Born Killers*, the showing of art films in galleries had simply been ignored until this incident. The Kilkenny experience disrupted this state of blissful ignorance; but, the disruption did have a positive effect, leading to a renewed debate around the outdated censorship laws.[23]

Many argued that those working in the arts did not seize the opportunity to change the law; the danger was that a self-censorship culture would develop, with galleries refusing work that might be deemed indecent, for fear of being denied certification. Indeed, challenging shows like McCarthy's are still rare in Ireland, perhaps because such a culture already exists. Interestingly, while it is unthinkable now that Kate O'Brien's novels might be banned, or a Tennessee Williams play be the subject of a criminal prosecution, the application of censorship legislation to visual art remains an issue.

Given the continued application of outdated censorship laws, it may legitimately be said that a culture of censorship has developed in Ireland, based upon a particularly theocratic notion of what constitutes the common good. The challenge for progressive communitarians is how to redefine the common good so as to ensure that freedom of expression is more strongly protected and limited only according to a set of consistent criteria, a rational definition of what constitutes the common good that does not bring about the repression of women's sexuality or the muzzling of artistic expression.

Progressive communitarian definitions of the 'common good'

It is very difficult to devise a consistent progressive communitarian definition of the common good. Such a task may only be possible if free speech is viewed through a prism of equality or in a way that takes account of the imbalance of power in social structures. In this way, the law would presume that no restrictions on free speech are permitted. Where such a restriction was proposed, its implications would always be examined for their effect on upholding or challenging structural inequalities in society. This approach would test how freedom of expression affects social equality, in order to come up with a definition of the common good in each case where it was proposed to use it as a basis

for restricting expression. The question would be whether the exercise of the freedom amounted to an abuse of power by a stronger group or individual.

Such an approach would be greatly facilitated if the constitutional guarantee of freedom of expression were explicitly made subject to a core norm of equality. Equality before the law is guaranteed in Article 40.1 of the Irish constitution, but is subject to extensive restrictions and has been interpreted conservatively by the courts. This may be contrasted with the provisions of the 1996 South African Constitution, a document drafted, and recently enacted, in line with a progressive communitarian ideology. Unlike the Irish constitution, the South African charter seeks to protect socio-economic rights, some of which are as directly enforceable as the right to free speech. These include the right to basic education, the right not to be refused emergency medical treatment, and the right of a child to basic nutrition, shelter, basic health care services and social services. All of these are guaranteed in accordance with the principle of equality, and equality is the first substantive right guaranteed in the Bill of Rights.[24] Article 9 of the South African constitution provides that: '(1) Everyone is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection and benefit of the law; (2) Equality includes the full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms. To promote the achievement of equality, legislative and other measures designed to protect or advance persons, or categories of persons, disadvantaged by unfair discrimination may be taken'.[25]

Article 39 provides that, when interpreting the Bill of Rights, courts 'must promote the values that underlie an open and democratic society based on human dignity, equality and freedom'. Because equality is a core norm in the context of which other rights must always be seen, the freedom of expression guarantee in Article 16 explicitly provides that this protection does not extend to 'a. propaganda for war; b. incitement of imminent violence; or c. advocacy of hatred that is based on race, ethnicity, gender or religion, and that constitutes incitement to cause harm'.

But, while Article 16 may answer the question as to what sort of speech should be limited by common good criteria in a secular pluralist republic, it also specifies certain forms of individual expression as particularly in need of protection. It provides a general guarantee that '[e]veryone has the right to freedom of expression', and then states that this includes: 'a. freedom of the press and other media; b. freedom to receive or impart information or ideas; c. freedom of artistic creativity; and d. academic freedom and freedom of scientific research'.

It is argued that, from a socialist perspective, this formula amounts to a careful balancing of interests. Potentially vulnerable forms of expression, the free exercise of which are essential in any functioning democracy, are explicitly protected. Equally, forms of expression potentially harmful to the common good, which may cause harm or allow invidious discrimination against certain groups, are explicitly excluded from constitutional protection. Expression is always seen in the context of power. Where a group or class of persons is disempowered and needs society's protection in some way, then stronger groups should not be permitted to use the freedom of expression to abuse the power imbalance. Such balancing of interests may most easily be carried out in a context where equality is a core norm. But, even where it is not explicitly guaranteed as such, in practice an equality test is used to justify different types of restriction on free speech in every democratic society; democracy is premised on equality, and true liberty depends on equality of means to participate fully in society.

Justifying restrictions: the equality test

Even in the USA, where free speech is generally seen as a core norm, regulation of free speech is regarded as necessary in the form of controls on political campaign spending and advertising. Fiss describes such controls as exemplifying 'the tension between capitalism and democracy'; he writes about how the free speech decisions of the US courts in the 1970s allowed capitalism to win. In striking down legislative controls on election spending, the decisions served to 'impoverish rather than enrich public debate and thus threatened one of the essential preconditions for an effective democracy'.[26] In other words, controls on political access to the media during elections are necessary in order to preserve an equal and democratic system.

In the same way, arguments for regulating advertising—prohibiting the advertisement of tobacco-based products, for example—can be based on an equality premise: that potential harm might be caused to vulnerable or disempowered members of the community were companies to have unfettered rights to advertise their products. It is possible to justify other restrictions on freedom of expression in the same way. Prohibitions on hate speech, child pornography, or on the right to march through sensitive areas in Northern Ireland may mean encroaching upon freedom of expression, but in a way justified in the interests of protecting weaker members of society from harm caused by abuse of power. Conversely, the application of the equality test would not justify restrictions on freedom of expression which cause the banning of sexually explicit

artwork in galleries or prevent access by pregnant women to relevant medical information. This is because neither the display of explicit art nor the provision of abortion information encroaches upon the rights of disempowered groups. Thus, a reframing of free speech in the context of equality and of social power is possible.

In many jurisdictions, the equality test is often applied in practice to justify restrictions upon 'hate speech'—speech promoting or inciting racial discrimination. This type of speech is explicitly excluded from protection in Article 16 of the South African Constitution and in the laws of many democratic states. In Ireland, although there has been little debate around hate speech, its restriction in the interests of the common good was accepted as necessary in the Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act, 1989. This forbids the publication, distribution or broadcast of material intended to stir up hatred against a group of persons on account of their race, ethnicity or nationality, religion, sexual orientation or membership of the Traveller community.

Like hate speech, pornography is also seen by many as harmful to the common good, but its prohibition is not so routinely accepted by progressive communitarians. The censorship legislation discussed above, with its emphasis on prohibiting obscene and indecent material, represents a form of legal moralism or paternalism, based on concern about the moral welfare of citizens. Most progressive people would argue for its repeal. But, new legislation criminalising child pornography, introduced more recently, is based on a more tangible concern, i.e. that such material involves the causing of actual harm to children and should be prohibited to protect this especially vulnerable group. The Child Trafficking and Pornography Act, 1998 introduced a new criminal framework for the possession, production or distribution of child pornography. Until its enactment, neither possession of child pornography, nor taking indecent photographs, nor making sexual video recordings of children were criminal offences, so long as no assault was involved. Again, few communitarians or, indeed, liberals, would question the pressing need for, or the ideological basis of, the new legislation.

The debate about adult pornography and whether it should be seen as harmful to adult women in the same way is more complex. Here, Irish law remains mired in a state of moral paternalism. Elsewhere, however, feminists have been seeking change in pornography laws to reflect the harm/equality perspective. As O'Malley writes, anti-pornography feminists are effectively united with the moralist/conservative position in seeking a ban on such pornography, although, of course, they differ from the conservatives in terms of their reasons for such a prohibition.[27]

Feminist anti-pornography arguments are based upon the concept that pornography causes real harm to real women—that it amounts to discrimination against women. As MacKinnon says, 'protecting pornography means protecting sexual abuse *as* speech, at the same time that both pornography and its protection have deprived women *of* speech, especially speech against sexual abuse'.[28] But the feminist movement is divided on this issue: Nadine Strossen, for example, has written a strong critique of what she describes as MacKinnon and Dworkin's 'pro-censorship' approach. She argues that the effect of their campaign against pornography is to blame the words and images that make up pornography for the social fact of violence against women and so to overlook the root causes of 'complex, troubling societal problems'.[29]

Conclusion

Feminists (and progressive communitarians) are divided on approaches to pornography and whether it can be restricted on the basis of applying an equality test. This is perhaps the most difficult free speech issue, since it would always be a matter of contention as to whether particular pornography amounted to discrimination against women; the definition of pornography is itself contentious.

   The application of an equality test wherever restrictions on speech are proposed might not resolve that most difficult free speech issue of pornography, but it would go some way to solving what has always been the principal problem with free speech for progressive communitarians. The fact is that laws favouring freedom of expression have consistently permitted the dominance of the individual interest over the collective, the victory of capitalism over democracy. The left and the women's movement need to reclaim freedom of speech by placing it within the equality context, so that it becomes a right that must always be seen in a constitutional framework in which equality is the core norm. As MacKinnon argues, we require 'a new model for freedom of expression in which the free speech position no longer supports social dominance, as it does now; in which free speech does not most readily protect the activities of Nazis, Klansmen and pornographers, while doing nothing for their victims, as it does now; in which defending free speech is not speaking on behalf of a large pile of money in the hands of a small group of people, as it is now'.[30]

   As progressive communitarians, as feminists, and as socialists, we can only reclaim free speech when equality becomes the core norm. Then, expression would no longer be only a liberal freedom, a marking of private territory upon which the public sphere should not encroach.

Rather, it could be seen as a positive right, the exercise of which the state would facilitate where necessary to empower those disadvantaged in society and restrict only where necessary to prevent abuse of power by dominant groups. This approach to free speech would protect the interests of those who are genuinely not free to speak, due to economic or social conditions, and could ensure a greater harmony between the right to free speech and the core norm of equality in democratic societies.

Notes

[1] *Constitution of Ireland—Bunreacht na hÉireann* (Dublin: Stationery Office 2000). The full text of Article 40.6.I.i reads:

'The State guarantees liberty for the exercise of the following rights, subject to public order and morality: i. The right of citizens to express freely their convictions and opinions.

The education of public opinion being, however, a matter of such grave import to the common good, the State shall endeavour to ensure that organs of public opinion, such as the radio, the press, the cinema, while preserving their rightful liberty of expression, including criticism of Government policy, shall not be used to undermine public order or morality or the authority of the State.

The publication or utterance of blasphemous, seditious, or indecent matter is an offence which shall be punishable in accordance with law'.

[2] O. Fiss, *Liberalism Divided: Freedom of Speech and the Many Uses of State Power* (Boulder & Oxford: Westview Press, 1996).

[3] G. Quinn, 'The Nature and Significance of Critical Legal Studies', (1989) *Irish Law Times* 282.

[4] Ibid., p. 282.

[5] M. McGonagle, *A Textbook on Media Law* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan 1996), p. 23.

[6] *Report of the Constitution Review Group* (Dublin: Government Publications 1996), p. 292.

[7] (1988) 3 Frewen 163.

[8] P. MacEntee, 'Publish and be Banned', in P. Smyth & E. Hazelkorn (eds.), *Let in the Light: Censorship, Secrecy and Democracy* (Dingle: Brandon Press 1993), p.113.

[9] [1983] ILRM 89.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid., pp. 114–5.

[12] S. Ranalow, 'Bearing a Constitutional Cross: Examining Blasphemy and the Judicial Role in *Corway v. Independent Newspapers*', (2000) 3 *Trinity College Law Review* 95, p. 95.

[13] Supreme Court, 30 July 1999.

[14] Ranalow, op. cit., p. 109.

[15] Section 7 (2), Censorship of Films Act, 1923.

[16] S. Bosche, *Jenny lives with Eric and Martin* (London: Gay Men's Press 1983).

[17] *AG v. Simpson* (1959) 93 ILTR 33. For a detailed commentary on the case, see G. Whelan and C. Swift, *Spiked: Church-State Intrigue and the Rose Tattoo* (Dublin: New Island 2002).

[18] [1979] I.R. 295.

[19] M. Kelly, 'Censorship and the Media', in A. Connelly, *Gender and the Law in*

Ireland (Dublin: Oak Tree Press 1993), p. 185.

[20] See McGonagle, op. cit., p. 234–5.

[21] *AG (SPUC) v. Open Door Counselling Ltd* [1988] I.R. 593.

[22] *AG v. X* [1991] I.R. 1. Following this decision a constitutional referendum was passed in November 1992 allowing the freedom to give information on abortion. The Regulation of Information (Services Outside the State for Termination of Pregnancies) Act, 1995 was then enacted providing for the conditions under which such information may be given by counsellors, doctors, etc.

[23] See, for example, H. Linehan, 'Calling the Censor to Account', *Irish Times*, 18 November 2002.

[24] South African Constitution, chapter II.

[25] South African Constitution.

[26] O. Fiss, op. cit., pp. 10–11.

[27] T. O'Malley, *Sexual Offences: Law, Policy and Punishment* (Dublin: Round Hall 1996), p. 417.

[28] C. MacKinnon, *Only Words* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press 1993), p. 6.

[29] N. Strossen, *Defending Pornography: Free Speech, Sex and the Fight for Women's Rights* (London: Abacus 1995), p. 279.

[30] MacKinnon, op. cit., p. 109.

A Sense of Place: Travellers, Representation, and Irish Culture

PAUL DELANEY

In the closing pages of his memoir, *The Road to God Knows Where*, the late Sean Maher sounded an almost apocalyptic note. Recalling a Traveller life that had been characterised by traditional associations with the road, Maher lamented 'that soon this simplicity would be no more, that a people, a language and a culture would die in this horrible, modern world'.[1] Maher's remarks were made in 1972 and were set against a backdrop of increased industrialisation and urban development; evidently, they were also informed by the findings of the 1963 Report of the Commission on Itinerancy. Established by the Lemass administration, this report had sought to identify and solve 'the problems of itinerancy' in Ireland; its recommendations shaped official policy for decades to come. The report famously found that there was no alternative to housing 'if a permanent solution to the problems of itinerancy, based on absorption and integration is to be achieved'.[2] It goes without saying that *The Road to God Knows Where* and the report of the commission were directed towards very different ends—the former text was supportive of a nomadic lifestyle, for instance, in ways that the latter was not. However, when the two texts are read alongside each other, one could argue that they both prompt questions which are central to discussions with and about the Irish Travellers.

Both texts are concerned with ascribing the Travellers a 'place' in modern Ireland, for example. Whereas Maher is anxious that changes in the base of the economy might result in the annihilation of an entire community (with Travellers apportioned no place to go), the reporters for the commission appear worried that, unless changes are brought about and Travellers are 'settled', this community will continue to remain marginal to the interests of Irish society (they will remain 'with-out', both literally and figuratively). Both texts also attempt to explore the often fraught relationship that has existed between the Traveller and the settled communities in Ireland. For Maher, this relationship had become

increasingly uneasy by the early 1970s, to the point where it threatened the very existence of the Travellers; for the commission, the relationship had always been problematic and could only ever be resolved through strategies of assimilation and economic redress. Clearly, Maher's *Road to God Knows Where* and the report of the commission were underwritten with opposing aspirations—they were concerned respectively with the survival and eclipse of what Maher was to term 'a people'. In the pages that follow, I want to suggest that Maher's use of this term bears some relevance for the philosophy of republicanism (keeping in mind the fact that republicanism is founded upon the concepts of *res publica* and 'the people' and that it privileges principles of democracy and citizenship), and I want to suggest this by drawing particular reference to questions of representation and culture.

In the inaugural issue of this journal, Liam O'Dowd distinguished between nationalist and republican thinking by remarking that 'the question for nationalists is who belongs to the nation?; for republicans, it is who are the people?'[3] This distinction is both succinct and suggestive and should be kept in mind in the course of this brief essay. At the same time, it will be useful to remember Daltún Ó Ceallaigh's rejoinder, also included in a previous number of this journal, concerning the compatibility and interplay between nationalist and republican positions.[4] Ó Ceallaigh drew attention to the national *and* international dimensions of republican thought and warned against imagining too ready a division between nationalism and republicanism; he argued this through reference to what he perceived were the different evocations of nationalism, which, in turn, are expressive of fundamentalist, conservative, liberal, and/or socialist concerns. Ó Ceallaigh's point is derived from recent comparative studies that have discerned a historical ambiguity at the heart of the nationalist project. This ambiguity has been used to point towards a characteristic 'double-poise' in political nationalism—as it looks forwards and backwards, to modernity and the archaic, and as it threatens to always slip between emancipation and aggression (in the fight against imperialism, for instance, but also in maintaining strategies of exclusion and underdevelopment). It is worthwhile to explore these issues a little further. The Marxist critic Tom Nairn, for example, has argued that 'all nationalism is both healthy and morbid', since 'progress and regress are inscribed in it … from the start. This is a structural fact about it. And it is a fact to which there are no exceptions'.[5] Significantly, this sense of ambiguity has been used to distinguish between ethnic and civic forms of nationalism.

This distinction can be summarised briefly: ethnic nationalism has been

defined as a collective form of identification that is based upon the significance of an almost mystical *ethnie*—that is to say, a racial essence, which grounds identity in exclusive and inherited characteristics. Civic nationalism, by contrast, has been thought to stress the importance of fluidity and self-awareness in the make-up of any populace and to understand the basic idea of the nation in terms of an imagined community of citizens living in a prescribed geographical space (a classic literary example of this being advanced by Bloom in the 'Cyclops' section of *Ulysses*). Ethnic nationalism, it is argued, frustrates the potential for any form of development and inevitably leads to states of exclusion and paralysis, whilst civic nationalism is alive to change and allows for expansive conditions of citizenship and cultural inclusivity. ('What is your nation if I may ask, says the citizen.—Ireland, says Bloom. I was born here. Ireland'.) Distinguishing between these formulations, students of nationalism have, nonetheless, also remarked that *all* nationalist projects share to varying degrees in ethnic and civic ambitions. For example, Nairn, once again, has warned against delineating too easily between good and bad forms of nationalism, arguing that a regressive/progressive ambiguity is inherent within all nationalist formations, since 'forms of irrationality' and prejudice 'stain' their founding principles.[6]

I want to suggest that such theories confound any clear-cut republican-nationalist division. Returning to O'Dowd's thesis, for instance, one is reminded of the claim that nationalists traditionally ask 'who belongs to the nation?', whereas, republicans ponder 'who are the people?'. Rehearsing this claim in the light of ethnic and civic formations, it could be argued that civic nationalism transgresses O'Dowd's implicit either/or logic by raising questions of belonging *and* engaging with issues of citizenship—civic nationalism subjects the conditions for belonging to scrutiny, for instance, and does this through an interrogation of the concept of 'the people'. How this concept is defined, whether it incorporates marginal as well as dominant forms of identity ('a people' … 'the people'), how it negotiates with ideas of difference, and whether it manages to represent marginal interests within an inclusive or participatory model of democracy—all of these issues are vital to the projects of republicanism *and* civic nationalism, and all of these questions are raised in cultural representations of the Travellers.

As much is suggested in the titles—and also in the underlying arguments—of two comparatively recent texts: Jim Mac Laughlin's *Travellers and Ireland: Whose Country, Whose History?* and *Travellers: Citizens of Ireland*, which was compiled by the Parish of the Travelling

People.[7] Mac Laughlin's text is interesting, here, since it attests to the extent to which the Travellers have been traditionally precluded from discussions of modern Ireland. Although Travellers are occasionally included in the pages of Irish literature (in works by Synge, Yeats, Lady Gregory, Pádraic Ó Conaire, Thomas MacDonagh, Liam O'Flaherty, and Bryan MacMahon, amongst others), most canonical historical texts, by nationalist and revisionist scholars alike, have excluded all mention of this vulnerable minority. Indeed, on the rare occasions when the Travellers have been included within the index of Irish history, it has typically been in the guise of non-agents or passive recipients of the historical process—either as extra-national vagrants, for instance, or as victims of evictions, plantations, and the great famine. The consensus, as Patricia McCarthy once suggested, has been that the fight for independence 'was not theirs and did not involve them', since they were too personally preoccupied by the struggle for survival to appreciate a conflict that was based on ideology or long-term ambition.[8] Such readings have been used to authorise and foreclose discussions about the Travellers' non-involvement in the course of Irish history. (This is despite the fact that alternative references to the agency of Travellers do exist—a celebrated instance being provided by Nan Joyce, when she alluded to the involvement of some families in the smuggling of arms during the revolutionary period.[9]) Such readings have also been used to deny Travellers a place in Irish society and to see them, rather, as an irritant and an anachronism in the modern nation state.

A counterblast to all of this was provided in *Travellers: Citizens of Ireland*. Acknowledging the social and cultural importance of Travellers to Irish society, the contributors to this volume advanced the need for an acceptance of the rights and the responsibilities of Travellers as citizens of the republic. The double-stressed nature of this demand, for rights *and* responsibilities, evoked principles that are implicit in any understanding of civic politics and was founded upon a spirit of protection and public accountability—quite simply, it recognised that Travellers have duties to live up to as well as rights to claim. The contributors argued that such recognition was reliant on an engagement with and a reassessment of the Travellers by members of the settled populace. According to the contributors, settled society needs to rethink the ways in which it approaches the Travelling community—a previous edition of this book was appropriately entitled *Do You Know Us At All?* and focused precisely on this issue. For one thing, members of the settled republic need to recognise that Traveller identity is not determined by a history of dispossession—it is not characterised by a subculture of poverty, it is not descendant from

those who took to the roads during the Famine, and it is not desirous of some form of resettlement, as the report of the commission originally advanced. Instead, settled society needs to review its attitude to the complexities of nomadism, accommodation, and difference and to accept that Travellers are fellow-citizens, with a distinct cultural identity and a legitimate ethnic inheritance. It has been argued that such an acceptance would provide the necessary safeguards for the protection of Traveller rights—and that this, in turn, should provide a further incentive for Traveller groups to address questions of civic responsibility.

It goes without saying, however, that this is a controversial issue, which has been contested in political circles, and that the question of rights and responsibilities has been appropriated by various elements of the media and used to signify a variety of different purposes. For example, in the aftermath of a rather notorious incident on the banks of the Dodder in 2001 (when damage at an illegal halting site provoked public outrage and cost the local council a substantial sum), a number of broadsheets chose to discuss Traveller-settled relations under this banner. Many papers, including *The Sunday Business Post*, for instance, editorialised on a supposed 'imbalance between the rights of the Travellers and those of the settled community' and warned that this imbalance 'has created a scenario that is ripe for exploitation'.[10] It was suggested that this imbalance stemmed from an inability to weigh the rights of the settled community (to private property and recourse to the law) against the responsibilities of Travellers (to abide by the rule of law and respect ownership rights). By focusing on these responsibilities, the vital issue of Traveller rights was slighted and was seen rather as part of the perennial excuse of law-breakers and politically correct interest groups. What is more, by alluding to the supposed threat of invasion and exploitation and by drawing upon a language of excess and misrule, the papers discursively demonised an already poorly represented section of the populace—a section that has been historically represented according to type (Travellers are often represented as pariahs, blackguards, tricksters, or thieves, for example) and whose needs have traditionally remained undocumented in Irish politics and print culture.[11]

As suggested, the stress on responsibility obscured important concerns relating to Traveller rights and needs, and these rights and needs must be recognised urgently. The sense of urgency in this matter can, perhaps, be best gauged through reference to a series of statistics which, although neither complete nor entirely up-to-date, are shocking to a contemporary mind. The lives which underlie these statistics must be brought to bear witness to a very real division in modern Ireland—a division which not

only revolves around 'the haves and the have-nots', but which is expressive of an insistent rupture 'between rhetoric and reality' in the Irish psyche. Colm Walsh has traced aspects of this division in an earlier issue of this journal and has remarked on how the core principles of republicanism (liberty, equality, fraternity) continue to hold a paradoxical significance for many in the modern-day republic.[12] Without wishing to reiterate all of Walsh's argument, it is worth recalling his central premise: that although a belief in liberty, equality, and fraternity is vaunted and cherished by many members of the settled populace, it is nonetheless constantly flouted in relations with the Travelling community.

What statistics are available bear this out and make for appalling reading. In terms of health, for instance, it is known that Travellers have specific requirements that are in need of pressing consideration: infant mortality rates among Travellers remain substantially higher (three times) than the national average, and Traveller men and women continue to have a much lower life expectancy than other members of the Irish populace—it is reckoned that only 5% of Travellers live to the age of 50 and 1% to 65. In the area of education, literacy levels remain disproportionately lower among Traveller adults and children, and the numbers of children who make their way through the educational system is fractional. (It is thought that six thousand Traveller children attended primary school in 1999; the same year, one thousand were in their first year at secondary school, and only a handful were in their final year.) Moreover, in terms of accommodation, many Traveller families live in dangerous, unhealthy, or substandard conditions, and a sizeable proportion live without access to basic services such as water, electricity, toilets, and refuse collection; according to Pavee Point, a significant number of families still live on the roadside, without access to any of these facilities. All of this flies in the face of the recommendations of the 1995 Report of the Task Force on the Travelling Community. The task force (a broad-based inter-party group and a liberal-minded successor to the 1963 Commission on Itinerancy) recommended that over 3,000 units of accommodation should be provided for Travellers by the year 2000; only 127 of these units were ready by that time. Since then—and notwithstanding the obligations that have been placed on local authorities under the 1998 Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act—the number of units remains derisory, and many Traveller families continue to live without provision on illegal or unofficial halting sites. The condition of these families has grown all the more uncertain with the recent passage of the controversial Trespass Bill.[13]

Many organisations, including the Irish Traveller Movement and Pavee Point, have argued that this bill is assimilationist in strategy and discriminates against Travellers by criminalising the practice of nomadism. The basis of their argument rests on the woefully inadequate number of appropriate and serviced halting sites that are available for Traveller families. If there are so few sites available, it is asked, then where can Travellers go without breaking the laws of trespass? Are Travellers required to accept some form of housing?, and, if they do, can they still claim access to a discrete sense of identity? Is Traveller identity dependent upon patterns of mobility?, and, if so, should one describe those who move into housing (on either a temporary or a long-term basis) as having been successfully assimilated or settled? That, to recall the closing lines of *The Road to God Knows Where*, was Sean Maher's abiding fear—that, apart from everything else, a people would cease to exist as a result of some kind of settlement. That was also the guiding principle behind the report of the 1963 commission—that there was no alternative to housing 'if a permanent solution to the problems of itinerancy … [was] to be achieved'. Such claims continue to be heard in popular and political thought: for instance, they are often used to militate against any claims that might be made on behalf of the legitimacy of Traveller culture; they are also used to denigrate Traveller identity and to describe the Traveller life in terms of custom and class rather than ethnicity. (Custom being understood as the simplification and mummification of culture, or as something dead rather than alive, according to Frantz Fanon.[14]) According to such arguments, nomadism is an aberration in modern Ireland and should be discontinued since it is without any genuine cultural value or lasting significance. Indeed, and as the Travellers practise it, it is often considered a deterioration of the truly nomadic practices that are carried out by other, more legitimate groups, like the Roma.

One could retort, however, that such arguments misconstrue the complex and vibrant significance of nomadism to Traveller life. It has been claimed by Traveller activists, for instance, that nomadism says 'everything about Travellers', and that it is 'vital to our survival' as a distinct people.[15] It is significant that the idea of nomadism that is evoked in such discussions is fluid and vital: it incorporates Travellers who are housed, as well as Travellers who live by the road, and it signifies a way of thinking about the world, as much as a way of living through it. Indeed, many Travellers are at pains to point out that nomadism is not restricted to those who live in caravans or on halting sites—it is not dependent upon acts of physical movement, they argue, but, rather, it is

suggestive of a certain mindset and an approach to life. This is not to romanticise the concept of nomadism, but to suggest that nomadism is an intrinsic part of Traveller identity and the Traveller psyche. Jean-Pierre Liégeois, the acclaimed Roma scholar, has diagnosed the situation as follows: 'whereas a sedentary person remains sedentary, even when travelling, the Traveller is a nomad, even when he (or she) does not travel. Immobilised, he (or she) remains a Traveller'.[16]

Such thinking deconstructs a division that is often supposed to exist between housed and camping Travellers—this division holds sway in popular discourse and has been regularly depicted in fiction and in film. (In Mary Ryan's *Into the West*, for instance, it is only after Papa Riley leaves the house into which he has tried to settle that he rediscovers his identity as a true Traveller.) By breaking down these divisions, one is able to comment on the various ambiguities and contradictions with which issues of accommodation have been historically riddled. Moreover, by breaking down absolute distinctions between mobility and housing (whereby one is designated *either* settled *or* nomadic), one is able to touch on a wealth of interrelated questions and explore some of the greyer areas in intra-Traveller behaviour—such as the lived experience of shared housing and the fact that many housed families still take to the road at certain times of the year. Breaking down this distinction also allows one to note a rather paradoxical phenomenon. According to recent work by Jane Helleiner, housed or so-called settled Travellers are often more mobile than those who live by the road, since the latter group are often worried about losing access to facilities and forfeiting their right to a site if they choose to travel.[17]

Nomadism, then, should be considered a complex practice that incorporates sedentary and migrant forms of behaviour—it is a practice that is inscribed with a profound material and emotional significance, and it provides for a close arrangement of social, economic, cultural, psychological, and familial activities. Indeed, many of the defining features of Traveller society are determined by some kind of commitment to a nomadic lifestyle. The continued commitment to the idea of the extended family, for instance, relies in part on the idea of travel. As Martin McDonagh has explained it, 'keeping up with news, building contacts, strengthening relationships—these are all strong reasons for travelling: the pull factors for nomadism'.[18] In addition, there are the push factors that also prompt travel and that incorporate a range of external and internal pressures—if Travellers are sometimes moved on by local authorities, for example, they also take to the road to avoid conflict with other families or groups. According to McDonagh, this is of

'major importance' for the well being of Traveller society since it can prevent inter-family disputes from escalating into something far more serious. Economic factors, of course, also contribute to the store of pull factors. For instance, traditional work-practices (such as horse-dealing, metalwork, trading, hawking, and harvesting) largely depended upon patterns of seasonal movement and allowed the Travellers to remain a typically self-employed people. Although many of these practices have died out, as a result of the mechanisation of the land and the introduction of plastic, the Traveller economy still stresses the value of self-reliance and incorporates a choice of occupations that call for some measure of mobility (including scrap, recycling, tarmacking, dealing, and hawking). All of which is to say that nomadism—for all its ambiguities and ironies—remains vital to the structural identity of Traveller society.

Nomadism is a complex practice, which has ambiguous links with many of the predominant ways of living and thinking in the republic. Its conflation of sedentary and migratory habits notably transgresses what was once a founding principle of life in the Irish state: the primacy of a territorialised identity and the importance of rootedness and kinship with the land. Moreover, nomadism is a vibrant concept, which has changed much of its material existence in accordance with the demands of historical circumstance. It continues to be a living principle and is of vital significance to the cultural identity, rather than the customary behaviour, of Traveller society. Dealings with the Travelling community need to engage with the implications and the complexities of nomadism and to accept it as the legitimate basis for another form of identity. Much of the legal groundwork for such an acceptance has already been put in place in the recommendations of the 1995 *Report of the Task Force on the Travelling Community*; these recommendations need to be enshrined and enforced, in order to protect the health, the promise, and the identity of a very small native community. (It is estimated that there are approximately twenty-five thousand Travellers in Ireland.) Without romanticising the issue, it could be argued that such an acceptance would help society at large to move beyond the anomalous impasse that was recently noted by Seán Ó Riain, whereby settled society was seen to object to the provision of facilities for Travellers, whilst also complaining about conditions at halting sites.[19] It might help people to realise that issues of rights and responsibilities are intimately linked, and it might also help to advance calls for a greater recognition of Travellers as citizens of modern Ireland. The suitable provision of accommodation, health-care, and educational facilities, for example, and the setting up of more appropriate schemes of training and employment might help to

provide more apposite modes of accountability and assist in the promotion of a greater sense of civic belonging.

   For too long, Travellers have been represented as the ghosts of an earlier form of existence—this is an idea which underpins Maher's reflections, and it is an idea which was iterated by John Millington Synge, almost a hundred years ago, when he lamented that the Irish Travellers were representative of a way of life that 'we have all missed who have been born in modern Europe'.[20] This idea needs to be confronted. Instead of describing the Travellers as the leftovers of an earlier age—and dismissing them, accordingly, as the remnants of some kind of 'remaindered community'—artists, commentators, and critics need to engage with the significance of the contemporary presence of the Travelling community.[21] They must engage with the various needs, problems, and promises that have been prompted by the history of Traveller-settled relations. (Peter Brady's richly textured novel *Paveewhack* provides a daring example of what might be attempted.) They also need to examine what implications, if any, the presence of the Travellers has for broader discussions of Irish culture. Do claims for the legitimacy of Traveller culture, based on the importance of nomadism, for instance, help to break open any homogenous conception of Irish identity and Irish culture? Do they help to promote the realisation that the concept of culture is always contested, dissonant, and vibrant?; do they represent marginal interests in an inclusive fashion?; do they provide a viable place for Travellers in the modern state?; and do they point towards a model of identity which is defined civically not ethnically? Ultimately, perhaps, one might ask whether these claims provide the necessary space for more critical representations of and by Travellers in contemporary Ireland?

Notes

[1] Sean Maher, *The Road to God Knows Where: A Memoir of a Travelling Boyhood* (2nd ed.) (Dublin: Veritas 1998), p. 164. The Talbot Press originally published Maher's memoirs in 1972.

[2] *Report of the Commission on Itinerancy* (Dublin: Stationery Office 1963), p. 62.

[3] Liam O'Dowd, 'The Changing World Order and the Republican Ideal in Ireland', *The Republic*, no. 1 (June 2000), p. 29.

[4] Daltún Ó Ceallaigh, 'Republicanism and Nationalism: An Imagined Conflict', *The Republic*, no. 2 (Spring/Summer 2001), pp. 138–143.

[5] Tom Nairn, 'The Modern Janus', *New Left Review* 94 (November–December 1975), p. 17. For a more recent discussion, see Tom Nairn, *Faces of Nationalism: Janus Revisited* (London: Verso 1997).

[6] Nairn, 'The Modern Janus', op. cit., pp. 8 & 18.

[7] Jim Mac Laughlin, *Travellers and Ireland: Whose Country, Whose History?* (Cork:

Cork University Press 1995); Erica Sheehan (ed.), *Travellers: Citizens of Ireland* (compiled by Frank Murphy and Cathleen McDonagh) (Dublin: Parish of the Travelling People 2000).

[8] Patricia McCarthy, 'Life with the Travelling People', in Victor Bewley (ed.), *Travelling People* (Dublin: Veritas 1974), p. 87.

[9] See Nan Joyce, *Traveller: An Autobiography*, (Anna Farmar, ed.) (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan 1985), pp. 26–27.

[10] 'Call a halt to Traveller invasions', *Sunday Business Post*, (17 March 2002).

[11] Aoife Bhreatnach, 'Travellers and the Print Media: Words and Irish Identity', *Irish Studies Review* 6: 3 (December 1998), p. 285.

[12] Colm Walsh, 'Between Rhetoric and Reality: Travellers and the Unfinished Republic', *The Republic*, no. 1 (June 2000), pp. 86–88.

[13] Many thanks to the officers at Pavee Point for providing me with these statistics.

[14] Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (trans. Constance Farrington) (Harmondsworth: Penguin 1967), p. 180.

[15] Michael McDonagh and Winnie McDonagh, 'Nomadism', in Sheehan, op. cit., pp. 33–34.

[16] Jean-Pierre Liégeois, *Gypsies and Travellers*, cited in Sheehan, op. cit., p. 209.

[17] Jane Helleiner, *Irish Travellers: Racism and the Politics of Culture* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 2000), pp. 109–110.

[18] Michael McDonagh, 'Nomadism in Irish Travellers' Identity', in May McCann, Séamas Ó Síocháin and Joseph Ruane (eds.), *Irish Travellers: Culture and Ethnicity* (Belfast: Institute of Irish Studies 1994), p. 97.

[19] Seán Ó Riain, *Solidarity with Travellers* (Dublin: Roadside Books 2000), p. 60.

[20] 'People and Places', in J. M. Synge, *Collected Works, Volume II: Prose* (Alan Price, ed.) (London: Oxford University Press 1966), p. 199.

[21] I borrow the phrase 'remaindered community' from Seamus Deane, *Strange Country: Modernity and Nationhood in Irish Writing since 1790* (Oxford: Clarerndon Press 1997), p. 163.

Republicanism and Childhood in Twentieth-Century Ireland

MARY SHINE THOMPSON

Introduction

While the declaration of the Irish Republic in 1948 was the de jure culmination of Irish nationalism, the political entity of the twenty-six counties was already perceived by many to be a de facto republic in the preceding decades. During the Dáil debates surrounding the declaration Eamon de Valera asserted that 'We were a republic, no doubt about it'.[1] Margaret Buckley, the then president of Sinn Féin, disdained the pronouncement because, she said, 'the Republic was proclaimed in 1916, established in 1919, and it has never been disestablished'.[2] Buckley here identifies some of the texts that write out and interpret republican ideals in the modern Irish context, but her list is not exhaustive. The Irish constitution of 1937, for example, is a further important chapter concerned with the tensions between republican concepts and state building. Constitutional law and the law's interpretation of rights inspired by republicanism and enshrined in the constitution further articulate and modify those ideals.

Republican theory does not preclude children from playing a participatory civic role in the republic. However, Irish republicanism in the first half of the twentieth century was preoccupied more with matters, both external and internal, that related to its post-colonial status than with civic agency. While children are notionally included as citizens of the Irish republic in its ideal and real form, they were rarely identified as a group, their specific role as citizens was not alluded to, and their capacity to contribute to *res publica* (civil society) was little acknowledged. Irish republican texts contain little exposition of the social implications of citizenship, and childhood is notably absent from its conceptual arena. The allusions are few, and at worst deploy childhood as a metaphor for subordinate citizenship or for those in need of protection. Post-independence documents such as the 1937 Constitution offer a limited, class-bound interpretation of childhood. While women objected to their designated subjectivity in the constitution, no single body argued for the

rights of children. Subsequent judicial interpretations of the constitution evince an ongoing limitation of children's rights: nowhere is this more evident that in the provision of education, where equality of access has been significantly circumscribed. However, the climate is changing. Some recent constructions of childhood focus on children's capacity for reasoned thought and their right to be heard publicly, thus closing the gap between them and more enfranchised citizens of the Irish republic.

Republican citizenship and childhood

Among the ideals variously emphasised in modern (eighteenth-century or later) republicanism are social independence, balanced government, the rule of law, and collective self-government.[3] Today, notions of freedom, active citizenship, and interdependence are integral to it.[4] Interdependence takes account of difference and diversity, and this heterogeneity is not limited to culture, gender, region, religion and ethnicity. Participatory citizenship of a republic ought not therefore be denied on the basis of individual differences that relate to age and ability and does not preclude a concurrent need for protection and nurture, although the most appropriate means of ensuring maximum participation from a sector such as children may need to be explored laterally. The common good and the civic virtues that accrue from an interdependence that articulates difference (and children may be included here) both interrogate and affirm individual interest. In the Irish context, James Connolly summarised that participatory ethos when he hoped that 'the Irish Republic might be made a word to conjure with—a rallying-cry for the disaffected, a haven for the oppressed, a point of departure for the Socialist, enthusiastic in the cause of human freedom'.[5]

The corollary of inclusivity and representativeness is a participatory disposition and the availability of deliberative forums in which all shades of informed interest and opinion may be represented. These necessarily include legal and parliamentary forms of discussion. It is axiomatic, therefore, that in a properly functioning republic not only are the rights of child-citizens upheld in legal and parliamentary discourse, but also that participatory channels are made available to children in which their understanding of their rights may be honed and heard.[6] As I will demonstrate later in this paper, the Irish constitution and Irish legislation have served to limit rather than articulate republican civic ideals in the case of children.

Irish republican documentation of childhood

The formal documentation of the republic in the early decades of the last

century makes little reference to civic roles or to childhood as a distinctive sector of Irish society, although the term 'child' is often used metaphorically. There are sound practical reasons why this might be so. In the first place, in the period up to the Treaty, republicanism was 'a desperate search for purity, for the political thing-in-itself', in Seamus Deane's words. It was a search for a distillation, an absolute essence of republicanism, rather than a practical model for everyday living. Deane further elaborates that the republic was 'the unrealised and perhaps unrealisable entity in which power and authority will be as one, in which everything that smacks of compromise and negotiation will be forgotten and the false status of the Pharisee will be exposed before the true worth of the Publican (or re-Publican)'.[7] Everyday matters such as active participation, order, civic education, and citizenship, which comprise the matter of Graeco-Roman republicanism, find their way on to few agendas. There are notable exceptions, among them James Connolly's socialist and Francis Sheehy Skeffington's feminist programmes. However, their contributions pre-date the foundation of the Irish state and had little impact on republicanism beyond a brief flowering of socialist ideals in the late teens and the feminist response to the 1937 constitution. Similarly exceptional is the work of Patrick Pearse. While Pearse's impassioned plea for enlightened education manifests an overt post-colonial separatist agenda, his perception of individual children as capable of exercising free choice evinces his readiness to include them as active agents in his ideal republic. Similarly, his emphasis on difference, on freedom of choice, and on children's capacity for selfless service to the community may be seen as further evidence of civic republicanism.[8]

Notwithstanding exceptions, pre-independence republicanism was primarily visionary. In the first decades of independence, its orientation was external, preoccupied with boundaries and territorialism. Within the confines of the state, its priorities included the sorely contested topic of unification (a response both to civil war scars and boundary issues), as well as tradition and the maintenance of an authentic and separate identity. It could be said that the cultural nationalism that prevailed in the early years of the Irish state, which was based on custom, language and communal memory, displaced an emphasis on civic values. The reality of fraternal strife that characterised the civil war could not bear too much looking into, and the analysis of notions such as citizenship, social rights and obligations was too painful.

The trajectory of the metaphor of childhood found in republican writing suggests that the Irish legacy of attitudes towards children is complex, containing within it strands of British class prejudice and a

colonial conflation of childhood and inferiority. From the late nineteenth century in Britain, 'social constructions' of children and childhood gained currency and became widely acceptable social truths.[9] In Kimberley Reynolds's opinion, the late Victorians simultaneously idolised and resented childhood and the new images of childhood empowered and elevated children.[10] An American sociologist, Viviana Zelizer, suggests that during the years between 1870 and 1930, children were 'sacralised' (i.e. invested with sentimental or religious meaning).[11] Among the often conflicting representations that survived into the twentieth century were the cult of the child beautiful (Millais's *Bubbles* finds its literary counterpart in Frances Hodgson Burnett's *Little Lord Fauntelroy)* and the Rousseauesque myth of incorruptible childhood (defined in *Émile*). Children were recast as emotional and affective assets and confined to the domestic arena. While elements of this bourgeois child-centredness found their way into Irish life (for instance, the 1912 first communion photograph of the poet Austin Clarke sees him clad in a Bubblesesque outfit), it was countered by a pervasive puritanism and sense of innate sinfulness, especially in sexual matters. The numerous articles by Timothy Corcoran SJ, whose philosophies dominated Irish education for the first two decades of Irish statehood, emphasise the corrupt nature of the child and the consequent necessity for strict authoritarian teaching.[12] The feminisation of childhood that was the norm elsewhere was tempered here by the role children were expected to play in relation to arduous chores on small farms and childminding in a society of large families. Curtin and Varley suggest that in rural Ireland children were not wanted as an end in themselves but 'as a means of providing generational continuity on the farm, of supplying farm labour, or of acting as a hedge against old age'. They also observed that farmers valued silence and passivity in their children.[13] What Foucault calls the 'regulation' of children—the monitoring, surveying, and calculating— dates from the turn of the century and found enthusiastic expression in Ireland in state-sponsored orphanages and industrial schools. Other manifestations of this regulatory phenomenon are the physical segregation of children from adults that is implicit in formal schooling and the compulsory education that was introduced in Ireland in 1926.

   A complex of concealment, love, distrust, authoritarianism and class prejudice therefore informs our understanding of childhood in the early decades of the century and inevitably informs republicanism, albeit obliquely. *Inghindhe na hÉireann*'s[*] first public gesture of protest

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[*] Daughters of Ireland.

consisted of a patriotic picnic, led by Maud Gonne, for 40,000 children in the Phoenix Park in 1900. This may be perceived as an instance of practical inclusivity, but also suggests a class-inflected approach that substitutes philanthropy for agency and is consolatory rather than enabling. As such, it serves as a caution against facile equations of children's presence at highly-charged republican occasions and their participation in public affairs. When James Connolly, that exceptional Irish nationalist in that his republicanism contains a dominant social and socialist dimension, wants to convey his opinion that the 1905 pro-Russian campaign offers no lead to Irish republicans, he calls the minds that conceived it 'childish'.[14] Like many another contemporary, he employs the term 'children' of a mother-nation when he refers to citizens.[15] The 1916 Proclamation of the Provisional Government of the Irish Republic refers to children no less than four times, each time as a metaphor for incipient citizenship:

> Ireland, through us, summons her *children* to her Flag … supported by her exiled *children* in America … she strikes in full confidence of victory … The Republic … declares its resolve to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation and all of its parts, cherishing all of the *children* of the nation equally … In this supreme hour the Irish nation must, by its valour and discipline and by the readiness of its *children* to sacrifice themselves for the common good, prove itself worthy of the august destiny to which it is called.[16] (Emphases added)

Childhood is conflated with citizenry in the imagined, embryonic Irish republic. Child-citizens are summoned, cherished, and sacrificed: only their geographically-distanced American cousins act autonomously and as subjects rather than objects of action.

This phenomenon may be perceived as an instance of the recurring pattern, noted by Frantz Fanon, in which intellectual and social elites who have organised effective nationalist resistance rapidly reinstate hierarchical systems.[17] It is not an isolated expression of unconscious but no less unrepublican thinking, as the analysis of the 1937 constitution conducted below reveals. A more positive expression of republican perception of childhood may be found in the Democratic Programme of the first Dáil of 1919. As Seamus Deane has observed, this 'provides a basis for all future declarations of republican principle … and remains an embarrassing reminder to all subsequent meetings of the Dáil of what the struggle for independence was supposed to achieve'.[18] Here, there is an awareness of children as citizens, but while its statement of intent to provide for their physical, mental and spiritual well-being is reassuring, it falls short of according a participatory role to the young:

> It shall be the first duty of the Government of the Republic to make provision for the physical, mental and spiritual well-being of children, to secure that no child shall suffer hunger or cold from lack of food, clothing or shelter, but that all shall be provided with the means and facilities requisite for their proper education and training as Citizens of a Free and Gaelic Ireland.[19]

Even here, in the last sentence, the external priority of republicanism is apparent. The exclusive emphasis on education, training, and nurture underlines children's passive citizenship rather than their capacity for agency.

However, it is in the 1937 constitution that republican civic values and republican concepts of childhood find their fullest expression. The primary author of this text is Eamon de Valera, who perceived himself as the embodiment of pure republicanism. In the debate leading to the 1922 Treaty, he stated unequivocally that he was a symbol of the Republic, and that he did not attend the Treaty negotiations because 'I wished to keep that symbol of the Republic pure even from insinuation, or even a word across the table that would give away the Republic'.[20] Similarly, de Valera's avoidance of the explicit term 'republic' in the constitution was no repudiation of the ideal, but a tactical device that served the external agenda of the state. During the 'republic' debate,

> de Valera read out the dictionary definition … but said that he had deliberately avoided declaring Ireland a republic in his constitution because he was trying to 'keep open a bridge over which the Northern Unionists might one day walk'. He said that this avoidance of the nomenclature 'puts the question of our international relations in their proper place and that is outside the Constitution'.[21]

It is evident from these statements that de Valera, the primary architect of the constitution, perceived himself as the symbol of republicanism. The constitution is therefore a significant expression of republican ideals, as well as being a contract between state and people. Its noteworthiness derives in part from the role that texts play in modernising societies in defining individuals' rights to self-government and in creating institutional safeguards for those rights. 'It is the text that establishes our social identity and institutional place, it is the text that provides us with our jurisdiction or right of speech, it is the text in which we are born and in which we die'.[22] As an important official narrative of the real as opposed to the imagined state, its importance in creating and setting boundaries to rights should not be underestimated. The actual act of making narratives is a crucial element in the construction of social realities, social, cultural and political institutions, and communal

identities. By conceiving the constitution as an episode in the national and republican narrative, seemingly just, equitable and transparent discourses (such as the legal) are seen to construct the reality that they appear to represent.[23]

The 1937 Irish constitution

Republicanism is rarely pure and never simple. It shares a platform and sometimes, inevitably, vies for place or conflicts with the other pressing matters in a new state, such as the creation of institutions, the modernising impulse, and the designation of the 'Other'. The 1937 constitution's concern with consolidating and bringing status to converging concepts of national, rather than local, identity (through the production of texts) does not necessarily conflict with its articulation of the rights and obligations of a common citizenship. Republicanism and the state have the common reference points of 'territory' and 'people'. The constitution contains a strong statement of the people's fundamental rights, such as rights to equality before the law, freedom of expression, freedom of religion and education at Articles 40–44, that is consonant with the state's republican roots. The courts, in turn, support these rights in that they may issue binding decisions that legislation is unconstitutional if it breaches these fundamental rights.

However, the constitution evinces many limitations when it comes to enshrining republican ideals, particularly with regard to essential tenets such as equality, recognition of diversity, representation and agency as they apply to children. This section of the paper will explore how the constitution underwrites, rather than demolishes, a hierarchy based on class, gender and familial status. Although it identifies the family as the basic unit of society, its bias is unequivocally bourgeois. Secondly, its elaboration of the concept of family is profoundly patriarchal and therefore excludes equality. Thirdly, many specific references to children perceive them primarily as conduits for the rights of parents rather than as a well-defined group of citizens. Fourthly, its description of children's rights as 'natural and imprescriptible' is vague and problematic. Lastly, the constitution has given rise to interpretations in the law courts that have served to limit and constrain those rights.

The 1937 constitution is 'a powerful instrument for conveying a homogenous narrative of Irish citizenship'.[24] It was also a narrative that was written and implemented by powerful elites of the new Ireland, middle-class thinkers including clergy, civil servants, lawyers and politicians. As such, it was central to the consolidation of middle-class Irish aspirations and reality and an example of the hegemonic processes

by which a dominant culture maintains its dominant position. Moreover, the constitution is an element of the infrastructural and administrative apparatus of the state. As the state formalised its power, its bureaucracies (legal and archival) expanded, making its power seem abstract (and, therefore, not attached to any one individual or group). This, in turn, inculcated middle-class ideals that were dependent on literacy in the people, through the judiciary, parliamentary debate, education, and publication, for example. Furthermore, its catholic idiom and the 'special position' that Article 2 (since amended) accords the catholic church circumscribe the commitment to diversity. The constitution is also, therefore, a statement that overtly and covertly defines an ideal class and mode of ordering society and has the incidental effect of moulding young Irish citizens according to a template inflected with class and nationalist characteristics. At a time when critics of modern Ireland such as Sean O'Faolain were berating Ireland for the thinness of society, the constitution lost an opportunity to redefine and extend the possible modalities of organisation that would have facilitated the partnerships of participatory republicanism. Instead, it upholds the fallacy that Ireland is a society lacking a complex social stratification or class system and, in the process, further privileges those in whom power is vested.

Hanafin draws attention to another inherent inequality that the constitution creates, arguing that the Irish constitutional concept of family reflected a notion of the national family that is 'inward-looking and subject to the rule of a weak patriarchal figure', so entrenching the patriarchal social order. The family as the ideal unit group of society (as it was perceived in the constitution) and as an ideal in itself (if based on marriage) carried subliminal messages and revealed an intolerance of difference.[25]

The designation of roles along gendered lines is further evidence of the underlying patriarchal thrust of the document. Power and the ultimate 'authority' in the family are often invested in the income earner.[26] The roles allocated to women, contentious even at the time that the constitution was drafted,[27] were reinvented as imaginary, aspirational and elusive ideals. The concept of manhood was undefined and therefore the universal norm, but in practice the role of the authoritative, knowing male was limited to an elite of powerful patriarchs, while the uneducated, impoverished majority were marginalised.

Within this adult, gendered domain, children hardly figure. They are denied the status of a differentiated citizenship and consequently also denied the inclusion, empowerment and participation accorded other groups—such as citizens with property. Because they are not recognised

as a well-defined, distinct group, the state's contractual obligations to them remain underarticulated. Where the constitution does acknowledge them, it is often to empower parents to exercise their children's rights, in the matter of education and religion.

The family

It is paradoxical, therefore, that one of the defining features of the constitution is the dominant status it accords the family in Irish life, since this affirmation might seem to ensure that children's rights as citizens of a de facto republic would be protected. The reality is more complex. The constitution identifies the family as 'the natural primary and fundamental unit group of society' (Article 41.1.1) , and 'the necessary basis of social order' (Article 41.1.2). While it offers no definition of this key term, Justice Henchy interpreted Article 41.1.1 so as to suggest that the family is 'founded on the institution of marriage'.[28] A childless married couple constitutes a family, but, for example, an unmarried couple rearing their children in a stable relationship did not enjoy similar status until recent decades. As Henchy stated in another case: 'For the state to award constitutional protection … to the "family" founded on an extra-marital union would in effect be a disregard of the pledge of the state … to guard with special care the institution of marriage'.[29] (It was not until a case was taken to the European Court of Human Rights in 1966 that the notion that the family was not confined to marriage-based relationships was accepted.[30]) The effect of this policy was to diminish the status of children born into non-marriage based unions. Through no fault of their own, they were deemed to belong to an inferior 'unit group of society'. The point here relates not so much to constitutional legal rights, but to their right to equal public esteem and dignity as equal citizens of a republic.

The constitution details the family's rights in regard to children and parents' right to choose the type of education (denominational or otherwise), and it proscribes divorce. Specifically, it accords children 'natural and imprescriptible' rights (Article 42.5). Explicit references to children include the following:

> The State acknowledges that the primary and natural educator of the child is the Family and guarantees to respect the inalienable right and duty of parents to provide, according to their means, for the religious and moral, intellectual, physical and social education of their children. (Article 42.1)
> The State shall not oblige parents in violation of their conscience and lawful preference to send their children to schools established by the State, or to any

particular type of school designated by the State. (Article 42.3.1)

The State shall, however, as guardian of the common good, require in view of actual conditions that the children receive a certain minimum education, moral, intellectual and social. (Article 42.3.2)

In exceptional cases, where the parents for physical or moral reasons fail in their duty towards their children, the State as guardian of the common good, by appropriate means shall endeavour to supply the place of the parents, but always with due regard for the natural and imprescriptible rights of the child. (Article 42.5)

Legislation providing State aid for schools shall not discriminate between schools under the management of different religious denominations, nor be such as to affect prejudicially the right of any child to attend a school receiving public money without attending religious instruction at that school. (Article 44.2.4)

The cited provisions from Articles 42 and 44 privilege parents' dominion over their children and promote their rights to a sectarian lifestyle over their children's rights. Conversely, they also safeguard the state's right to interfere in the family unit that it defines as sacrosanct, by enabling it to 'supply the place of the parents'. In practice, when the state did act *in loco parentis*, it tolerated alternatives to its idealised family unit (such as the orphanages discussed later in this paper) that were harsh, sometimes to the point of criminality, and whose punishments were cruel and unusual. Children as a differentiated group of citizens with rights and obligations are acknowledged overtly to the extent that they are seen to possess 'natural and imprescriptible' rights (Article 42.5) and that 'the state shall endeavour to ensure that the tender age of children shall not be abused' (Article 45 4.2).

In theory, of course, children's rights are not limited to those identified in Articles 41 and 42 but include unenumerated personal rights as in Article 40.3.1 also: 'The State guarantees in its laws to respect, and, in as far as practicable, by its laws to defend and vindicate the personal rights of the citizen'.[31] However, the citation of 'natural and imprescriptible rights' as a guarantee of children's citizenship deserves attention. Natural law is based on value judgements that emanate from some absolute source, such as God's revealed truth—for example, in 1927, Lambert McKenna cited St. Thomas to support his assertion that it is a principle of natural law that the right to educate children belongs to their parents.[32] Were the full range of statutory legislation in place to enumerate and detail the precise nature of children's rights, the appeal to natural law would provide an additional safeguard, since, as the Supreme Court pronounced, the personal rights of Article 40.3.3 are natural in the sense

that they are inherent in the individual and antecedent to the constitution. As a *substitute* for such legislation, however, the citation of natural rights constitutes another instance of the elision of children's citizenship.

Since 1798, when the National Assembly of France set forth natural, imprescriptible, and inalienable rights in Article 2 of its Declaration of the Rights of Man and of Citizens ('The aim of all political association is the preservation of the natural and imprescriptible rights of man. These rights are liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression'[33]), the concept has had its legal detractors. 'Imprescriptible' has precise legal connotations, implying that whatever the term qualifies is immune or exempt from prescription. It suggests rights that are so fundamental that they cannot be prescribed. This, together with the appeal to natural law (which in theory is a statement of natural rights based on the principles and findings of human reason) is in effect an appeal to legal common sense, which is dangerously vague and unreliable in practice. Bentham declared that all rights are the creation of law; 'natural rights is simple nonsense: natural and imprescriptible rights, rhetorical nonsense— nonsense upon stilts'.[34] One commentator, Burns Weston, has opined that, by World War I, there were scarcely any theorists who would defend the 'Rights of Man' along the lines of natural law.[35] Bentham's fear that declarations of natural rights would substitute for effective legislation resonates in the context of children's rights in Irish law. The proof of this may be found in the fact that it was not until 1980 that the 'inalienable and imprescriptible and natural and imprescriptible rights of the child' were interpreted as of paramount consideration when a conflict arises between the constitutional rights of a child and the prima facie constitutional rights of the child's mother.[36]

In addition, when the term 'natural' is applied to childhood, its negative connotations, never far from the puritan Irish psyche, are in danger of dominating thinking—the natural is thus defined as the uncultivated; the wild; the illegitimate; those born out of wedlock; existing in, or produced by nature: not constrained; not affected by humanity or civilisation. In this context, an appeal to natural law and imprescriptible rights has, in short, been a licence to the state and to adult citizens of the state to curb, control and exercise authority rather than enable citizens to exert agency. In recent decades, however, the express use of natural law reasoning has diminished.

While the intention of the constitution's authors may have been to protect vulnerable citizens, the constitution's romantic, selective idealism in effect militated against the exercise of rights. It created a hierarchy composed of those whose lifestyle conformed to the model of 'natural

and primary unit group of society' and those whose lifestyles did not. In law and in fact, members of families (as it defines them) are accorded rights and privileges denied other citizens, such as the children of unmarried parents (of which more later). Implicit in this is an intolerance of difference and a devaluation of alternative modes of organising society: those values of difference and heterogeneity are implicit in the republican paradigm.

One illustration of how the constitutional elevation of the family has worked against children's rights may be found in the decision of the Supreme Court in the *State (Nicolaou) v. An Bord Uchtála* (1966).[37] Nicolaou fathered a child outside marriage, and the mother sought to have the child adopted without his permission. Nicolaou had shown himself an interested and involved parent from the child's birth. However, when Justice Walsh delivered his judgement in the Supreme Court, he introduced 'the rhetoric of the bad father' in order to deprive Nicolaou of his right to challenge the order on the grounds of the guarantee of equality in Article 40.1—'All citizens shall, as human persons, be held equal before the law. This shall not be held to mean that the State shall not in its enactments have due regard to differences of capacity, physical and moral, and of social function'. Walsh declared that, although Nicolaou had cohabited with the mother, he was not entitled to avail of the constitutional guarantees to the family because 'so far as Article 41 is concerned the guarantees contained therein are confined to families based upon marriage'.

> When it is considered that … it is rare for a natural father to take any interest in his offspring, *it is not difficult to appreciate the difference in moral capacity and social function between the natural father and the several persons as described in the subsections in question.*[38] (Emphasis added)

Here the judge moves from interpreting the constitution so as to deny the right of a child and his interested caring father to a biological family to making a general statement concerning all unmarried fathers' moral and social shortcomings.[39] In earlier proceedings of the same case, it was pointed out that if Nicolaou argued on the basis of the rights of his child, 'it is more than probable that his interests and those of the child conflict'.[40] The provisions of the Adoptions Act, 1952 provided no role for the natural father of a child born outside marriage. While this case is sometimes cited as an example of how unmarried fathers' rights are circumscribed, it offers insights into how, as late as 1964, Irish constitutional law disregarded children's right to a family defined in broader terms than the puritanical, class-inflected and highly idealised

terms of the constitution. Furthermore, it illustrates how the category of the 'natural' is burdened with negative connotations. The right of a child to a 'natural' father (and, by extension, to a biological family) is not entertained, and the court assumes that the natural father is necessarily morally and socially inferior. Finally, it is worth mentioning that this is not an isolated case: the previously mentioned case, *Keegan v. Ireland*, heard at the European Court of Human Rights, arose because Mr. Keegan's child, born out of wedlock, had been placed for adoption without his knowledge or consent.[41]

In its narrow definition of the family, the constitution is aligned with propertied citizens who have a personal stake in limiting the dispersal of property and, by extension, in containing power. Legislating to constrain sexual behaviour is the central mode of containment, as Joe Lee observes:

> A sluggish society clinging to the possessor principle inevitably places decisive emphasis on inheritance patterns. God and Mammon collaborate to produce a predictable structure of morality in the circumstances. The technique of birth control devised by post-Famine Ireland, late and few marriages, required rigorous sexual self-control from the disinherited, and indeed from the inheritors until they belatedly came into their legacy. Exceptional emphasis was naturally laid on the perils of sex, whose uncontrolled consequences would threaten the whole edifice … [Celibacy] protected the property interests of the farmer, whose children dominated the clergies, catholic and protestant, which preached these necessary values.[42]

Dolores Dooley adduces another reason for the emphasis on the family: 'The articles on family and marriage are symptomatic of a state that has been fearful of the uncontrollable power that might be unleashed if the concession of sexual equality of citizenship were realised in action'.[43] The state, then, is concerned to control aspects of individual liberty, to uphold the right to own property and to retain it in the hands of the few. Here a range of republican rights are seen to be in conflict: the right to personal liberty versus the desire to control behaviour for a perceived 'common good'; and the right to preserve property versus its equitable distribution.

Upon this battleground, children are not a neutral group. When they grow up within a nuclear family in which a mother is home-maker and father the bread-winner, they are palpable evidence that all is right with the new Irish bourgeois identity and that society is successfully organised around the principle of the nuclear family. When they are born outside wedlock or are the children of parents unable to support them, they are

chafing reminders of the gaps and inadequacies of this model of social organisation and are a visible threat to the security and continuity of power.

The state found a solution to this irruption of reality: it funded and regulated institutions that concealed these children, who were the evidence of the fallacy and failure of the model of the idealised nuclear family. Significantly, it delegated the responsibility for running these institutions to the churches and demanded little accountability, transparency or articulation of rationale. In the 1920s and 1930s, when British policy moved away from institutionalising large numbers of children, Ireland, 'for reasons that had very little to do with child welfare', took the opposite course and institutionalised large numbers of children.[44] What we know as orphanages were in fact industrial schools that detained orphans (as the institutions' names suggest), the children of unmarried mothers, and also those of *married* parents who were still living. In fact, the majority of children in these institutions had parents still living. So, while the state was elevating the concept of the family based on marriage, it was effectively supporting the fracture of families by institutionalising the children of materially impoverished marriages. Interestingly, in the 1930s and 1940s in particular, girls outnumbered boys to such a degree that even the Department of Education was concerned. Raftery and O'Brien claim that while the public was probably unaware of the enormous scale of the system for detaining children, there was, nonetheless, a clear and popular knowledge of the existence of a punitive system of incarceration for children.[45]

The widespread abuse that took place is itself evidence of the solution being worse than the problem, as are the harsh conditions. Recurring motifs in survivors' accounts emphasise the brutality and the pathological preoccupation with sexuality, underlining further the fact that elevating the concept of the family based on marriage was an expression of the controlling ethos of church, state and the middle classes and their impulse to retain power. The widespread acceptance of this anomaly— the privileging of the concept of the family while condoning the practice of denying children its support and public representation—illustrates how Irish society colluded with its representatives in flagrantly violating its own republican ethos. Indeed, even elected representatives have not been slow to publicly deny children equality. In 1926, for example, when the government introduced the School Attendance Act, Michael Heffernan, a TD representing the farming lobby, demanded that the compulsory primary education requirement for the children of agricultural labourers should be relaxed. The purpose of this, he made clear, was so that it

would not interfere with the higher priority of cheap labour for strong farmers.[46]

Education

We have already seen how children's rights as citizens, as enshrined in the constitution, have been open to judicial, state and social interpretation that has circumscribed those rights. Nowhere is this more evident than in the field of education. Article 42.3.2 states that the state shall, 'as guardian of the common good', require that children 'receive a certain minimum education, moral, intellectual and social'. Here, several laudable republican principles are implicit: the public or common good, the implication that all children are given a minimum share of the educational cake, and a willingness to prepare children for active citizenship based on their understanding of moral, social and intellectual goods. Education is one crucial portal to civic agency; in its wider forms can safeguard freedom; and is one of the few public forums in which children participate.

However admirable and republican the sentiments expressed in Article 42.3.2, the reality has been quite different. In fact, Farry has argued the fundamental case that children do not even have a constitutional right to a minimum education, but only that the state has a duty to provide for such an education.[47] As recently as 2000, the Supreme Court ruled that the primary education to which a child is entitled is only 'what is provided by teachers in classrooms', in short, 'a basic scholastic education'. The judgement went on to say that it was extremely unlikely that those who framed the constitution, or the people by whom it was adopted, would have authorised the state to intervene in intimate matters such as toilet training (one of the issues in the widely publicised Sinnott case.).[48] Here, the judge has deployed the dual strategies of contextualising the constitution in its moment of origin and defining education in terms that directly contravene contemporary understandings in order to limit the state's responsibility to vulnerable citizens. The inevitable outcome is to restrict these citizens' capacity to participate in and contribute to public life.

Furthermore, the provision of education has been the means by which a whole range of vested interests have served their own, and not children's, democratic privilege and prerogative: in particular, the state has used it to promote its nationalist agenda and the churches their determination to maintain power and influence. Language and especially class, together with gender, geography and disability, conspired to limit access. Even in its structures, the educational system in the Republic has been

exclusionist—at least until 1985 when the concept of partnership was articulated unequivocally as an educational value. The principle of liberty, so stressed in republican documents, drew the disdain and derision of Timothy Corcoran SJ, the most prolific spokesperson on education and a central influence on educational policy in the 1930s. He criticised Maria Montessori's methods because they emphasised the necessity of the child's liberty, and he could not accept that she could have adapted for 'normal' children from methods devised for the 'deficient'.[49] The educational programmes he approved were at once ethno-nationalist and competitive, emphasising British public school values, the classics and the Irish language. Corcoran was not alone in elevating the Irish language. Eoin MacNeill, minister for education in 1925, identified the conservation and development of Irish nationality as the chief function of Irish educational policy.[50] Yet the following year, the report of Coimisiún na Gaeltachta showed that there was only one secondary school in any Gaeltacht area—and it was English-speaking![51] By the mid-1930s, the vigorous implementation of the Irish language policy in non-Irish speaking areas included the directive that Irish be the language of the Infant school, prompting Joseph Lee to comment that 'when [those pupils] were dispatched from the country as emigrants they would be equipped to serve their new masters only as hewers of wood and drawers of water'.[52]

Equality of opportunity was further constrained. At the time of the foundation of the state, school attendance was alarmingly poor (under 70% daily attendance), and it was estimated that 100,000 children were not even enrolled. Two decades later, drop-out rates were still high, and less than a quarter of students were enrolled in the senior cycle in 1948–9. Long school journeys and poor physical conditions were a prominent feature of the lives of Gaeltacht primary school children in the 1920s. The vocational schools, established in 1930 to cater for poorer children, failed to prepare pupils for Leaving Certificate (primarily because of clerical insistence), effectively stamping them, again in Lee's trenchant words, as 'second class citizens'.[53] A half-century later, the completion rate of vocational school pupils was still only a third of that of secondary school pupils. When the issue of raising the school-leaving age, then fourteen, arose in 1935 (at a time when constitutional rights were being formulated), economics and class dictated the government's response: 'if the school leaving age is to be raised, it must be raised only in selected areas in which the conditions are favourable and in which there is no likelihood of serious economic results'. Things had changed little by 1960 when the Council for Education rejected the policy of

'secondary education for all'.[54]

Geography and gender are two more markers of inequality within the educational arena and are remarkable for the historical continuity they display. The counties that had the lowest rates of secondary school participation in 1962 had the lowest rates of admission to higher education in 1980. Girls' completion of secondary school lagged significantly behind boys' for the first two decades of the new state. Facilities for children with disabilities were provided only by voluntary bodies, and there was virtually no progress during the generation following independence—not until the mid-1950s, and then only following the initiatives of parents, friends and professionals, were schools established to cater for their needs.[55] Other multiply-disadvantaged groups of children, such as Traveller children, did not fall within the official gaze at all. It was 1960 before the Irish government established a Commission on Itinerancy, whose report, published three years later, was the basis for a programme of assimilation rather than recognition of diversity. The message is clear: education within the Irish state that fondly imagined itself a republic was the province of the favoured and served only to increase inequality and division rather than egalitarianism and fraternity.

Changing climates

Enabling children to exercise their republican rights and responsibilities poses a unique but not insurmountable challenge. Childhood has now become a battle site for competing vested interests that vie to reconstruct public perceptions of childhood according to their own precepts. Childhood has become medicalised, commercialised, legalised, and sexualised. It is both a commodity and a niche market, and not least of the commercial interests are educational: witness the grind schools, the expansion of education departments, the strength of educational publishers, and now, rather belatedly perhaps, the interest of the academy. Children's perceived safe space is shrinking as they retire to the independent republics of their bedrooms—hermetically-sealed personal spaces. Yet, the virtual space they can access through electronic means is expanding. Childhood as we have imagined it is transgressing the boundaries within which we fondly corralled it. Dark silences remain; poverty still determines the life of many. Much is unknown; much research remains to be done. What we do know is patchy, but there is a growing awareness of the diversity of experiences that come under the umbrella of childhood discourse and a disintegration of the old authoritarian relationships between young and adult, between the child

and powerful public voices. Eclecticism, transgression of boundaries, polyphony, disintegration, and the need for self-reflexivity are the hallmarks of contemporary Irish childhoods.

The 'politics of mutism'[56] (the phrase is Kathleen Lynch's) that traditionally silenced children's voices in Ireland has finally been challenged, but official re-evaluation of childhood remains reactive and paltry. The recent copper-fastening of children's right to appropriate education came only on foot of a series of court challenges, all bitterly contested by the Department of Education and Science, which is constitutionally obliged only to ensure that 'children receive *minimum* education, moral, intellectual and social' (my emphasis). The High Court challenge by Jamie Sinnott, which attracted so much attention in November 2000, was only one of 100 cases relating to autistic and special needs people that were awaiting hearing in the courts in October 2000.

Kathleen Lynch has pointed to the need for equality of respect and a greater democratisation of schooling and of health and welfare services for children. She cites the public derision that greeted Adi Roche's suggestion in 1997 that a Children's Commission should be established and interprets this belittling as evidence that there is little public concern for the status of children.[57] Children are rarely canvassed for their views, and there is little recognition that they can be equal partners rather than passive subjects in the research process. In addition, 'researchers have been as "child-blind" as others'. Children are not a mobilised political voice, although there are discernible shifts. The actions of secondary school pupils during the 2001 secondary teachers' industrial action may suggest that this is changing. The launch of the National Children's Strategy, the National Children's Advisory Council, and the Children's Rights Alliance (composed of NGOs), whose purpose is to co-ordinate child-related activities and provide forums in which children's voices are heard, is a significant advance in public policy and awareness. The Law Society's recommendation that the constitution be amended to give children legal rights as individuals is also welcome.[58] The dark side of Irish childhood, the physical and sexual abuse, the family disorder and dysfunction are coming into the public domain.

While psychological models of childhood remain influential in defining the roles that children may adopt in society, childhood is no longer viewed as a period when cognition (including the processes of perception, intuition and reasoning) is necessarily impaired by immaturity. This is an important shift, in that it removes one of the barriers from accepting that children are capable of a more participatory

citizenship. If their rationality is no longer defined only in terms of its immaturity or limitations, then the path is open for more inclusivity, since rationality is one of the key precepts of republicanism. The work of Albert Bandura and L. S. Vygotsky has gone some way towards balancing the narrowly developmental, but profoundly influential, approach of Jean Piaget. It is now accepted that Piaget may have underestimated children's early perceptual abilities and cognitive development and did not take sufficient account of the individual differences between children. The gap between children's and adults' capacities for formal operations and abstract reasoning is now considered not to be as wide as his research suggested.[59] Contemporary theories of childhood cognition, as exemplified by Bandura's concept of social learning and Vygotsky's social development theory, propose that social interaction plays a fundamental role in full cognitive development.[60] Changes are not confined to psychological models of identity. Kieran Egan, an influential educational philosopher, stresses not only how children's thinking is different from adults' but also how it is greater in complexity, abstractness, and sophistication than is generally understood.[61] The implication of this reinvention of childhood is the growing awareness of a subaltern class that can provide unique initiative and momentum. In this way, the hegemony of the elitist bourgeois class that informed the constitution is contested. In this way, too, the work of establishing what Benedict Anderson calls an imagined community as a precondition for active participation in *res publica* can continue.[62] The question for the future is how to work out the practical minutiae and implications of this sector's claim to civic agency.

Conclusion

Children are not devoid of rationality or morality. Their ability to engage in dialogue may require fine tuning, but no more than other groups. By placing them outside the pale of discourse, civic society relegates them to the realm of the amoral and irrational. The reasons that this happened in Ireland relate to the tensions between the nation's various social and cultural discourses and its external political agenda.[63] Not least among these is the state's focus on liberty in the external rather than civic sense, its elision of fraternity as a value in a nascent state, and its blindness to issues of equality. Its myopia is complicated by the new state's assumption that state and nation are equivalent categories. So, formal republican texts, the 1937 constitution in particular, write out ideals at once modernising, democratising and authoritarian. While they purport to empower Irish children, they succeed rather in channelling power

through them and signally fail to cherish all the children of the nation equally. Ultimately, what they say about children is what they do not say. Children were ousted from these modern and modernising texts, their rights defined in an acontractual, naturalised and restricted form. The result is that civic republicanism is skewed and denied the contribution of a worthy and significant body of its citizens.

Notes

1 *Dáil Éireann Parliamentary Debates*, vol. lxiii, p. 926.

2 'A Perpetuation of Partition', *Irish Times* (22 November 1948), p. 1, quoted in Chris Morash, 'Theatre and the Republic of Ireland Act', in Ray Ryan (ed.), *Writing in the Irish Republic: Literature, Culture, Politics 1949–1999* (Basingstoke: Macmillan 2000), pp. 64–81.

3 See Gerry Smyth, *Decolonisation and Criticism* (London: Pluto 1998), pp. 10–34.

4 Iseult Honohan, 'Freedom as Citizenship: The Republican Tradition', *The Republic: A Journal of Contemporary and Historical Debate*, no. 2, (Summer 2001), pp. 15–16.

5 James Connolly, *Socialism and Nationalism: a selection from the writings of James Connolly* (introduction and notes by Desmond Ryan) (Dublin: Sign of the Three Candles 1948 [1897]), in Seamus Deane et al (eds.), *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*, three volumes, (Derry: Field Day Publications 1991), vol. 3., p. 718.

6 There are several useful discussions of republican concepts in *The Republic: A Journal of Contemporary and Historical Debate*, nos. 1 & 2, (2000 & 2001).

7 Seamus Deane, 'Political Writings and Speeches 1900–1988', in *Field Day*, vol. 3, p. 683.

8 Patrick Pearse, *The Murder Machine* (Dublin 1912), in *Field Day*, vol. 3, pp. 288–93: 'I would urge that the Irish school system of the future should give freedom—freedom to the individual school, freedom to the individual teacher, freedom as far as may be to the individual pupil'. See also Eavan Boland, 'Aspects of Pearse', *Dublin Magazine* (Spring 1966) (Patrick Pearse: Commentary. 5 May 2003.)

<http://www.pgileirdata.org/html/pgil_datasets/index.htm>.

Boland quotes Pearse on the inculcation of patriotism in the pupils of St Enda's: 'We have always allowed [the boys] to feel that no one can finely live who hoards life too jealously, that one must be generous in the service and withal joyous, accounting even supreme sacrifice slight'.

9 H. Hendrick, *Children, Childhood and English Society 1880–1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1997), p. 10.

10 K. Reynolds, *Children's Literature in the 1890s and the 1990s* (Plymouth: Northcote House 1994), p. 13.

11 V. Zelizer, *Pricing the Priceless Child. The Changing Social Value of Children* (New York: Basic Books 1985).

12 E. Brian Titley, *Church, State and the Control of Schooling in Ireland* (Kingston and Montreal/Dublin: McGill-Queen's/Macmillan 1983), p. 94.

13 C. Curtin and T. Varley, 'Children and Childhood in Rural Ireland: A Consideration of the Ethnographic Literature', in C. Curtin et al. (eds.), *Culture and Ideology in Ireland* (Galway: Galway University Press 1984), pp. 42–3, cited in Kathleen Lynch, 'The Status of Children and Young Persons: Educational and Related Issues', in Seán Healy and Brigid Reynolds (eds.), *Social Policy in Ireland: Principles, Practice and Problems* (Dublin: Oak Tree Press 1998), p. 322. Lynch's article covers some of the issues raised in this article also, but its focus is primarily on contemporary Ireland rather

than the founding principles of the Republic. See also Kathleen Lynch & Anne Lodge, *Equality and Power in Schools* (London: Routledge Falmer 2002).

[14] Connolly, op. cit., p. 727.

[15] Ibid., p. 723.

[16] Poblacht Na hÉireann The Provisional Government Of The Irish Republic To The People Of Ireland. 5 May 2003. <http://homepages.iol.ie/~dluby/proclaim.htm>.

[17] Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (trans. C. Farrington), (Middlesex: Penguin 1967 [1961]), pp. 19–65.

[18] Deane, op. cit., p. 734.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Irish Free State: Dáil Debates, *Tuairisg oifigiúil: díosbóireacht ar an gConnradh idir Éire agus Sasana do signigheadh i Lundain ar an 6adh lá de Mhí na Nodlag, 1921; Official report: Debate on the treaty between Great Britain and Ireland signed in London on the 6th December, 1921* (Dublin : The Talbot Press, 1922), pp. 257–8.

[21] Basil Chubb, *The Politics of the Irish Constitution* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration 1991), p. 24, (Princess Grace Irish Library (Monaco) EIRdata Electronic Irish Records Dataset. Eamon De Valera. Commentary. 5 May 2003. <http://www.pgil-eirdata.org/html/pgil_datasets/index.htm>).

[22] Peter Goodrich, 'Introduction: Psychoanalysis and Law', in Pierre Legendre, *Law and the Unconscious: a Legendre reader* (ed. and trans. Peter Goodrich), (Basingstoke: Macmillan 1997), p. 4, quoted in Patrick Hanafin, 'Interpreting the Irish Constitution', in Ray Ryan (ed.), op. cit., p. 147.

[23] See Terry Threadgold, *Feminist Poetics: Poiesis, Performance, Histories* (London: Routledge 1997), quoted in Hanafin, op. cit., p. 155.

[24] Hanafin, op. cit., p. 154.

[25] Ibid., p.156.

[26] Dolores Dooley, 'Gendered Citizenship in the Irish Constitution', in Tim Murphy and Patrick Twomey (eds.), *Ireland's Evolving Constitution, 1937–1997: Collected Essays* (Oxford: Hart 1998), p. 128.

[27] See the exchanges in *Irish Press* (22, 25, 26, 28 June and 1 July 1937); *Cork Examiner* (29 June 1937), cited in Lee, op. cit., p. 208; see also Yvonne Scannell 'The Constitution and the Role of Women', in Brian Farrell (ed.), *De Valera's Constitution and Ours Thomas Davis Lectures* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan 1988), pp. 123–136.

[28] *Re J an infant* [1966] IR 295.

[29] *The State (Nicolaou) v. An Bord Uchtála* [1966] IR 567, at p. 572, in Michael Farry, *Education and the Constitution* (Dublin: Round Hall/Sweet & Maxwell 1996), p. 61.

[30] *Keegan v. Ireland* (1994) 18 EHRR 342, in Farry, op. cit., p. 61.

[31] The Supreme Court indicated this in *Re Article 26 and the Adoption (No 2) Bill* [1989] IR 656.

[32] Lambert McKenna, 'State Rights in Education', *Studies*, vol. XVI, 1927, p. 215.

[33] At University of Minnesota Human Rights Library. French Declaration on the Rights of Man, Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (August 26, 1789). 6 May 2003. <http://www.bibliomania.com/2/1/327/2414/27948/1/frameset.html>.

[34] Jeremy Bentham, *Anarchical Fallacies*, in *The Cambridge History of English and American Literature*, 18 volumes, (1907–21), vol. xi. The Period of the French Revolution, III. Bentham and the Early Utilitarians, 8. Natural Rights. 6 May 2003. <http://www.bartleby.com/221/0308.html>.

[35] *Enclyclopaedia Britannica*. Burns H. Weston, '"Nonsense upon stilts": The critics of natural rights'. 6 May 2003. <http://www.uichr.org/features/eb/weston2.shtml>.

[36] *PM v. AW, MM and Attorney General* (unreported, High Court, 21 April 1980).

[37] *The State (Nicolaou) v. An Bord Uchtála* [1966] IR 567.

[38] Ibid.

[39] See Leo Flynn, 'To be an Irish Man—Constructions of Masculinity in the Constitution', in Murphy and Toomey, op. cit., p. 139, for a useful interpretation of this judgement from the perspective of the constitution's failure to ensure the rights of unmarried fathers.

[40] [1966] IR 567, at pp. 590–1.

[41] (1994) EHRR 342.

[42] J.J. Lee, *Ireland 1912–1985: Politics and Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1989), p. 645.

[43] Dooley, op. cit., p. 130.

[44] Mary Raftery & Eoin O'Brien, *Suffer the Little Children: The Inside Story of Ireland's Industrial Schools* (Dublin: New Ireland 1999), p. 17.

[45] Ibid., p. 14.

[46] State Paper Office S4606, cited in J.J. Lee, op. cit., p. 131.

[47] See Farry, op. cit., pp. 13–22.

[48] [2000] *Jamie Sinnott v. Minister For Education, Ireland & The Attorney General* IR 326 & 327, (judgement of Murphy J., 12 July 2001).

[49] Titley, op cit., p. 95.

[50] Ibid., p. 93.

[51] Séamus Ó Buachalla, *Education Policy in Twentieth Century Ireland* (Dublin: Wolfhound Press 1988), p. 428, fn. 96.

[52] Lee, op. cit., p. 133.

[53] Ibid., p. 132.

[54] Unless otherwise stated, material in this and the next paragraph is drawn from Ó Buachalla, op. cit., pp. 356–67.

[55] Páid McGee, 'Special Education in Ireland', *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, vol. 5, no. 1, (1990), pp. 48–64, especially p. 52; see also Páid McGee, 'Acts, Commissions and Change', *Reach Journal*, vol. 3, no. 1, (1989–90), pp. 11–13.

[56] Lynch, op. cit., p. 322.

[57] Ibid., pp. 323–4.

[58] Carol Coulter, 'Give All Children Legal Rights as Individuals—Law Society', *Irish Times* (26 May 2001), p. 4.

[59] See, for example, K.S. Berger, *The Developing Person through the Life Span* (2nd ed.) (New York: Worth 1988).

[60] For Bandura's theories, see A. Bandura, *Aggression: A Social Learning Analysis* (1973), *Social Learning and Personality Development* (London: Holt Rinehart and Winston 1970), *Social Learning Theory* (Englewood Cliffs; London: Prentice-Hall 1977), and *Social Foundations of Thought and Action* (Englewood Cliffs; London: Prentice-Hall c1986); K. Bussey & A. Bandura, 'Social Cognitive Theory of Gender Development and Differentiation', *Psychological Review* 106, (1999), pp 676–713; A. Bandura, 'A social cognitive theory of personality', in L. Pervin & O. John (eds.), *Handbook of Personality* (2nd ed.) (New York: Guilford Publications 1999), pp 154–196. For Vygotsky, see L.S. Vygotsky, *Thought and Language* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press 1962), and *Mind in Society* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press 1978); J. V. Wertsch, *Culture, Communication, and Cognition: Vygotskian Perspectives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1985).

[61] See, for example, Kieran Egan, *The Educated Mind: How Cognitive Tools Shape Our*

Understanding (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press 1997), and *Children's Minds, Talking Rabbits, and Clockwork Oranges* (Ontario: The Althouse Press 1999).

[62] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso 1983).

[63] Tzvetan Todorov, *On Human Diversity: Nationalism, Racism, and Exoticism in French Thought* (trans. C. Porter), (Harvard: Harvard University Press 1993).

'Our songs are our laws …'—Music and the Republic (Part 1)

PATRICK ZUK

As of yet, theorists of civic republicanism have paid but scant attention to the fine arts and the question of their general social and cultural importance. This is somewhat puzzling, given the keen interest that many writers who are drawn to republican and communitarian ideals have shown in education—a concern that Adrian Oldfield in his book *Citizenship and Community* justifies succinctly:

> We cannot expect a practice of citizenship to grow merely because politicians and political thinkers wish it, and exhort their populations to effort. It is not, as again the civic-republican tradition makes clear, a natural practice for human beings, or one that they would spontaneously choose. 'Natural' human beings, or 'non-civic' ones, have to be moulded and shaped for their role as citizens. In part this is the task of education in the broadest sense …[1]

The notion that we must be educated to the practice of citizenship is one of great antiquity. The ancient Greeks and the Chinese both regarded the task of education to consist, at least in part, in the inculcation of certain traditional ideals of conduct that were held to be socially desirable and of fundamental importance for the well-being and preservation of the community as a whole. Both cultures placed considerable emphasis on the valuable role the arts could play in this task of promoting civic virtue. Through the emotional and communicative immediacy of poetry, drama and song, young people could be made familiar with the history and religious beliefs of the community and become aware of their cultural inheritance. The creations of the imagination were also prized on account of their capacity to render vivid and compelling those haunting moral

conflicts that human social life perennially presents and from which all philosophical considerations of citizenship and human social interaction ultimately arise. What better point of departure than, say, a play such as *Antigone* for a discussion of citizenship, duty, and the tragic existential dilemmas that can arise from a clash of loyalties? For thoughtful Greeks, the theatre was an arena for moral education—an education for the practice of living, as it were. The great tragedians taught man to reverence the gods in a fitting manner, to deal fairly with his fellow men and to be on his guard in himself against such evils as hubris by making him witness the tragic and terrifying consequences that could spring from moral dereliction. It is in the context of such an understanding that Aristophanes could describe Aeschylus as a teacher of his people.[2] Central, then, to Greek aesthetics is the notion that the humanities can humanise, can make us humane—a claim that has been reiterated countless times in western culture ever since. A consideration of the role of the arts in society that gives due attention to this guiding idea would therefore appear to arise as a natural progression from the republican concern with education.

Within this tradition, in which aesthetic and ethical concerns are frequently inextricably intertwined, it is perhaps surprising how much emphasis has at times been placed on the social importance of music as an agent of moral education. One might have imagined that a non-verbal artistic medium such as music would have been deemed of little use in the task of imparting a moral vision or a sense of what constituted fitting social conduct. From the outset, however, this does not appear to have been the case. Once again, there are many points of similarity between the Greek and Chinese traditions, both of which ascribe to music an especially potent influence on man's character and moral development, and, on this account, regard music as a matter of the utmost political significance, crucial, in fact, to the well-being of all citizens and to the proper functioning of the state itself. Thereafter, it is interesting to observe how consistently these philosophical and cultural debates about music and its place in society have centred around a comparatively small set of concerns and preoccupations, many of which, as far as we can tell, had already begun to crystallise by 500 BC or thereabouts. The questions raised by such thinkers echo and re-echo down to our own age, when a philosopher such as the Frankfurt Marxist Theodor Adorno can claim to descry behind the facade of western 'culture' the same moral bankruptcy and potential for barbarism that were made manifest in Hitler's death camps, adducing as crucial evidence to support his analysis not only the

musical artefacts of mass culture but also some musical compositions with pretensions to high culture, which, he contends, conspire to perpetuate a state of false consciousness that would seek to deny the sheer horror and ugliness of the world we live in.

Whether one agrees with an analysis such as Adorno's or not, the social significance he ascribes to music is striking, regardless of whether this music is trivial in import or of the utmost seriousness. Indeed, the social significance that this philosophical and educational tradition as a whole ascribes to music is in marked contrast to the distressing trivialisation of the art in our own culture, where, despite its sometimes maddening and inescapable ubiquity in our daily lives, music does not appear to be regarded by many as a medium for the communication of matters of serious import. The 'music industry'—a term that is itself indicative of a sad state of affairs—regards music merely as a commodity to be manufactured and sold for profit, which satisfies, at best, a desire for 'entertainment' or, at worst, provides background noise in elevators and supermarkets. In such a context, the philosophical tradition I have described serves as a poignant reminder of the original dignity of the art, and provides a rich discourse for republican theorists interested in cultural matters to explore. In this article, I propose to present a brief account of the principal issues that have arisen in some important philosophical considerations of the social and political significance of music, emphasising in particular those aspects of this tradition that might be fruitfully reconsidered from the vantage point of republican thought.

It is to Greek culture that we owe one of the most moving expressions of the power of music over the psyche of man, the tale of the mythical musician and poet Orpheus, on whom Apollo and the muses had bestowed gifts of an exceptional order. Such was the ravishing beauty of his playing on the lyre and his singing that he was not only able to tame wild beasts, but even had dominion over inanimate nature, making rocks move from their places and causing rivers to be diverted from their courses to follow the sound of his song. Nor was he without influence as a civilising force in human affairs: as priest of Apollo, the god of reason and order, Orpheus denounced the practice of sacrificial murder carried out as part of the rites honouring Dionysus. In vexation, Dionysus finally set the Maenads on him, and they attacked him inside Apollo's temple at Deium in Macedonia, rending him limb from limb.

Some of the principal themes that are to occupy us in this essay are sounded in this ancient myth. First of all, we note that Orpheus' powers are said to be of divine origin: a recognition of the strange fascination

exerted by music and its wholly mysterious emotive power, for which it seems scarcely possible to provide a satisfactory explanation in rational terms. Second, we note the belief that music has the power to subdue animality and to render it—at least for a while—innocuous. If we read the myth on a metaphorical rather than a literal level, it suggests that civilisation, and those bonds of friendly association between men that Aristotle described as 'concord' become possible as wild, untamed impulse gives way to culture and civilised conduct. Third, the artist has a special role as an agent of this civilising force, as a transmitter of culture. By encountering beauty and acquiring knowledge of it, the grosser animality of our nature can be transcended as order and restraint are imposed on unbridled instinctual impulse.

   Finally, the fragility of this culture and its vulnerability to the forces of unreason are also underlined poignantly, as the dark instinctual energies that were vanquished at the opening of the myth return symmetrically at the tale's close to exact their terrible vengeance.[3] The confrontation has an elemental quality, as the representative of law and social order engages in tragic combat with the representatives of amoral instinct, which recognises no law. Dionysus and the Maenads too were associated with a characteristic type of music, which forms a sharp contrast to Orpheus' Apollonian music. This wild and frenzied music was performed on flutes and drums, and, rather than assisting in the sublimation of chaotic instinctual impulse, served, on the contrary, to induce a state in which these drives could be given untrammelled expression. It was particularly associated with the nocturnal orgiastic rites performed in honour of Dionysus, graphically described by Euripides in the *Bacchae*. These rituals seemed to have involved frenzied dancing and sometimes culminated in the acts of tearing a live animal to pieces and devouring it raw.[4] Whatever other magical or religious ends the participants may have believed such rites served, it also seems probable that they provided a ritual channel for the release of pent-up tensions engendered by the necessary repression of such impulses in regular social contexts. Individuals who experienced these tensions as unendurable could cast restraint aside and regress, at least for a while, to a pre-civilised state of mind after the manner of the Maenads in the Orpheus myth, who similarly rebel against the Orphic demands for continence and self-control that they have come to find intolerable. E. R. Dodds suggests that these rites probably had a valuable social utility, since they purged individuals of what he describes as 'infectious irrational impulses' which became dangerous if dammed up for too long.[5]

The Greeks therefore drew a sharp distinction between two genera of music, one of which was of enormous significance in the subsequent development of western art music. On the one hand, there was a Dionysian music associated with the rites and festivals of a superstitious peasant religion, through which erotic and aggressive energies could be discharged. The unrestrained expression of such instincts in everyday life would of course prove profoundly disruptive to social order, since a regressed conscious is unconcerned with moral responsibility and seeks only the immediate gratification of instinctual impulse. Certainly many Greeks would have regarded such behaviour with abhorrence and alarm, though Greek society evidently seems to have recognised that it was wiser and safer to tolerate these rites up to a point in the interests of general social stability rather than seek to outlaw them.

From the point of view of a musical culture that appealed to the educated, this music can scarcely have been valued on account of its intrinsic artistic merit, since the participants at such rituals would, to put it mildly, hardly have been in a frame of mind to engage in detached aesthetic appreciation of the music for its own sake. Indeed, it is probably not fanciful to compare it in function to much modern popular music, which is mostly formulaic, has little intrinsic musical or intellectual interest, and is largely intended as an adjunct to ritualised dancing in night-clubs and discotheques, which can facilitate a comparable regression in our own culture.

The control of instinctual impulse was a problem that confronted Greek societies just as much as ours. One of the most powerful and effective means of dealing with this problem was seen to lie in education, or to use their term, *paideia*, and it is precisely here that art music—music in its other, Apollonian manifestation—had a central, indeed, crucial role to play as a civilising force. But, it is important to emphasise here that 'education' is a rather unsatisfactory rendering of the Greek term *paideia*, which by the fifth century BC was generally understood to mean the harmonious development of mind and personality brought about through *gymnastike* (physical training) and *mousike* (the study of song, poetic recitation and the art of accompaniment on the lyre). The German '*Bildung*' perhaps translates the word more closely, suggesting a process not only involving the transmission of culture but also fostering personal cultivation of character. The acquisition of technical competence or the assimilation of factual information, while not unimportant, constituted only part of what had to be accomplished.

The overriding aim of *paideia* was to develop the mind and character

of young people and assist them to become good citizens. The inculcation of a sense of social responsibility must inevitably have involved discussion of the value of personal discipline and self-control. In the course of their literary and musical studies—which were one and the same thing—students would have been made acquainted with ideals of exemplary conduct evinced by gods, heroes and ordinary mortals. They would have been taught the proper means of reverencing their gods and have come to acquire a sense of their place in a long cultural tradition. They would have been taught to view certain types of behaviour as unbecoming for educated men. And while republicans might undoubtedly find themselves in sharp disagreement with Greek educators concerning what was considered virtuous conduct, since much emphasis was placed on character traits that would prove subsequently useful in the army,[6] this Greek concept of the function of education has much to commend it. Evidently, the Greeks did not trust that the transmission of cultural values could safely be left to occur spontaneously and automatically.

But, the importance of art music was not merely ancillary to the study of texts in which these examples of personal and civic virtue were to be found. It would appear that many Greeks believed that music could exercise a power to promote the good and assist the sublimation of the lower instincts in the manner suggested by the Orpheus myth. (This belief is perhaps not quite as unlikely or extravagant as it sounds, if one remembers the widely attested value of the role that music can play in certain forms of psychological therapy.[7]) In part, this appears to have arisen from the fact that Greek *paideia* was intimately bound up with a long metaphysical tradition which envisioned music as a manifestation of an underlying divine order. The Pythagorean tradition held that the organisation of the cosmos itself was a musical one, the celestial bodies moving to the 'music of the spheres'—an image memorably invoked by Plato in the celebrated passage describing the vision of Er in *The Republic*. It is perhaps not surprising, then, that Plato, who wrote extensively on the subject of *paideia*, should have come to believe that music also provided a model for the order of the soul, a crucial tenet of his philosophy of education. It seems wholly natural that educators in such a cultural context should view the importance of a musical education to lie in its power to form character. This view seems to have been fairly widespread in Greece and was also endorsed by subsequent generations of theorists and writers on music.[8] Certainly, music would appear to have occupied an important place in the curriculum long before Alexandrine scholars assigned it a place in the classical *quadrivium*

together with geometry, arithmetic and astronomy.

In his discussions of *paideia*, Plato is principally interested in the wider social and political significance of education in art music, rather than in the specifics of technical training or the derivation of aesthetic satisfaction regarded as a sufficient end in itself. In formulating his views on *paideia* and on music generally, Plato appears to have been influenced to a considerable extent by the teachings of a pre-Socratic thinker named Damon, to whose opinions he attached a considerable importance judging from the respectful tone of the references to him in *Laches* and *The Republic*. Damon's principal philosophical contribution seems to lie in the development of a doctrine that posited the most intimate linkage between music and personal morality. Beautiful songs and dances, Damon claimed, create a beautiful soul, while ugly music exercises baneful and morally deleterious effects. Damon proceeded to theorise about the comparative ethical value of various types of music, analysing their melodic and rhythmic organisation to ascertain which of them, in his view, could be suitably employed and which were best avoided. In a celebrated passage in *The Republic*, Damon is attributed with the statement that musical styles cannot be changed without changes also occurring in the laws of the state.

Plato makes the real or fictitious Pythagorean scholar Timaeus express Damonian views in the dialogue that bears his name. Harmony, Timaeus explains, can help restore the soul to a state of inner concord on account of the fact that its motions are of a like nature. Similarly, rhythm is conducive to a state of inner grace. However, only certain types of music could produce these beneficial effects, and Plato is at pains to expose as erroneous the contention that 'rightness is not in any degree whatsoever a characteristic of music'. Music that makes men succumb to frenzy—such as the Dionysian music described earlier—he expressly condemns. He also looks askance at the derivation of a voluptuous or immoderate pleasure in music.

For Plato, the main purpose of *paideia*, then, was the promotion of civic virtue, achieved by educating citizens to love the good and abhor evil. In one passage in *The Laws*, Plato describes it as the process whereby youth is led towards what he calls 'right reason' as it is embodied in the law and approved by the best leaders of the community. Since a child's mind cannot be expected to grapple with serious things, the process of *paideia* can gradually acquaint him with the precepts of the law in terms that he can understand by means of play and song. In such a way, he will learn naturally to discriminate between good and evil, even

before he attains to a state of sufficient intellectual maturity in which he can make use of his reason to assist him in making moral choices. And the employment of reason will come easily, he avers, to one who has already received this training, in which consistent habits of mind have already been formed.[9]

It is of interest here to compare Platonic *paideia* with the contemporary Chinese conception of music education. Here too, we find that music was considered to constitute one of the principal manifestations of an underlying cosmic order, a point on which the two cultures were in striking agreement. According to the *Yüeh Chi* ('Record of Music'), a work included in the compilation of Confucian writings known as the *Li Chi*, music 'appeared in the Great Beginning' when heaven and earth were created.[10] The function of music, according to the philosopher Hsün Tzu, one of the most important figures in ancient Chinese philosophy, was to regulate human emotions and cause them to find appropriate expression in accordance with what the Chinese call *li*, a word meaning rules of proper conduct or mores. Hsün Tzu maintained that the nature of man was evil and that goodness was only acquired by training. The study of *li* served to limit men's desires and appetites, and to refine their behaviour, as he makes clear in the following passage:

> Man's emotions, purposes and ideas, when proceeding according to the *li*, will be orderly. If they do not proceed according to the *li*, they will become wrong and confused, careless and negligent. Food and drink, clothing, dwelling places and movements, if in accordance with the *li*, will be proper and harmonious. If not in accordance with the *li*, they will meet with ruin and calamity. A person's appearance, his bearing, his advancing and retiring when he hastens or walks slowly, if according to the *li*, are refined. If not according to the *li*, he will be haughty, intractable, prejudiced, and rude. Hence man without the *li* cannot exist; affairs without the *li* cannot be completed; government without the *li* cannot be peaceful.[11]

Music was an indispensable adjunct in helping men live their lives in accordance with the precepts of *li*. The author of the *Yüeh Chi* comments in this connection:

> [T]he early kings, when they instituted *li* and music, did not do so to gain full satisfaction for the desires of the mouth, stomach, ears and eyes. But they intended to teach the people to regulate their likes and dislikes, and to turn back to the normal course of humanity … When man is acted upon by external things without end, and no regulation is set to his likes and dislikes, he becomes changed through the encounter with any external object. To be so changed is to

have the natural principle (*t'ien li*) within him extinguished, and to give the utmost indulgence to his human desires. With this there comes the rebellious and deceitful heart, with its licentious and wild disorder … This is the way to great disorder. Therefore the early kings instituted *li* and music to regulate human conduct.[12]

It is important to emphasise at this juncture that such an austere conception of the function of music did not constitute the whole story as far as Greek society was concerned, the cultural and educational significance of art music notwithstanding. Aristotle, for example, is considerably more tolerant of other, less exalted, views of the function of music. In *Politics*, he seems readily prepared to allow that music might simply provide diversion and amusement. He seems less troubled by the tastelessness of popular musical entertainments than Plato, provided such activities remain within reasonably seemly bounds. He does inveigh, however, against certain types of abuses in performance that he regards as vulgar or tasteless. As far as music education was concerned, though, Aristotle, too, acknowledged its central importance and appreciated the contribution made by musical activities to general intellectual culture.[13]

On the whole, this view of music education had an enormous influence on subsequent writers, well into the last century. And, although we can no longer lend credence in a literal manner to the metaphysical basis of *paideia*, its beauty as a poetic conception is impressive.[14] These Greek insights concerning the social importance of art music (and its sister arts of dance and poetry) could form a useful starting point for civic republicans who might wish either to evolve a general theory of culture or to arrive at a considered justification of the continuing importance of these disciplines within our educational systems. It would be of particular interest for educational theorists to explore whether this Greek vision of art music education, which emphasises a holistic development of the personality and our rounded development as citizens, may not offer a richer and more imaginative view of what education could involve, even if we must now discard those aspects of *paideia* which are no longer of relevance to us. Amongst these can be included those negative and authoritarian aspects of Platonic *paideia* that I shall discuss later.

The European tradition of education in art music stands in a direct line of descent from the ancient Greeks. In its modern form, it still offers unique opportunities for a holistic education that could be of immense benefit to all students whether or not they become professional musicians. Apart from whatever technical skills and proficiencies they may acquire, students also come to engage with music on intellectual,

emotional and imaginative levels. Moreover, since most music-making must take place in groups, music education can provide many opportunities for children and young people from different backgrounds to learn to work together on shared projects, as well as providing them with valuable social outlets as adults. In the course of their studies, a number of valuable traits of character can be encouraged to develop in a completely unforced manner. Gifted teachers can bring their students to an appreciation of the personal and social value of discipline, thoroughness, intellectual humility and a capacity for truthfulness towards self. They can also awaken ethical and emotional insights and encourage the development of artistic sensitivity and intellectual independence.

Some of our most important formative experiences take place during the long hours we spend in the classroom. Education, therefore, has an ethical dimension that is inescapable. This should not be forgotten as education comes under increasing pressure to function as a profit-making venture, an utterly impoverished view that threatens to reduce it to a dismal and impersonal affair, in which tedious rote learning for the sake of examination results appears to be all that is considered important or valuable. The experiences of young people in institutions of learning can have a lasting effect for good or ill on the course of their future development. Information that has been forgotten may be easily re-assimilated by consulting a work of reference, but ultimately far more valuable for a young person's future personal and intellectual development is a stimulus which encourages the acquisition of certain habits of mind and a healthy curiosity that might lead students to broaden their understanding of the cultural context in which they find themselves and sensitise them to the problems of social coexistence. This I consider to be an education for citizenship in the best possible sense.[15] Music, when well taught, can provide just such a stimulus and is a particularly interesting example of a discipline that makes quite a number of simultaneous demands on the student's capacities, apart from furnishing a good starting point for other intellectual and artistic pursuits.

Certainly, as William Galston points out, there is no need for such an education for citizenship to assume sinister forms that suggest mass indoctrination on the part of what he calls a 'tutelary state'[16]—neither need teachers engage in anything so blatant as overt moralising or preaching. This would not only be unnecessary but also intolerable. Such social skills and sense of personal responsibility and discipline as a musical education can impart are likely to find widespread acceptance

amongst all members of the community. Greek *paideia* should serve as a salutary reminder of what all education worthy of the name is (or should be): a process that stimulates the whole of the personality to further growth and development. The acquisition of information and the systematic mastery of certain skills are, of course, important, but they only constitute a part of this process; and a disproportionate emphasis on them to the exclusion of other concerns, equally important, if perhaps less justifiable in purely utilitarian terms, leads to the impoverishment of a noble ideal.

Music education engages the student's capacities on a number of levels simultaneously to an extent that few other disciplines can do. Most students begin by learning to play an instrument or to sing. Little by little, they must surmount progressively more difficult challenges to their sense of physical co-ordination. They must develop a refined tactile sense which can control the most subtle discriminations of sound production. Considerable sophistication of aural perception is necessary in order to play properly in tune. There is also a substantial quantity of technical knowledge that must be acquired if the student is to read musical notation fluently. The secure mastery of these skills requires a great deal of patience and sustained effort, as well as a daily commitment of time spent in practising one's instrument. As students become older, a variety of more advanced studies become necessary: the study of harmony, counterpoint, and musical forms assists students to deepen their understanding of musical structures from a technical point of view, while historical and aesthetic studies can lead students to an appreciation of the relationship between musical artefacts and the cultural and social matrices from which they emerge. Finally, one hopes that students will come to acquire those elusive gifts of emotional insight and imaginative empathy essential to any mature engagement with a work of art. These studies are potentially endless. And even if a student decides not to pursue a career as a professional musician, the knowledge and skill they have acquired are valuable and enriching.

One hopes that when young adults leave school, music will continue to play an important role in their lives. At the very least, they might continue to attend concerts or to enjoy recorded performances at home. It is undeniable that contact with great music can provide an emotional and aesthetic satisfaction that, for some people, constitutes some of the most important experiences of their internal lives. Even if not consciously articulated, this significance lies perhaps in the fact that art can provide us with images of order and beauty in the midst of a world that seems

ever more menacing, ugly and uncertain. Orpheus, in Rilke's cycle of sonnets, raises his lyre amongst the shadows to offer consolation for those aspects of our existence that are the occasion of sorrow and anguish:

Über dem Wandel und Gang,	Transcending change and motion,
weiter und freier,	further and freer
währt noch dein Vor-Gesang,	resounds yet your primal song,
Gott mit dem Leier.	God with the lyre.
Nicht sind die Leiden erkannt,	We cannot fathom the cause of sorrow,
nicht ist die Liebe gelernt,	nor learn aught of love,
und was im Tod uns entfernt,	and what is taken from us in death
ist nicht entschleiert.	is not revealed to us.
Einzig das Lied überm Land	Song alone, over the land,
heiligt und feiert.[17]	can heal and celebrate.

For some, their encounters with music take place in a jealously guarded solitude and are of a deeply private nature. Others derive pleasure from the fact that such experiences can be shared or that they can participate in music making together with friends and acquaintances. Such people might join a choir, a local light operatic society, or an amateur orchestra or chamber group. The social value of such activities is immense. Apart from providing an outlet for talent that would not otherwise have the opportunity for expression, these activities bring members of a community together for pleasurable recreation of a particularly worthwhile kind.

Choral singing, in particular, is unique in the extent of the opportunities it affords for participation: provided one has a sense of rhythm and can sing in tune—and for the vast majority of people neither of these requirements presents a problem—one can become a serviceable chorister. The quality of the individual voices in a choir does not have to be exceptional; and very few voices are so objectionable in timbre as to present an insurmountable difficulty. No purchase of instruments is necessary, and the financial cost of participating in almost all amateur choirs is well within the reach of most. Choral singing can also forge common bonds of mutual obligation and reliance—choristers must attend regular rehearsals and take individual responsibility for learning their parts, so as not to slow up the progress of the entire group in rehearsal or adversely affect the artistic standard of excellence that the group can reasonably expect to achieve. Membership of a choir can also provide a

spur to further personal development. Many conductors of choirs encourage their members to improve their competence at reading musical notation, for example, or to take private vocal tuition. Finally, the choral literature is so vast that members of choirs can enjoy singing fine music dating from any period since the middle ages up to the present. Similar benefits accrue from participation in amateur theatrical or instrumental groups, and these activities should surely be of interest to those civic republicans and communitarians who lament the increasing atomisation of communities into isolated individuals who pursue their aims without relation to one another and without any shared sense of purpose or sense of responsibility to their fellow citizens that might transcend narrow personal interests.

In our present social and cultural climate, there is a very real danger that the benefits accruing from both a musical education and the activities it makes possible will be lost sight of. The western art music tradition is particularly vulnerable to the slur of elitism—an incoherent and misguided attack, which, in its crudest form, denigrates classical music as a costly recreational activity that is of marginal interest. The value of a musical education is also overlooked by those who hold extremely utilitarian views on education and regard the study of the fine arts with scepticism or impatience. Politicians and educators holding attitudes of this kind, especially if allied to populist sympathies, will naturally be slow to acknowledge the intrinsic value of art music as a cultural pursuit, let alone support the provision of public funding for it. A careful reconsideration of the cultural importance of art music from a civic republican standpoint along the lines I have suggested might be both timely and pertinent.

The value of the western art tradition has implicitly been called into question by certain modern trends in musicology that could also fruitfully be subjected to critical scrutiny by republican theorists. Readers who have followed the course of recent debates in literary criticism concerning the hegemonic claims traditionally made for the canon of western literature will recognise ideas that are essentially similar. As far as music is concerned, these revisionist critiques typically advocate a thoroughgoing relativism that emphatically denies any privileged place in our musical culture for western art music above folk music, jazz, and all the various types of popular music. Proponents of this view point would have us redirect our attention to music that has occupied a place outside the margins of what was considered 'high culture' and that did not receive attention from musicologists until comparatively recently—

amongst these are ethnic musics from Africa and Asia and the various genera of jazz and popular music (in the broadest meaning of that term).

A related trend in contemporary musicology concerns itself with questions of ideology in relation to music, assuming that ideological positions can somehow be discerned even from abstract musical compositions without texts. For example, practitioners of feminist or so-called gay and lesbian musicology claim to be able to uncover the attitudes of a composer towards sexuality and gender from a musical composition. The methodological premises on which such work is based, as well the manner in which its putative 'findings' are obtained, may be open to severe criticism, but, nonetheless, these branches of musicology seek to alter traditional notions concerning the sort of music that should receive attention both within the university and outside it. Part of this writing is highly provocative and confrontational in tone, eager, so it seems, to denigrate the achievement of central figures in the western canon in a manner similar to some deconstructionist criticism.[18]

In part, these tendencies originate in an emotional reaction to some of the more questionable aspects of Europe's past, which is typically accompanied by a vehement rejection of a complacent, culturally insular eurocentrism and a pronounced distaste for the arrogant assumption of cultural superiority that all too frequently accompanied such an attitude when Europe's colonial and imperial ambitions were at their zenith. A second aspect of the 'new musicology' is connected to topical political issues surrounding sexuality, race, gender and socio-economic disadvantage, all too familiar to need rehearsal here. Once again, this is indubitably bound up with what Hegel described as a desire for *Anerkennung*—a need for recognition, respect and acceptance on the part of certain groups within our society who have until comparatively recently been treated unjustly.

Though the positions adopted might appear attractive to many at a first glance, they are in fact highly problematic when one subjects them to more considered scrutiny. One wonders if there is any meaningful sense in which one can compare a highly complex cultural artefact such as a Beethoven symphony with a typically ephemeral product of mass culture such as a formulaic and banal pop song with trite lyrics, let alone assert that they are of equal cultural significance. And is the pop song of comparable cultural significance to, for example, a chant employed in the course of a religious ritual by an Asian ethnic group? Given that many western music students learn about African or Asian musics with only the most superficial knowledge of the language of the community they study,

if any, or its social structure, religious beliefs and culture, one wonders whether many courses in ethnomusicology are not, ironically, further manifestations of a western cultural arrogance that really panders to a superficial vogue for the artefacts of these cultures marketed as 'world music', while attempting to conceal its superficiality of engagement under the cloak of academic respectability.

   The practical implications of this relativist stance are of great moment for music education. The very choice of music to be studied in school music programmes and in university courses is now frequently a controversial matter. Academics and educators who design such courses are understandably anxious to avoid incurring ideological opprobrium through charges of eurocentrism, anti-populism or elitism. One wonders if these changes to the curriculum sometimes come about not only because of a desire for greater inclusiveness but also from an ideological hostility to our western musical heritage. As a consequence, in many curricula the study of western art music is now supplemented with courses devoted to a variety of ethnic musics, jazz, and popular music. This creates many practical problems, however. It is difficult enough to provide a thorough training in the various technical disciplines and historical studies that make up most traditionally-structured music programmes—if provision of time must also be made for the study of other types of music, the situation becomes impossible. There is, after all, a thousand years or so of western art music for students to get to grips with. To bring students to the point where they can appreciate a complex artefact such as a Mahler symphony or a Wagner opera in all its multifarious subtleties of construction and expression requires a thorough training and a considerable provision of time. Inevitably, sacrifices have to be made if the students are not to be overburdened. What tends to happen in practice is that courses in traditional core subjects are either abandoned or else much diluted in order to allow time for the study of ethnic or popular musics. But, inevitably, these will also be taught in a superficial fashion, since teachers or lecturers must contend with the difficulties presented by constraints of time and budgetary expenditure in these subject areas too. Courses that involve progressive technical work often tend to be dropped from the curriculum, and, in practical terms, students cease to acquire a really solid foundation in any subject. The integrity of the educational vision I have described above is thus greatly compromised and its potential benefits to the student reduced.

   Needless to say, problems such as I have described are not unique to music education. The distinguished scholar and art critic Ernst Gombrich

gave a lecture in 1985 in which he expressed deep concern about the effects of proposed financial cutbacks on both the quality of courses offered at undergraduate level and on academic standards generally. He emphasises that it is unrealistic to expect that students who have not acquired a thorough foundation in their subject will produce work of any real significance. Furthermore, some of the most valuable aspects of university education have increasingly come under threat because they are perceived to cost too much money. Gombrich strongly criticises moves to reduce the provision of time for tutorials, for example, where students have the opportunity to receive helpful suggestions and commentary relating to their work. He emphasises that while historical facts can, of course, be learnt from a book, stimulating discussion with a fine teacher can be invaluable in furthering a student's intellectual development and helping to release innate talent. There is no substitute for personal contact of this nature. If university education degenerates into mere rote learning, and unsystematic rote learning at that, without any provision being made for students to receive detailed criticism, standards suffer. Ultimately, this decline in standards means that the subject stagnates. As Gombrich rightly points out:

> The advancement of the subject depends to no small extent on the respect it gains amongst colleagues and ultimately also in the wider world. Writing books, giving lectures, reviewing, even people joining in public discussions, should not be seen as self-promotion; they can serve the paramount duty I have outlined, they can enlist interest and make people see that the subject must not be perverted nor sacrificed to other considerations … Over the centuries our institutions of higher education have developed into finely tuned instruments in which all the conflicting demands made on them appear to be so carefully balanced that nothing can be omitted or even added without serious harm to the whole. Hence the outcry that invariably goes up when any part of the system is threatened. We have seen those who are anxious to spare the taxpayer money eyeing that magnificent edifice from all sides with axe or shears in hand, bridling at the cost of the ground rates in a desirable part of the city, at the expense of a low student-to-staff ratio, at the needs of research, at the tenure system, and of course at the expenditure on students' grants, making our flesh creep about the *per capita* cost of every student who sits in a classroom.[19]

He continues:

> There is much talk nowadays about [the] added opportunities that a university education confers on graduates. I am not sure that this applies to the present as it undoubtedly did in the past, but if there are such advantages they can only derive

from the confidence that the awarding university still widely enjoys. There are plenty of institutions that confer quite worthless degrees; if others are far from worthless on the market place their value must be due to the academic excellence that only the teachers themselves can judge and preserve … [R]eading an arts subject under an inspiring teacher can and should be an enriching experience even for those who do not want to advance the subject. Life is often sad, and it is barbarous cruelty to want to cut off our young people from this source of strength, from the inspiration they can derive throughout their lives from this vitalising contact with the masterpieces of art, literature, philosophy and music, whatever their future employment or unemployment will demand of them.[20]

Gombrich is also highly sceptical about certain fashionable relativist attitudes now prevalent in criticism and sees their influence on scholarship as calamitous. 'Cultural relativism', he claims, 'has led to the jettisoning of the most precious heritage of all scholarly work, the claim of being engaged in a quest for truth.'[21] If one accepts the claims of such relativist theorists concerning music, all musical artefacts, no matter how trivial, must be considered to have an equal claim to be seen as significant. As a consequence, any attempts at intellectually responsible criticism that raise questions of standard, technical accomplishment or the intrinsic interest of the artistic conception are rendered impossible, because all such judgements mean making comparisons with other art works. At its most absurd, this leads to a sort of wishy-washy aesthetic positivism that views all musical artefacts as good, since there can be no standards outside that defined by these works themselves, which, we are told, must be taken on their own terms. As we shall see later, this is precisely the impasse confronting those wishing to come to terms with much contemporary music. Apart from being paradoxical and self-defeating—since, in the end, all relativists are forced to recognise the validity of every counterclaim—relativism results in a shallowness of intellectual and imaginative critical response. Civic republican theorists could therefore make a valuable contribution to the theory of criticism as well as to discussions of music education by subjecting such relativism to a searching critique and addressing the many undesirable practical consequences that arise from attempts to implement such a stance in practice.

It is important to emphasise here that the western art music tradition in Ireland is particularly vulnerable to the practical consequences of such elitist and relativist criticisms. For reasons intimately bound up with our colonial past, musical infrastructures remain significantly under-developed here in comparison with other European countries, and the

work of Irish composers occupies at best a peripheral place in the awareness of most Irish people. We have little in our musical heritage that can compare with the rich art music traditions to be found on the continent, some of which go back to the middle ages and were largely fostered by native aristocracies. As a result of their patronage and practical support, orchestras could be founded and companies formed for theatre, ballet and opera. Many of these institutions still exist, some of them three or four hundred years old and prized in their native countries for their history of distinguished artistic achievement.

In Ireland, matters are very different, and art music could only begin to develop more fully in the latter part of the twentieth century. For a start, our native aristocracy, who might have supported artistic ventures in a manner similar to their European counterparts, were forced into exile after 1600, as the systematic colonial subjugation of the country began in earnest. This was a disaster of the first magnitude for Irish cultural life, and in the centuries that followed circumstances were hardly propitious for the development of a vibrant native culture of art music. In the eighteenth century, such musical activity as there was in Ireland took place mostly in Dublin, supported predominantly by the ruling Anglo-Irish class. In 1800, however, a further blow was dealt to Irish cultural life with the passing of the Act for the Union of Great Britain and Ireland. Within a decade or two, Dublin ceased to be a cultural centre of any importance, and, as sources of financial support for local artistic ventures dried up, musical life in Ireland went into rapid decline.[22]

Throughout the nineteenth century, the circumstances of musical life here—our rich tradition of folk music notwithstanding—were impoverished to a degree unimaginable in central Europe. Ireland had no professional orchestras or other performing groups; neither was there a professional national opera or ballet company. The country was beset by so many social and economic problems—not least of which were those caused by the general level of poverty and by disasters such as the potato famines—that cultural enterprises of this nature were quite simply not a priority. Most talented musicians had to go abroad for further training and frequently stayed there to live, since Ireland offered so few opportunities for remunerative and artistically rewarding employment. This situation lasted well into the twentieth century. The dispiriting circumstances of Irish musical life are therefore quite unique amongst European countries.

When Ireland gained its independence, circumstances at last began to change, largely thanks to the efforts of a pioneering generation of prominent Irish musicians such as Aloys Fleischmann and Brian Boydell.

Slowly, musical education became more widely accessible, a variety of professional ensembles were set up, and performance infrastructures slowly developed. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, then, the conditions of musical life in Ireland are healthier than they ever were. But, we still have only one symphony orchestra; we do not have either a national opera company or a ballet company that operates on a full-time basis; music education in primary and secondary schools is in crisis; and musicology in Ireland is still in its infancy. Despite the fact that Ireland has produced a significant number of composers whose work merits attention, their music remains largely in manuscript, unpublished and largely unperformed, so it is difficult at times for a specialist scholar to form any evaluation of it, let alone the general music-lover. There is, moreover, scarcely a book in print to which one could refer readers wishing to acquaint themselves with the details of an Irish composer's career. The last general history of music in Ireland was written in 1905. If one point emerges clearly from this sketch, it is that the beleaguered tradition of western art music is particularly fragile here and occupies anything but a privileged position in Irish cultural life: it needs to be carefully fostered if we are to consolidate and build upon the achievements of the last eighty years.

Part two of this article will appear in issue four of The Republic

Notes

[1] Adrian Oldfield, *Citizenship and Community: Civic Republicanism and the Modern World* (London: Routledge 1990), p. 8.

[2] See Warren D. Anderson, *Ethos and Education in Greek Music* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press 1966), p. 114.

[3] Elizabeth Sewell's book *The Orphic Voice: Poetry and Natural History* (Harper Row 1971) gives a fascinating account of the subsequent elaborations of the Orpheus myth in western culture.

[4] For a discussion of these rites, see E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkley: University of California Press 1973), appendix I, pp. 270–282. The reader will also recall the chilling evocation of them in the description of Aschenbach's nightmare in Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice*.

[5] See the discussion in Dodds, op. cit., p. 76f.

[6] That is, unless these civic republicans find themselves sympathetic to Machiavelli and other thinkers in the republican tradition who urge the value of universal military training.

[7] Fascinatingly, the Greeks also believed music to be effective in curing mental disturbance—a striking adumbration of the modern discipline of music therapy. See the discussion in Dodds, op. cit., pp. 78–80.

[8] The Romans adopted many features of this Greek aesthetic tradition. In the *Ars Poetica*, a text much invoked by eighteenth-century music theorists writing on opera, Horace espouses a belief that contemporary drama should have an instructive and moral

aim in the manner of Greek models. Writing in the first century BC, the polymath scholar Varro explicitly subscribes to a belief in the power of music to form character and makes the ethical content of a piece of music the crucial criterion for assessing its value. The geographer Strabo, who lived around the beginning of the Christian era, refers to the ancient notion that poetry taught virtue and tells us that many music teachers in his day claimed to assist in the moral development of their students by imparting culture. The writer Quintillian, who produced a famous treatise on rhetoric, seems also to have held such views, as did Philo Judaeus and a variety of later neo-Platonists. Boethius, whose treatises on music were by far the most influential and widely cited theoretical texts on music before the Renaissance, held that the importance of music in the curriculum lay in its relation to morality and to the realm of pure knowledge. He emphasised the importance of understanding and controlling the elements of music, since it had such a potent influence on human behaviour, particularly as a means of strengthening our rational capacities. A Platonic influence is similarly in evidence in the writings of Basil the Great, in which he stresses the role of music education within the curriculum. Augustine, too, wrote extensively on music and was deeply appreciative of the art, though in a celebrated passage of *The Confessions* he expresses his suspicion of chants that were too overtly sensuous in appeal.

[9] See the discussion of Platonic *paideia* in Warren D. Anderson, op. cit., p. 91ff.

[10] See Fung Yu-Lan, *A History of Chinese Philosophy* (trans. Derk Bodde), (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1983), vol. i, p. 344.

[11] Ibid., p. 298.

[12] Ibid., pp. 342–343.

[13] For a concise account of Aristotle's views on music, see Warren D. Anderson, op. cit., pp. 111–146.

[14] It is striking that a culture that could attach so much importance to music, not only as an agent of social order but also as a manifestation of a divine cosmic order, should have been responsible for conducting the first researches of which we have record into acoustics and discovering the hidden mathematical order underlying the harmonic series (those notes that can be obtained from a string or pipe when it vibrates in simple fractions of its length).

[15] Richard Dagger, *Civic Virtues: Rights, Citizenship and Republican Liberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1997), p. 117; Dagger emphasises that for republican liberals 'part of the point of education is to help people live autonomously' and to enable them 'to live as autonomous individuals in community with other autonomous individuals'.

[16] Richard Dagger, *Liberal Purposes: Goods, Virtues, and Diversity in the Liberal State*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1991), p. 216–217.

[17] Rainer Maria Rilke, *Sonnets to Orpheus* (Manchester: Carcanet 2000), Sonnet I. Translation by author.

[18] The musicologist Susan McClary hears some of the music of Beethoven as the embodiment of a violently aggressive sexuality, and she speaks of pounding, pelvic thrusts and rape. In one particularly purple passage, she claims that the end of the first movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony is an 'unparalleled fusion of murderous rage and pleasure in its fulfillment'. According to McClary, Beethoven finally 'forces closure by bludgeoning the movement to death'. See her *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender and Sexuality* (Minnesota University Press 1991). For a general discussion of these branches of musicology, see Nicholas Cook, *Music: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1998).

[19] 'The Embattled Humanities: The Universities in Crisis', in E. H. Gombrich, *Topics of Our Time: Twentieth Century Issues in Learning and Art* (London: Phaidon Press 1991), pp. 25–26 and 28–29.

[20] Ibid. p. 30–31.

[21] 'Relativism in the Humanities', in E. H. Gombrich, op. cit., p. 38.

[22] For an account of music in Ireland from the end of the eighteenth century into the first decades of the nineteenth, see Ita Hogan, *Anglo-Irish Music 1780–1830* (Cork: Cork University Press 1966). For developments after the Act of Union, see the article by Aloys Fleischmann, 'Music and Society', in W. E. Vaughan (ed.), *A New History of Ireland, volume vi: Ireland under the Union II* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1996), pp. 500–522.

The Public Thing: A Materialist View

D. R. O'CONNOR LYSAGHT

The appearance of *The Republic* was welcome: its survival into a third issue even more so. No movement needs political theory as much as Irish republicanism after the debilitating effect of decades of concentration on armed struggle, reinforced, on the one hand, by the generally philistine influence of the catholic church and, on the other, by the Communist Party's claim to be able to solve the Irish national question by reformist means, leading to the will-o'-the-wisp of 'actually achievable socialism in a single country'.

Of course, this journal cannot be welcomed uncritically. The articles it has published tend to claim for republicanism more than it can bear. This arises partly from a justifiable disillusion with the aforementioned Communist Party panacea. In the first issue, Liam O'Dowd declares: 'Socialists found it difficult to marry a universalistic programme with the reality of having to build socialism (sic) in specific states'. In the second issue, the doubts are more obvious: Iseult Honohan and James Livesey seem to see republicanism per se as more vital and relevant than socialism. Honohan is cautious: 'Socialism appeared to be routed by liberalism'. Livesey has no doubts:

> After the demise of socialism, [republicanism] is the major, if not the only intellectual alternative to Anglo-American liberalism … For much of the twentieth century, indeed, the revolutionary moment was lost to institutional republicanism and instead was found in the communist tradition. French republicanism survived this, and still offers us a strong and vibrant perspective from which to understand the modern world and act within it.

Besides, in an otherwise scrupulously detailed analysis of Irish republicanism before the Treaty, Patrick Maume compounds his colleagues' failings by ignoring the most coherent of the signatories of the 1916 proclamation, James Connolly.

The overall effect implies that the writers (and, perhaps, the editors) believe that republicanism can provide a strategy for the future that will incorporate the strengths, but not the weaknesses, of socialism. But, how

is republicanism so different and superior? Presumably, it means more than having a country ruled and reigned over by Jacques Chirac or George W. Bush, rather than reigned over (but not ruled) by Elizabeth Windsor. Yet, only Livesey tries to articulate his vision, and he can find no better example of it than the French celebrations (surely nationalist, rather than republican?) of their football World Cup win.

This produces a second weakness, seen in the general rather than the specific Irish contributions. The general historical approach is idealistic rather than materialist, fudging the question of the material context in which republican politics are to be applied. Neither Finbar Cullen's challenge on republicanism and nationalism nor Honohan's and Fergus O'Ferrall's articulate descriptions of republican concepts since Aristotle contain any description of their subject's material origins. The unwary reader (and this writer has learnt over the years how few readers are wary) might conclude that republicanism sprang from the brain of the tutor of King Alexander the Great. This is the more contrary in that Aristotle was himself a materialist, whereas his teacher, Plato, was not only an idealist but also the author of the first book known to posterity by the title *The Republic*. The trouble for idealists is that Plato's republic gives women gender equality only in a stratified caste society rather than in the actual practice of the republic (or, more accurately, the *polis* of his day) and so is closer to the practice of Greece's one contemporary monarchy, Sparta.

A materialist account of historic republicanism should begin with the establishment of the first bourgeois republics. This must exclude the pre-monarchical communes of America, celebrated so well by Peter Linebaugh; though folk memories of similar entities may have influenced future radicals, they could not begin to change history positively until Friedrich Engels incorporated anthropological discoveries of the actual nature of the American bodies into socialist theory.

Historic republicanism began with the overthrow of the kings of the classic Greek city-states by those states' rising middle classes. The motives of these rebels seem to have varied, but all wanted to get rid of one who stood in their way, often in the way of their getting greater powers of exploitation. Insofar as there was any contemporary theoretical justification for these rebellions, it is to be found not in Aristotle but in Herodotus' report of the debates among the Persian regicides after the death of Smerdis. And here, there are two differences: the democratic argument was less strident than in Herodotus, if, indeed, it was ever heard at all; and, of course, in Persia, the debate ended with the reassertion of the monarchy under Darius, since a majority of the

participants feared that the techniques used to run a city-state would prove inadequate for an empire.

This debate represented the first assertion of a feature that would come to distinguish the republic from the monarchy. Up to then, there had been a tradition of open debate in the tribal councils, with the king participating as first among equals and chief justice. It appears that, in many cases, his expulsion was caused by a fear that he would use his third role as military commander to curtail or even end that tradition. While this would happen in Persia, in the Greek states the defeat of royalty, though often accompanied by an increased repression of the less propertied, preserved the right to discuss this and other matters. While the monarchies became increasingly reliant on the monarch's will, tempered by his courtiers' intrigues, the new republics, the new *polises*, gave their name to the practice known as politics. In the absence of the threat of monarchy, political debate could and did develop throughout the free citizenry. Political thinking matured as it could not in contemporary Persia. Aristotle did not invent the republic; the republic could be said to have invented Aristotle.

The main issues behind such political disputes arose from class differences. The initial benefits of the republic were felt mainly by the rich. Without any interference from a king, they stepped up the pauperisation of the lower orders. These latter responded partly by yearning for an unobtainable return to a folk-remembered golden age, but sought redress as well from new monarchical figures, called tyrants, who did bring redress but also proved to block political development as much as their earlier role models. At the time of the Persian Wars, many of the Athenian democratic party are said to have gone farther and to have conspired to hand their state to the monarchical enemy. The subsequent broadening of the entitlement to political participation to include all (male) citizens put the wealthy on the defensive. Many of these began to look to the kingdom of Sparta for deliverance. Eventually, after Sparta's victory over Athens, they got their way and imposed, through their own thirty tyrants, a mercifully brief classical forerunner of twentieth-century fascism.

The trouble was that the economic basis for these democracies was one of chattel slavery. This had begun as a useful and even (compared to killing) humanitarian means of disposing of prisoners of war; by classical republican times, it had been extended to the impoverished citizens of the *polis*. It meant that the bourgeoisie had no incentive to develop the means of production (the classical Greeks knew most of the principles used to increase production during the industrial revolution; the use of slaves

removed the incentive to anticipate these practices.) At the bottom, the poorer citizens feared that free slaves would become competition, and their situation was merely one to be avoided personally rather than ended collectively.

The result was that the most enlightened Greek state, Athens, could pay for this enlightenment and for the appeasement of its poorer citizens only by an exploitation of their weaker nominal allies, isolating it decisively from Sparta and beginning a period of inter-Greek warfare that left the city-states vulnerable to King Philip of Macedon and his son and successor, Alexander the Great. This basic problem would not be solved by the Roman republic that supplanted Macedon and the Greek city-states. Certainly, it had more success than Athens in foreign policy, but this success gave the expanded republic problems that it could not resolve. To deal with them required strong government, something denied by the conservatives. The caesars led the democrats to abandon the republic for an imperial tyranny. Two and an half centuries later, all freemen in the expanded state were admitted to citizenship, but, now, this meant only increased imperial revenues. The *polis*, the Romans' 'public thing', seemed an impossible ideal.

Yet, it would not die. As barbarian invasions broke up the empire in the west, refugees joined with local fishermen to found a new monarch-free zone: the republic of Venice. This state developed in a new context. The barbarian conquerors of the rest of Europe had less developed economies than those that they destroyed; this meant not that they had no slavery, but that they depended on it less than those they defeated. The disintegrating Roman slave-operated estates were replaced by looser units, with local chiefs commanding hosts of tenants who paid for their lands through their service, all under an increasingly national authority. Such large-scale backwardness provided a centuries-long period of economic stability, which yielded economic units too poor to require slaves, yet productive enough not to be destroyed for slavery. Commodity production revived in the form of production by free men for exchange. All this contrasted with the stability of the Roman Empire in the Byzantine east and its neighbours. Here, equally strong imperial entities battled for supremacy, replacing their rivals where they could, but only with identical social-political orders. Slavery remained unchecked, as did absolute monarchy, the dominance of intrigue over politics, and a sterility of political thinking.

So, it was left to western Europe to host the gradual revival of republican practice and thought. This took some time. By the end of the first Christian millenium, Venice's example had been followed by a rival,

Ragusa (now Dubrovnik), and in northern Italy by several city-states that declared themselves republics in opposition to the theocracy of Rome and the revived Holy Roman Empire. By 1300, according to tradition, three Alpine cantons had formed a form of republican confederation to protect their interests against the emperor.

Like their classical predecessors, these medieval republics began as small towns and villages. Only the Swiss confederation managed to transcend urban limits, perhaps because it was confederal rather than fully federated. As yet, its units were also relatively poor and rural. Within other state boundaries, the 'public thing' was fragile. It had to contend with growing trade and the resulting increase in disparities between rich and poor. The latter remained atomised and disorganised enough to look to ambitious members of one or other of the leading families for salvation (as in Rome, for example). By 1500, every Italian republic, apart from Venice, Genoa and San Marino, had become a hereditary tyranny. Moreover, as with the *polises* of classical Greece, their collective weakness had left Italy vulnerable to foreign powers.

Outside Italy, the growth of national states under kings seeking increased independence from emperor and pope meant that national monarchs retained allegiance through compromise with republican principle and by assembling their parliaments to give a voice to the rising (and increasingly tax-paying) bourgeoisie as a counterbalance to the armed feudal nobility. This delivered less than it seemed to promise. The international power struggles offered subjects little choice beyond their rulers, while, once the nobility had been subdued and trade (and, hence, revenue) expanded, most monarchs were able to abandon the parliamentary experiment.

It was precisely the rise of the Italian republics in the context of monarchical adaptation to traditional republican forms that reinvigorated political theory. Both Thomas Aquinas and Marsilio of Padua preached the mixed constitution. Later, another Italian, Nicolo Machiavelli, produced two less compromising works that reflected a more critical situation in his country. *The Prince* expressed Machiavelli's gut reaction that a tyrant was needed to unite an independent Italy. His *Discourses* recognised that the more difficult path of a restored and reformed republicanism was needed.

Outside Italy at this time, the protestant break from Rome (the reformation) was preparing opportunities for further republican experiments. In the Netherlands, it provoked a political break from monarchy and a federation of republican states: the largest republic since classical Rome. In Britain, attempts by successive monarchs to keep the

break under their control led to King Charles' execution and a still larger republic.

The religious issue alone did not inspire the new republics. The rebellious emphasis on freedom of conscience did justify moves towards republics and even towards democracy and socialism, but these were crushed with the blessing of the new churches' founders. In the end, the reformation strengthened the local German dukes and the Scandinavian kings; indeed, in Sweden, it helped revive the monarchy after the defeat of a developing republic.

On the other hand, opposition to the religion of the ruling monarchs justified moves towards republicanism by catholics as well as protestants. The very first French republic was proclaimed by catholics who rejected both the protestant Henri IV and his rival, the catholic king of Spain, though they abandoned their 'public thing' when Henri converted to catholicism. An even briefer catholic initiative was the project for a seventeenth-century Irish republic unearthed by Tomás Ó Fiaich.

The protestant republics did better, but they succumbed, too, to monarchical pressures in the end. The British surrendered to Cromwell's tyranny before restoring a monarchy that accepted, more or less, the formal practice of the *polis*. The Dutch resisted longer, before bowing to the hereditary authority of the House of Orange. In each case, as in classical times, many of the most democratic (though rarely the most nearly socialist) proved the least republican.

By 1775, the 'public thing' was limited to Venice, Ragusa, Genoa, San Marino, and the Swiss confederation and its neighbour Geneva. In Britain and Sweden, monarchy was tempered with republican representative assemblies, but politics stayed subordinate to intrigue. (In a few years, the king of Sweden would restore full monarchical absolutism.) Outside cities and cantons, the concept was still less real than possible—and a temporary possibility at that.

Within ten years, this had changed because of the American Declaration of Independence and its realisation by force of arms, albeit including the arms of monarchies more absolute than the British oppressor. This achievement has been enhanced by the new republic's survival and current international pre-eminence. Much of the credit for this has been given to the Federalists, the drafters of the new country's constitution—John Adams, James Madison and John Jay—but they built on the unifying concept of the white American community opposing European monarchical intrigues, acting, in effect, as heirs of the British republic before Cromwell's subversion.

The Federalists contributed two further unifying concepts. First, the

new *polis* would be independent, if tolerant, of all religions. This had not been the practice in the former colonies. Nor had it been a feature of previous states going back to prehistoric times: those states had seen religious conformity as ensuring unity. Only Cromwell had been tolerant but, then, not to catholics. However, while religion could and still can help develop political thinking, its dogmatic enforcement must inhibit it.

Even more importantly, the Federalists asserted the sanctity of private property. This had existed with the 'public thing' from Roman times onward, when private land ownership completed the unequal division of wealth. Minorities always dissented: e.g. rebel slaves, reformation anabaptists and, in Cromwell's time, the Levellers. Secure private property was obviously in the interests of America's capitalist founding fathers, not least those who were slave-owners. It also provided a necessary stimulus to opening the new country's western frontier to discontented propertyless whites, who carved their own properties from the communal holdings of the primitive American-Indian republics.

George Washington had been president of the United States for only four months when the people of Paris stormed the Bastille. When he was re-elected, France was a republic. Many academics emphasise the conservative aims of the war of American independence, but it had inspired a republicanism that was far less restrained. The younger republic executed its king and queen, instituted full manhood suffrage, did not just separate church and state but also seized the lands of the majority catholic church, abolished slavery throughout all its territories, and tried to spread republicanism in the Netherlands, Switzerland and Italy. It tried, too, to tackle the divisions between rich and poor that had led to the downfall of its republican predecessors.

All this created problems that forced the revolutionaries to reverse major parts of the revolution. The revolutionary wars became a means of expropriating the client republics in order to solve France's economic crisis. The same crisis meant abandoning the attempt at a command economy and ending the voting rights of those who desired them most. To increase exploitation, slavery was restored in the colonies. The latter was enacted by a new tyrant, a former member of the democratic Jacobin party, Napoleon Bonaparte. He made himself emperor, allowed voting only for staged plebiscites (for which, however, he restored manhood suffrage), and signed a concordat with the Vatican. In 1815, he was overthrown by the older European monarchies, which restored the old monarchical ruling house to reign in the British manner. For the moderate republicans of the USA, this confirmed their moderation. For many Europeans, it confirmed the lessons taught by the careers of Julius

Caesar, the House of Orange, and Cromwell.

The monarchs were less sure. The great revolution had destroyed more thrones than could be restored. As after Cromwell, but now on a continental scale, several monarchies had saved themselves by conceding some revolutionary principles; in France, monarchy was limited by a constitution, while Prussia finally had to end serfdom. Only bourgeois weakness thwarted even greater compromises.

So, the European monarchs founded a Holy Alliance against the threat of revolution and to help each other rule by Christian (essentially feudal-absolutist) principles. For a century, inspite of major upheavals, this was reasonably successful. It could not stop Belgian and Norwegian independence, nor that of the Turkish empire's Balkan colonies, but it ensured that the new states had hereditary monarchs, like the new German empire and the united Italy. The hostility to republics was such that when Portugal discarded its monarchy in 1910, Britain and Germany opened talks about seizing its colonies—talks that were ended only by the First World War.

Yet, republicanism continued to advance. The Holy Alliance could not block it in France or Portugal, let alone in Latin America or China. To protect the hereditary principle, compromises had to be made with such developing forces as democracy and nationalism. In Italy, a single monarch replaced six others, the bulk of the papal territories and a province of the Austrian empire (including the former Venetian republic). In Germany, the new empire accepted manhood suffrage for its Reichstag.

However, as with the separation of church and state, republicanism was better able to identify with the new forces, if only becauses of its openness to new political ideas. It was best able to identify with democracy, since there had never really been any principled reason why some citizens rather than others should be allowed the vote. Identification was made more easy by the European and American struggles against slavery, though less so in America, where, in the USA, bourgeois radicals introduced full white male suffrage a quarter of a century before waging civil war to stop slavery and where, in Brazil, the republic was founded by former slave-owners revenging themselves on the emperor who had destroyed their property rights in slaves. Nonetheless, from the 1848 revolution in France onwards, republicans tended to oppose slavery more than monarchists.

They were readier still to extend voting rights. Few monarchs were willing to copy the German empire, and manhood suffrage came to their states, if at all before 1914, only after major agitation. As for votes for

women, they came first in the new western states of the USA. Most of the new republics agreed to separate religion from politics. Interestingly, the European pioneer, France, did not break Napoleon's link until the twentieth century, and then it failed to extend the separation to primary education. Indeed, in most states, separation was honoured more fully in form than in substance.

As the pages of this journal show, the most controversial of republicanism's new relationships is with nationalism. Of course, nationalism can be, and has been, nurtured and mobilised by absolute monarchs, as well as by democrats and republicans. It is true, too, that the French and, indeed, previously, the British revolutions showed internationalist aspects, presaging permanent political revolutions. Closer examination shows that the British attempt at extending its struggle was more protestant than republican and more power-political than either. Similarly, the French revolution's establishment of client republics ignored their citizens' desire to build nation states and dampened their republicanism by extortion (via expropriation, taxes, etc.) for the revolutionary mother country. For all this, nationalism does have greater affinity with republicanism than with monarchy, particularly since the former broke through the shell of the city-state. Both nation and republic respond to the needs of an increasingly powerful bourgeoisie. The common cultural experience that goes to create a nation is essential to a genuine republic, larger than a city and its hinterland, and more so where the cement of religion is separate from the state. Such identification is negative only in three circumstances. Its emphasis on common cultural bonds tends to lead to valuing those nationals who would subvert republican principles (like Sir Tony O'Reilly, Doctor of Marketing) above foreign republicans. Further, it hinders the recognition of the republic's need for international socialism. Finally, it can be the nationalism of the oppressor, rather than of the oppressed. All these problems can be difficult to recognise, but their results are displayed vividly in today's USA.

What republicans collectively could not discover was an economic perspective to combat the class divisions that had destroyed past attempts to realise its ideal. Bourgeois republicans tended to be satisfied with the general structure of society, sharing with their less wealthy allies a hostility to less productive and relatively marginal exploitation, such as landlordism, and, even then, to a lesser degree. Their radical supporters extended their hostility to the banks and tried to diminish poverty by command, as in the French revolution: they still hankered for the society of small enterprises that was then receiving the *coup de grâce* from the

necessary collectivisation that was occurring and the increasing numbers of free but propertyless workers.

These material differences to the slave societies of Athens and Rome created conditions for a real solution to the class problem: i.e. socialism, and this attracted some consistent republicans. Their wealthy leaders would have none of it. They went the other way, embracing liberal economics and, in many cases, making peace with the Holy Alliance. Between them were the traditional republicans: small bourgeois, artisans and small farmers—the traditional Irish 'men of no property'. They maintained friendly contacts with socialists. At the end of the American civil war, Abraham Lincoln corresponded amicably with the International Workingmen's Association. Later, his supporter Charles Sumner was said to have been recruited to it, along with the Irish republican leader James Stephens. Despite this, the creed of such republicans (including members of Lincoln and Sumner's Republican Party) lacked the resources to oppose capitalist economics. In power, they followed a capitalist rather than a specifically republican line, allying with the heirs of their movement's monarchist foes and opposing the socialist heirs of their republican predecessors. This became easier as the forms of republicanism became more general. In France, during the first half of the twentieth century, the ineptly named Radical Socialist Party claimed to uphold the true republican traditions against left and right. In practice, the only inheritance of the great revolution defended by it was that revolution's refusal to give women the vote. For the twenty years between the two world wars, its members sat in every cabinet, left and right, agreeing happily to the foulest capitalist and imperialist practices.

Before this, rival imperial capitalisms had loosed on humanity the First World War. After four years, it was won by the side that had recruited America. The outcome established capitalist democratic republicanism as the dominant political form internationally, although, outside Europe it was happy to support pliant colonial and semi-colonial tyrannies, while Soviet Russia offered the promise not just of new politics but also of a new economic order.

This picture of world capitalist politics has stayed much the same since 1918, with two exceptions. On the right, the national bourgeoisies in central Europe retreated into a form of imperialist tyranny called fascism and precipitated the Second World War, which destroyed it and enabled a victorious republicanism to replace the remaining direct colonialism with a semi-colonialism under its own political form. Half a century later, Soviet Russia imploded because its leaders had abandoned republicanism, claiming it to be superfluous since they had achieved

socialism, but ensuring that in reality they had achieved merely a new form of tyranny. The true heirs of the great Soviet initiative remain, like the French republicans after 1815, learning the lessons and planning for the future, while they struggle against the pure and simple formal republicans who dominate the earth.

In Ireland, republicanism has diverged from the international pattern only in its early identification with a developing national identity that had harked back to various 'wild ganders' and to the then current booby who claimed to be the rightful (Stuart) king of Britain. The great French revolution inspired a left wing version, distinguished not only by its maintenance of a form of revolutionary strategy (physical force) but also a programme more democratic than that of its moderate Home Rule rivals. Like the latter, but also like other republican movements, Irish republicanism was prepared to compromise with monarchy and imperialism. The leaders of the 1916 rising (excluding, significantly, the socialist Connolly) offered to crown a Prussian prince as king of Ireland in return for aid against the British. In 1922, the bourgeois wing, represented by its elected deputies, voted for a peace with Britain that compromised their republic, while the petty bourgeois armed wing fought against it. Today, most of the heirs of both wings have settled for a republic with six counties missing, and only a small minority remains prepared to do anything about it. Church and state are formally separate, but in a manner extremely favourable to the church. Those republicans who seek to complete the revolution tend to depart even further from the basis of their stated political ideal. Among them, political discussion is subordinate to the claims of physical force, even when physical force is not being used; since 1938, the clandestine IRA Army Council has been militant republicanism's ruling body, above the Sinn Féin Ard Chomhairle. This places intrigue above politics, as evidenced most clearly in the history of the former majority Official republicans. Here, the Official Army Council used its authority and the resemblances between the political practices of the two movements to manoeuvre its followers behind the tyrannical police-'socialism' of the degenerated Soviet bloc and then, also in tune with that bloc's evolution, into open reformism.[1]

So, revolutionary republicans have been more revolutionary as nationalists than as defenders of the 'public thing'. This can be seen in three issues that reveal their strengths and their weaknesses: the neo-liberal economic strategy of the present government and its 'Rainbow' predecessor; Ireland's position in Europe (emphasised by Kevin McCorry, in issue one of *The Republic*, as a republican weak spot); and

national unity.

On the first issue, republicans can and should attack present economic policies, even though these have increased employment, cut taxation and maximised economic growth—achievements of which previous generations of Irish republicans could but dream. There are two replies to this. The first is the pragmatic one that this prosperity is appearing as a flash in the pan and that it was won by policies that have deprived the state of valuable resources for the lean years that are coming. Republicans would add that the increase in the economic gap between rich and poor caused by these policies is creating precisely that alienation from politics that separated the poorer classes from the 'public thing' and helped destroy it in previous periods and countries. They might add, accurately, that, more than in the past, these policies are being backed by the suppression of long-term opposition to them through the power of the media not just to suppress but also to distort, compounded by the difficulty of denouncing this publicly and effectively when most national newspapers are owned by a single person.

The trouble is that Irish republicanism's essentially military-political nature is challenged by the central fact of political life, particularly in its democratic form: the central importance of economics. The movement cannot offer an alternative to the present neo-liberal cant without going beyond the boundaries of the nation state and without losing (as did the Official republicans) the revolutionary impetus of their nationalism. They can, and must, turn to the socialists for interim economic measures, but the growth of the global economy, albeit a super-exploitative one, means that any economic alternative must be more than that summarised in the idea 'Sinn Féin'.

Similarly, in Europe the republican may defend national interests not as a nationalist but rather on the political field as defender of the 'public thing'. It is, after all, the European Union that set the guidelines for present economic policy through the Maastricht Treaty, even if consistent neo-liberals (McCreevy, Harney, Duncan Smith) now consider those guidelines inadequate. Maastricht guides the partnership programmes in a manner least favourable to the workers. The privatisation frenzy, criticised by Colm Rapple (in issue one of this journal) and worked with such indifferent results in Britain, is to be the rule under the EU, even where real competition is impossible (e.g. modern rail), but where trade union power will be broken by division into private companies (the real purpose). Simple nationalism is mistaken tactically, as well as in principle; it is all too like the oppressor nationalism of the British Tory Euro-sceptics, defending the old imperial currency. With the Nice Treaty

passed and another referendum to be introduced on a European constitution, it should be understood that, as it is developing, Europe is not only not socialist but is also not truly republican. The more enthusiastic Europhiles support the union as a counter to the USA. The trouble is that, under capitalism, the EU is likely to be the US's rival in the super-exploitation of the dependent world and probably, as inter-imperial rivalry increases, an enemy in arms. For socialists, the cry must be for the United States of Socialist Europe, but this will be adopted all too easily by reformist Europhiles like Proinsias de Rossa. In any case, it will take time to educate the electors after the events of the last twenty years. In the meantime, republicans and socialist republicans should concentrate on specific constitutional demands to maintain the national veto (particularly in matters of war and peace); on extending it to allow nullification of previous treaties (a strategy used in the early years of the USA); and, particularly, on the duty of all member states to hold referenda to approve constitutional changes and to allow popular initiatives for referenda: that is, confederation rather than federalism. Such provisions will allow the blockage of militarist and globalist-imperialist measures. They are also democratic and republican.

Compared to its simple reflex opposition to the EU, Irish republicanism can, and does, claim vindication in Northern Ireland. It has won, at last, what seems to be, to paraphrase Michael Collins, freedom to achieve unity. Closer examination reveals major flaws. They do not include the suppression of a mythical 'protestant nation'. As an entity, the mainly protestant unionist majority in the six county province acts, in its essential parochialism and reliance on religion as a social unifier, less as a nation than as a pre-national *polis*, and, moreover, in its culture of colonial elitism and monarchism, it is even more primitive than a *polis*: less Athens than Sparta.

A real flaw is that Britain is permitting the possibility of Irish unity only in a manner that will cause the least disturbance to its interests and that will, in particular, bind the whole island of Ireland into its defence network. It was no accident that the Good Friday agreement was followed by the Irish government's formal and specific abandonment of its election promise not to join the so-called Partnership for Peace unless mandated to do so by a referendum (a classic piece of intrigue). Within Northern Ireland, sectarianism is enshrined formally in the new order. Above all, that order depends on the good will of the British government. Irish republicans, real and nominal, have a major collective responsibility in this. The rival constitutional parties have clear aims: to keep the northern troubles from affecting the twenty-six county state and its

uninterested bourgeoisie. Only after the self-sacrifice of the hunger strikers and the popular response had shown that the struggle would not be ended on traditional partitionist terms did the official Irish government start consistent diplomacy on the issue.

The revolutionary republicans allowed their rivals to get away with this through their traditional failings. An armed struggle fought as if it could drive the British army into the sea alienated much potential sympathy for reunification and left it restricted to what was a militant minority of the Northern Irish minority community. The mobilisations after Bloody Sunday and during the hunger strikes brought gains that were squandered in order to maintain a war that would end, by the time of the ceasefire, as one of attrition, facing defeat. The leadership responded with intrigue: secret negotiations resulting in a ceasefire on terms hidden from the rank and file and sold as a victory. This has led to disillusion and splits centred mainly on those who seek to resume the armed struggle. The leadership majority knows that such an option will mean not only military disaster but also the loss of the support that their peace strategy has won in the Republic, yet it cannot move too fast lest more defect. Seeing politics itself as being inherently reformist, the leadership is fulfilling this assumption by becoming as reformist as political. For it, characteristically, the choice is one of armed struggle or reformism—disaster or a minor role in future bourgeois coalitions.

Meanwhile, the unionists increase their pressure, hoping to force the republican movement into 'immediate and terrible [and probably suicidal] war'. If unionism wanted real reconciliation, the inspection of the arms dumps would be enough for them. The republican leaders are reluctant to risk their control of the nationalist vanguard by organising the necessary popular mobilisations against breaches of the Good Friday agreement on sectarian marches, routine rights of way (particularly that to Holy Cross School, Ardoyne), and the loyalist use of arms to intimidate catholics. They have to be geared to spread south of the border in a way that cannot be accomplished by the republican leaders' elitist approach. They will provide stimuli for more working class challenges to the state powers, north and south, and open the way thereby to a workers' republic, leading to the world socialism that is the only way to give security to the 'public thing'.

To those who object that, outside small select units, socialist initiatives have failed wherever attempted, it should be stated, once more, that over the two millennia before 1776 the same was said of republicanism.

Notes

[1] Apart from its role as the apparently viable alternative to imperialism, Stalinism appealed to the Irish republican movement for two reasons, neither of them revolutionary nor even republican. It appealed to nationalism by its strategy of 'First the republic, then the workers' republic' and its assurance that a socialist society could be achieved in a single country. In addition, the Stalinite use of intrigue corresponded to the similar practice within Irish republicanism.

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