



“CULTURAL BEREAVEMENT” AND AN IRISHMAN STUCK IN THE PAST

“KÜLTÜREL YOKSUNLUK” VE GEÇMİŞE TAKILMIŞ BİR İRLANDALI

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Abstract

Considered one of the milestones for his career as a playwright, Brian Friel in his play *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* (1964), narrates the cultural conflict that his young protagonist Gareth (Gar) O'Donnell experiences right before his migration to America. This article aims to discuss Gar's situation in relation to the term "cultural bereavement" defined by the Australian child psychiatrist and anthropologist Maurice Eisenbruch. Although Gar has not been an immigrant yet, he shows symptoms similar to those described in Eisenbruch's cultural bereavement. As he is isolated and marginalised by his own culture, the life of the protagonist is invaded by an imaginary character and by the memories coming from the past. Besides that, now and then he feels guilty and sad, and sometimes gets angry for the things he could not or did not accomplish in the past. Meanwhile, American culture penetrating into Ireland in the 1960s serves both as an escape and threat for Gar. This study claims that Gar, marginalised by his own culture, experiences "cultural bereavement" even though he has not been an immigrant yet, and that American culture, playing a bilateral role, serves both as an escape from this bereavement and as a threat for his Irish identity.

Öz

Brian Friel, oyun yazarlığındaki dönüm noktalarından biri olan *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* (1964) adlı oyununda Amerika'ya göç etmek üzere olan genç Gareth O'Donnell'in yaşadığı kültürel çatışmayı anlatmaktadır. Bu makale, Gar'ın içinde bulunduğu durumu Avustralyalı çocuk psikiyatru ve antropolog Maurice Eisenbruch'un tanımladığı "kültürel yoksunluk" (cultural bereavement) kavramı üzerinden tartışmayı amaçlar. Henüz göç etmemiş olmasına rağmen Gar, Eisenbruch'un kültürel yoksunluk olarak tanımladığı duruma benzer belirtiler göstermektedir. Kendi toplumu ve kültürü tarafından yalnız bırakılan kahramanın hayatı sürekli olarak hayal ürünü bir karakter ve geçmişten gelen hatıralar tarafından işgal edilmektedir. Bunun yanında geçmişte yap(a)madığı şeyler yüzünden kendisini bazen suçlu, bazen üzgün, bazense sinirli hissetmektedir. Bu esnada 1960larda İrlanda'yı etkisi altına alan Amerikan kültürü, Gar için hem bir kaçış hem de bir tehdit unsuru olarak öne çıkmaktadır. Bu çalışma, kendi kültürü tarafından dışlanan Gar'ın "kültürel yoksunluğu" daha göç etmeden yaşadığını ve Amerikan kültürünün bu yoksunluktan kurtulmak için hem bir alternatif kaçış hem de tam tersi şekilde bir baskı unsuru olarak bu yoksunluğun diğer bir sebebi olduğunu iddia etmektedir.

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The Australian child psychiatrist and anthropologist Maurice Eisenbruch, examining the mental conditions of a group of Cambodian refugee children fostered in Australian and the US, comes out with the term "cultural bereavement" to define the grief felt by the children for their lost culture (6). Being not only limited to this group of refugees, the term is defined by Eisenbruch as "the experience of the uprooted person - or group - resulting from loss of social structures, cultural values and self-identity" (6). As a consequence of missing his culture and cultural identity, this person, who could either be a refugee, or an exile or an immigrant, shows some symptoms:

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[He] continues to live in the past, is visited by supernatural forces from the past while asleep or awake, suffers feelings of guilt over abandoning culture and homeland, feels pain if memories of the past begin to fade, but finds constant images of the past (including traumatic images) intruding into daily life, yearns to complete obligations to the dead, and feels stricken by anxieties, morbid thoughts, and anger that mar the ability to get on with daily life (6).

In short, the subject, as he cannot detach himself from his cultural background, is constantly pestered by his past, and his memories revisit him once and again. According to Eisenbruch, cultural bereavement is not a disease but “*an understandable response*” that can be abated by “religious belief” and/or “*religious gatherings*” (6-7). The religious ceremonies, for Eisenbruch, compensate for the loss of these people while they also help them come to terms with the new culture and strengthen their personal identity (9).

This article relies on the definition of cultural bereavement by Eisenbruch to examine the character, Gareth O'Donnell, a future immigrant, in Brian Friel's *Philadelphia Here I Come!* (1964). Having been first performed in 1964 during the Dublin Theatre Festival, the play dealt with the crucial subject of emigration in a critical moment of political reformation. Opening its doors to global investments in the 1960, Ireland confronts a conflict arising from the clash of modern and traditional. As the representative of the young generation, who deals with the ontological results of this conflict, Gar undertakes a pivotal role in showing the cultural bereavement stemming from the gradual loss of Irish culture. Although he is not an immigrant, yet, Gar's condition extends Eisenbruch's definition to the concerns of a young person that feels marginalised by his own culture and society. In this respect, American culture flooding into Ireland, serves a bilateral function in Gar's identity; that is, on the one hand it provides an alternative space to save him

from the conservative society, while, on the other hand, it threatens Gar to replace his Irishness with a new American version.

Cultural challenges coming from outside Ireland have always been a significant subject of Friel's oeuvre since the start of his writing career. Particularly the movements of modernisation challenging the local Irish culture and Irish culture's attempt to survive have shaped the plot and characters of the playwright. In *The Loves of Cass McGuire* (1967), the protagonist Cass, who could easily be interpreted as the person to whom Gar will transform in America, returning to Ireland after fifty-two years is not accepted by her Irish relatives. In *Translations* (1980), the dominant English culture brings about the loss of Irish language in the 1830s and one of the characters Maire reveals that she wants to migrate to America and she needs to learn English for that. In a similar vein, in *Dancing at Lughnasa* (1990), in which the action takes place in 1936, the lives of the Mundy sisters, living in the small town, Ballybeg – the usual setting of Friel's plays – are destabilised by the modern culture and they are losing their long-lasting family hood. In this respect, *Philadelphia* and the cultural calamities Gar goes through hints the concerns of Friel's later works. This paper aims to examine the socio-political reasons for Gar's cultural bereavement and how it shapes his identity and complicates the passage from tradition to modernity.

Since the Great Famine of Ireland in the mid-nineteenth century, emigration has been an ineluctable fact for Irish citizens. At first, it had been a matter of survival for the starving people to leave their lands and to look for a new life in foreign countries. Yet, this migration was not to stop even after the end of the famine. One hundred years later, the Irish and particularly the younger generations, were still moving from rural Ireland to urban cities of Ireland – this time not because of a natural disaster, but for other economic and political reasons. As Paul F. State indicates, the economic weakness and shortfall caused by the policy of self-sufficiency kept the rate of migration in the 1950s up and “[a] little less than a half million people left Ireland [...] bringing the population down to a scant 2.8 million” (282). One of the main reasons behind such a high migration rate was the conservative insular politics followed by Irish politicians after the Second World War, during which nationalism and insularity were at their prime. Nevertheless, State underlines that in the 1950s, together with Ireland's application for the Marshall Plan and Seán Lemass becoming *Taoiseach* in 1959, Ireland went through a conversion of the stance taken against foreign financial influences. Now, the Irish

State promoted investments coming from global markets like the United States and they were integrated into international institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Consequently, Ireland achieved larger growth rates and a better economy in the 1960s and the 70s (281-82).

Financial recuperation, on the other hand, was not the only harvest of the Irish espousal of foreign influence. Concomitant cultural invasion became a fact of Irish lifestyle, that is, particularly American and British culture permeated into the lives of Irish citizens. In this period many young Irishmen, under the influence of the attractions of these newly introduced cultures, which were transported by immigrants or multimedia, fantasized about living in America and sustaining a comfortable life far away from the repressive and stern society of Ireland. However, it was also an arduous challenge to sever his/her ties with the lands and people to whom the immigrants were born. This cultural dilemma constituted the central theme of *Philadelphia*.

To begin with, Friel's career as a playwright has an interesting parallelism with the influence of the American culture on the Irish people. Although his visit to the US marks a turning point for his writing, he still feels hesitant to leave Ireland and live in the US. First, Friel was writing short stories and radio plays, but later he stopped producing short stories and focused on writing stage plays. In 1962 Friel completed his first salient play *The Enemy Within*, yet he needed to wait until 1964 to accomplish his first great success: *Philadelphia*. In the years between the production of *The Enemy Within* and *Philadelphia*, a professional journey would be a watershed for Friel and this would impinge upon the rest of his career as a playwright and mentality as an Irish citizen. As Friel underlines that he never had the privilege of learning about the dynamics of theatrical production, and he only had "a modest intuitive knowledge" about playwriting when he first started to write a play ("Self-Portrait" 103-04). Nevertheless, for this journey, in 1963 Friel was invited to the United States by the famous Irish director Tyrone Guthrie to spectate/attend the foundation of his theatre in Minneapolis and to learn about technical details of theatrical productions on and off stage (Friel, "Self-Portrait" 104). Actually, this turned out to be an excellent chance for Friel to accomplish his own American dream. For six months he was a student at a school, watching the construction of a theatre and familiarising himself with the backstage details of it. However, this journey would mean more than learning about the technical details of a theatre, it would help Friel open his eyes to a different reality, and distance

himself from his small traditional world in Ireland. Accordingly, he later would comment on the effect of this journey as follows:

Those months in America gave me a sense of liberation – remember, this was my first parole from inbred claustrophobic Ireland – and that sense of liberation conferred on me a valuable self-confidence and a necessary perspective so that the first play I wrote immediately after I came home – and that was *Philadelphia Here I Come!* – was a lot more assured than anything I had attempted before (“Self-Portrait” 104).

To explain why he felt liberated, the playwright states that he had grown up in a traditional Irish Catholic family and “*a schizophrenic community*” (“Self-Portrait” 103) and he believes that this community has been dictating a certain path on every other Irish writer, from which the previous generations were not feeling disturbed. Yet, Friel underlines that “*today the situation is more complex. We are more concerned with defining our Irishness than with pursuing it. We want to know what native means, what the word foreign means. [...] All persistent considerations like these erode old certainties and help clear the building site*” (“Self-Portrait” 107). Therefore, his journey to the United States did not distance Friel only from a physical space but also from the predetermined mindset of Ireland. He gained a modern look and focused on the uncertainties and ambiguities rather than sharp and rigid tenets of the past. That was how *Philadelphia* came out of the “native” versus “foreign” struggle, the contemporary Irish identity dealt with, and how Friel became “*the father of contemporary Irish drama*” (Pine 108). Nevertheless, despite learning a lot about theatre in the US and gaining success by means of this education, when he is asked if he would like to live in the US he says “*I would feel very lonely, I think in the way a child is lonely. I get very nostalgic and very homesick*” (“In Interview With” 10).

Philadelphia is about a young lonely Irishman who already feels nostalgic and homesick right before he migrates to the US. His cultural bereavement begins before he leaves Ireland. He is settled in the schizophrenic, claustrophobic and inbred Irish social structure Friel talks about. The family and community surrounding the protagonist, Gareth O'Donnell, have certain biographical elements of Friel. Just like the playwright, the character Gareth is also entrapped into this structure, and he is looking for a way out of the role cast on him. The financial and social restrictions imposed on him push Gar away into a psychological isolation. Cast aside by his own native culture, Gar shows the symptoms of cultural

bereavement: He is stuck in the past, he is constantly visited by his memories, he is even living with a ghost beside him and he feels angry as he cannot connect himself with the Irish culture. Gar is not an immigrant or refugee in a literal sense yet, and he does not experience a catastrophic case like the Cambodian children of Eisenbruch, but his condition proves that cultural bereavement is not about physical distance between places but about psychological distance one feels with his own culture. He is an exile in spiritual sense. Hence, it can be claimed that Gar becomes a literary example to demonstrate that a person could experience cultural bereavement without leaving his homeland.

The setting of the play is the house of S. B. O'Donnell, the County Councillor of Ballybeg in Donegal, who also owns a general shop in this small traditional Irish village. Being the only son of the lower-middle-class O'Donnells, Gar is living in his father's house and he is working at his small shop. As he has lost his mother, the maid of the house Madge is taking care of him and she is nursing the tarnished relationship between Gar and his father. As Elmer Andres states that Ballybeg, meaning "*Baile Beag – small town*" in Irish conveys the "*emotionally repressed and economically and culturally starved*" atmosphere of a traditional Irish town (Andrews 86). This barren cultural environment of Ballybeg and the ignorance of people isolate Gar into an intolerable loneliness. As a consequence of this isolation, Gar is living the last day in Ballybeg before his departure for Philadelphia, but he still has not made up his mind and he is still hesitant about leaving his home. His hesitation stems from the fear of losing his Irish identity. Although he wants to enjoy the promises of the American life, American culture poses a serious threat to replace his Irishness.

Unlike the children examined by Eisenbruch Gar is not a victim of war forced to live in another country, yet his social condition in Ireland create such a catastrophic effect on his psychology that he can be considered as an exile or refugee looking for spiritual shelter. Each of these conditions lying behind his cultural bereavement is disclosed with narrated memories or flashback scenes that revisit Gar's present world and remind him a milestone in his life. The minor reason turns out to be the financial dearth hindering access to material wealth while the major one consists of the emotional failures disconnecting Gar from his community. In the first flashback Gar remembers the night he randomly visits his ex-girlfriend Katie's house to ask her father's permission to marry his daughter. Before they arrive at her home, the dialogue between Katie and Public shows that

Gar is working at his father's small shop and he earns only 3.15 £ and some other really small amount of extra money per week. Obviously, Katie loves Gar yet she is not satisfied with this amount of income. However, the real shock comes from her father Senator Doogan when he implies that they, together with her mother, want Kate to marry Francis King, who will probably be the future doctor of the town. Senator determines his candidate for Katie according to the social and financial status of the man. He must be educated and must have a respectable job. Although Kate loves Gar as well, the financial insecurity and the concomitant lack of confidence Gar feels make him leave Kate's house without revealing anything to Senator.

For Gar, having a respectable job without going to a college and earning that much money seems to be possible only in America. At least, the young Irish characters in the play, as a result of the popular American culture reverberated in Ireland, imagine America as the land of opportunity. The dialogue between Kate and Gar, when she comes to visit him before his departure, reveals their expectations:

KATE. You'll do well, Gar: make a lot of money, and come back here in twenty years' time and buy the whole village.

PUBLIC. Very likely. That's my plan anyhow.

[...]

PUBLIC. (*A shade louder than necessary*) I'll come home when I make my first million, driving a Cadillac and smoking cigars and taking movie-films (*Philadelphia 80*).

"American Dream" fills the imagination of these inexperienced and naïve characters. Whether it is true or not, the idea of the "beauties" of America permeates into their expectations and distances them from their local Irish culture. At one point, also with the frustration of losing his beloved, Gar explodes and he brings out his hatred against his home and he believes that he will be free when he flies away from it:

PUBLIC. There's nothing about Ballybeg that I don't know already. I hate the place, and every stone, and every rock, and every piece of heather around it! Hate it! Hate it! And the sooner that plane whips me away, the better I'll like it!

KATE. It isn't as bad as that, Gar.

PUBLIC. You're stuck here! What else can you say!

PRIVATE. That'll do!

PUBLIC. And you'll die here! But I'm not stuck! I'm free! Free as the bloody wind! (*Philadelphia* 81).

The apparent dichotomy of free/unfree between Irish and American cultures is reflected in Gar's emotional crescendo. While he sees America as the land of freedom, Ireland resembles a prison. By leaving this small village and community, Gar breaks the bars of his cell and he sets sail to freedom and wanders away from the stultifying environment of Ballybeg.

Beyond the financial reasons, the departure of Gar stems from his lack of communication with the people around him, which draws him into a salient isolation. As Christopher Murray analyses his situation, Gar "*is conflicted less from circumstantial than from ontological causes*" (16). Unlike his ancestors, he does not leave Ireland for the matters of survival. Even if it is not a prosperous one, his life in Ireland is sustainable. It is rather a matter of existence and who Gar wants to be. His society ignores him. The lack of opportunities and the abundance of restrictions and failures in the Irish society curbs Gar's enthusiasm and pushes him to ignorance. As a result, he loses his connection with society and he is distanced from his family.

Being born into a similar society, Friel knows the shortcomings of the local people in such a society quite well and he foregrounds their failures and deficiencies to ground his protagonist's present condition. All the characters Gar confronts like Master Boyle, Canon O'Brien, Senator Doogan and County Councillor (father) symbolise the institutional corruption surrounding him. Their failures are basic reasons for Gar's social and spiritual isolation. As Elmer Andrews aligns them: "*Master Boyle is deluded, alcoholic failure continually at odds with his superiors in Ballybeg; Senator Doogan is a terrific social snob; Canon O'Brien is an ineffectual religious leader; County Councillor 'Screwballs' O'Donnell is 'a responsible, respectable citizen' but incapable of communicating with his son or showing any affection*" (86). None of these people really care about Gar's isolation and they never understand his concerns. Master Boyle is anything but recourse for Gar, he is "*arrogant and pathetic*" (*Philadelphia* 44) in Private's words, and indeed, he is looking for recourse himself. He asks Gar to lend him some money and he urges him to "*[b]e 100 percent American*" (*Philadelphia* 46). Senator Doogan does not see, or maybe he does but does not want to, that Gar loves his daughter. Canon O'Brien

constantly plays game of draught with S. B. O'Donnell but he cannot see that this young man is begging him to be his bridge to his father (*Philadelphia* 96).

As for his father S. B. O'Donnell, his ignorance and failure to communicate with his son give the biggest blow to our hero. Gar's single and crucial attempt to tie himself to his father in the play is unwittingly denied by S.B. when he cannot recall a day of fishing (*Philadelphia* 104-06) Private's mocking attitude and Public's exit before waiting for his father to finish his words confirm the destruction of Gar's final hope. Although S. B. sincerely strives to remember such a day, it does not change anything because this is a long overdue attempt. It has been such a long while since they last shared something that their channels of connection have been clogged and their memories have been shadowed by time. As a consequence of these experiences, there comes out a gap between Gar and the local community and culture of his home. He is driven to the peripheries of this silent society and his cultural bereavement comes out from this alienation.

After analysing the conditions of the refugee children, Eisenbruch indicates that the degree of cultural bereavement escalates when the refugees are subjected to any cultural pressure to "*leave the old culture behind*" and "*participate in traditional ceremonies [of the new culture]*" (7). In the case of Gar, substantially, it is not an external obligation but an internal desperation that confines him to American culture. Nevertheless, it can also be argued that American culture, travelling all the way through the Atlantic Ocean, imposes itself, as "the modern", on the Irish culture. Gar's aunt, Lizzy Sweeney, in this respect, is a symbolic character demonstrating the force of American culture. As a significant figure, with her characteristic behaviour, she sheds light upon the potential person Gar may become in the future. She is one of the earlier immigrants who has been living in Philadelphia together with her husband Con Sweeney since 1937 or 38. Cajoling Gar to leave Ireland with a beautiful American dream, she looks down upon Irish culture and she prefers being an American rather than Irish. Thereby altering her name from Lizzy to Elise, she tries to cover herself with her new identity. In the second flashback, Gar remembers the day Lizzy and Con come to visit him in Ballybeg. Lizzy constantly praises the American Ben Burton, who helped them when they arrived in Philadelphia, and she brags about her living standard in America. They offer him a job as a clerk in a Hotel in Philadelphia. When Gar seems reluctant to accept her offer, Lizzy tries to motivate him by despising the "typical" tardiness and shabbiness of the Irish:

CON. Honey! (To PUBLIC) You will think about what we were discussing?

PUBLIC. I will, Uncle Con.

CON. The job is as good as you'll get and we'd be proud to have you.

LIZZY. Don't force him.

CON. I'm not forcing him. I'm only telling him.

LIZZY. Well now you have told him – a dozen times. So now desist, will you?

PUBLIC. I'll think about it. Really.

LIZZY. Sure! Sure! Typical Irish! He will think about it! While he's thinking about it the store falls in about his head! What age are you? Twenty-four? Twenty-five? What are you waiting for? For S. B. to run away to sea? Until the weather gets better (*Philadelphia* 60-61).

Gar's decision is not only about a job offer, but it also means a cultural transformation. He is invited to "leave the old [Irish] culture behind" and become an "Irish-American" like Lizzy and Con.

Not only his relatives drag Gar to America and American culture, but also the modern means of media lure him into an American identity. Particularly the images Gar observes from TV programs shape his mind about American society. In such a society he believes that he could get the status he deserves. That is why in his dreams he sometimes turns into a football player who is "[the] pride of the Ballybeg team" (*Philadelphia* 18) and sometimes identifies with Gary the Kid who owns "plains stretching' 's far th'eye can see" (*Philadelphia* 22). As a matter of fact, Friel gives subtle references in these small details. For instance, the specific name "Garry the Kid" signifies a crucial moment in the history of Irish modernisation at the turn of the 1960s. As D. E. S. Maxwell states that "*on New Year's Eve 1961 Radio-Telefís Eirann – RTE – start[s] transmissions, heavily dependent on British and American imports. Its first programme [is] The Cisco Kid*" (159). In other words, "Garry the Kid" symbolises the nascent modern generation. Edward Brennan explains that during the foundation of Irish television, there were conflicting views coming from the conservative and liberal politicians. On the one hand, the conservative President Eamon De Valera, from the conservative side, was dubious about the outcomes television would have on Irish society and he would warn his people during the inauguration of the channel while he was giving the opening speech. On the other

hand, the new Taoiseach Sean Lemass was quite eager to modernize Ireland and he wanted the television programs to include international elements (Brennan, "Television in Ireland").

The relevance between *The Cisco Kid* and "Garry the Kid" is also significant to show what Gar misses in his life. The former is an American Western and presents the adventures of a cowboy. The image of a cowboy means the opposite of the local for the young Gar. As Elmer Andrews further explains that "*Gar identifies with the cowboys, with the American myth of freedom, the pioneering spirit, the forces sought to open up a new world*" (88). Although he will not discover new lands in America, Philadelphia will be "a new world" for Gar. Therefore, he pretends to be an exuberant cowboy and imitates his language while he prepares for departure: "*Lets git packing', boy. Let's git that li'l ole saddle bag opened and let's git packing*" (*Philadelphia* 23). For Gar, this journey to America means an independent life which will save him from the boring and repressive social structure of the strict and small Irish society. In this respect, "plains stretching' s far th'eye can see," Gar wishes to have in America, does not only mean material well-being, but it also means evasion from this narrowness and suffocating atmosphere of S.B.'s shop and house.

The title of the play, in this respect, is also a reference to a popular element of American culture. When the play begins, Gar just wakes up and he is quite energetic and excited for his impending departure. As soon as he comes on the stage, he starts singing the song "California, Here I Come!" However, as he migrates to Philadelphia, he changes California to Philadelphia and sings "Philadelphia Here I Come." As Maria Szasz reports that this song was "*[w]ritten by Bud de Sylva, Joseph Meyer and Al Jolson in 1924, [and it] was popularized by American television shows, such as Warner Brothers cartoons and the 1950s comedy 'I Love Lucy'*" (63). Indeed, this song is a particular choice of the playwright to exhibit that the introduction of American popular television culture dates a long way back before the inauguration of the first Irish TV broadcaster. Although Ireland opens its first state-controlled channel in 1961, in their neighbouring countries, England and Northern Ireland, The British Broadcasting Company (BBC) has already been broadcasting channels for long years. As Robert J. Savage underlines that in the 1950s through the transmitters set in the Northern Ireland BBC could reach the televisions of the northern and eastern parts of the Republic and some Irish newspapers were already publishing the daily schedules of BBC (1-20). As concerns the content of the programs published, Claire Mortimer points out that

“[i]ndependent television in Britain [that emerged in the second half of the 50s] was hoping to emulate the success of American television formats, notably the family-based sitcoms *I Love Lucy* (1951–57) and *The George Burns and Gracie Allen Show* (1950–58)” (76). The detour the song makes around Ireland because of the restrictive Irish government actually shows that the cultural pervasion of America is so strong that it easily exceeds the political borders set around the Republic.

Although Gar seems voluntary to acquire a new American identity, he is aware of that it posits a threat to his Irishness and this creates an awareness of loss. Demonstrating his distress, at the very beginning of the play, right after he recites the lyrics of the song, he reconsiders the prospect results of his migration:

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

PUBLIC. Yessir.

PRIVATE. Of leaving the country of your birth, the land of the curlew and the snipe, the Aran sweater and the Irish Sweepstakes?

PUBLIC. (*With fitting hesitation*) I-I-I-I have considered all these, Sir.

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

PUBLIC. I am fully sensitive to this, Sir.

PRIVATE. Where the devil himself holds sway, and lust – abhorrent lust – is everywhere indulged in shamelessly? (*Philadelphia* 18-19).

Gar believes that when he arrives in Philadelphia, the local colours of Ireland will be replaced by the hedonistic heresies of American culture and he obviously is afraid of being one of them. His Aunt Lizzy, in this respect, serves as model to visualise the person Gar will turn into in America. Although she is so proud of being an Irish-American, there is always a gap in her life and this gap is implied with her lack of a child. Apart from that, when she visits Gar in Ireland, she cannot identify the chapel where her sister marries and she does not even know Ireland has senators. So, her characterisation supports the idea that Gar’s Irish identity will be in danger in America.

The more Gar feels the tension of the impending departure and the future awaiting him, the more evident his cultural bereavement becomes in the play. First of all, in parallel to Eisenbruch’s indication, Gar constantly wanders around with a ghost nearby him. The protagonist is represented by two different characters on stage and the internal voice of Public Gar is embodied by another character, Private Gar. As Friel defines his technique: “*Public Gar is the Gar that people see, talk to,*

talk about. Private Gar is the unseen man, the man within, the conscience, the alter ego, the secret thoughts, the id" (*Philadelphia* 11). Private Gar accompanies Gar wherever he goes, Public resorts to his friendship to save him from loneliness. They discuss Public's decisions, memories, they comment upon the others' behaviours and they reveal Public's real feelings about the events. Although this kind of characterisation seems crucial to underline the feelings and thoughts of the character, it is also the sign of a mental condition. Maureen S. G. Hawkins emphasises that Private's role as an "internal prosecutor" shows "a schizoid individual" hearing and seeing "hallucinatory states" (466). Therefore, Private Gar is beyond being the conscience, is a ghostly figure who interrupts the reality of Gar. As such, Private is the "supernatural force," Eisenbruch defines, that springs from Public's "guilt of abandoning [his] culture" and even while he sings the song, his guilt is standing nearby him.

Another symptom of Gar's cultural bereavement is the past that repeatedly invades his present. According to Eisenbruch, a person experiencing cultural bereavement, "feels pain if memories of the past begin to fade, but finds constant images of the past (including traumatic images) intruding into daily life" (6). Gar's life is filled with memories and images coming from his past and he is often prompted by Private to remember a special moment that has deeply influenced him. The two flashback scenes about Kate's family and Lizzy's visit and his memory of going fishing with his father are three examples of this interruption. Eisenbruch continues his argument by stating that the immigrant "yearns to complete obligations to the dead, and feels stricken by anxieties, morbid thoughts, and anger that mar the ability to get on with daily life" (6). During the previously mentioned moments, it is seen that Gar feels guilty, anxious and angry about her memories. For instance, the dialogue between him and Private clarifies that he feels guilty, ashamed and angry:

PUBLIC. (*Softly*) Kate ... sweet Katie Doogan ... my darling Kathy Doogan...

PRIVATE. (*In same soft tone*) Aul bitch. (*Loudly*) Rotten aul snobby bitch! Just like her stinking rotten father and mother – a bugger and buggeress – a buggeroo and a buggerette!

PUBLIC. No, no; my fault – all my fault –

PRIVATE. (*Remembering recalling tauntingly*) By God, that was a night, boy, eh? By God, you made a right bloody cow's ass of yourself (*Philadelphia* 27).

Gar feels guilty because he and Kate visit Doogans to reveal their intention to marry at the next Easter but Gar cannot keep his word and is discouraged when he hears Senator's words about marrying Kate to the doctor. Gar is stuck at this night and as he cannot any longer complete his obligation, he either is at mad at himself or blames Kate though he has no reason.

The climax of the play also consists of Gar's effort to amend his fading memories of childhood, which mean relatively happy days for him. Gar is craving for that fishing memory to be true because they might reconnect him to his culture and that is why Private is so excited before he asks his father and he says "*(Urgently, rapidly) Now! Now! He might remember – he might. But if he does, my God, laddo – what if he does?*" (*Philadelphia* 104). Possibly Gar's future hinges upon the words that will come out of S.B.'s mouth, but he is not aware of the severity of his son's situation. Hence, everything collapses when S. B. does not give the awaited answer. He cannot remember the exact details and his memory challenges the reality of Gar's version. Now Gar is devoid of his remedy for the cultural bereavement; his memories.

PUBLIC. [...] But d'you remember one afternoon in May – we were up there – the two of us – and it must have rained because you put your jacket round my shoulders and gave me your hat

S.B. Aye?

PUBLIC. – and it wasn't that we were talking or anything – but suddenly – suddenly you sang 'All Round My Hat I'll Wear a Green Ribbono'

S.B. Me?

PUBLIC. – for no reason at all except that we – that you were happy. D'you remember? D'you remember?

(There is pause while S.B. tries to recall)

S.B. No ... no, then, I don't ...

(Private claps his hands in nervous mockery.)

PRIVATE: There! There! There!

[...]

So now you know: it never happened!

Ha-ha-ha-ha-ha

S.B. 'All Round My Hat'? – that was never one of mine. What does it go like?

PUBLIC. I couldn't tell you. I don't know either.

PRIVATE. Ha-ha-ha-ha-ha-ha-ha-ha-ha.

S.B. And you say the boat was blue?

PRIVATE. It doesn't matter. Forget it (*Philadelphia* 105).

The only thing that connects Gar to his culture and that compensates for his cultural bereavement is his memories. The denial of such a nostalgic moment disillusioned Gar with the reliability of these memories. As he recognises that they are withering into nothingness, his hope for recovery fades, as well. Consequently, he turns back to his personal abyss and does not try to contact his father again.

Eisenbruch's observations also included that religion and religious ceremonies reduce the degree of cultural bereavement, reconnect them to their past and help them understand who they really are (7-9). For Gar, religion and religious ceremonies, all look dysfunctional, but it still does not constrain him from performing the prayers. At the very beginning of the third episode of the play, Friel demonstrates O'Donnell family while they perform the daily rosary before their supper, and the description of the scene clearly confirms that the rosary does not carry any spiritual meaning: "*The words are barely distinct, a monotonous, somnolent drone*" (*Philadelphia* 87). During the rosary, let alone spiritual renewal, Gar does not even follow words recited and he rather thinks of the girls he will meet in the US. However, no matter how hollow his belief is, this religious ceremony is still something to be held onto. It will surely be a part of his life in the US:

PRIVATE. This time tomorrow night, bucko, you'll be saying the rosary all by yourself – unless Lizzy and Con say it (*Joins in a response in American accent*) – Holy Mairry, Mother of Gawd, pray for us sinners now and at the hour ... (*He tails off as his mind wanders again.*) (*Philadelphia* 87).

Indeed, Gar expects his religion to work as an institution to carry out the functions Eisenbruch describes. That is why Private Gar complains about Canon O'Brian's silence and prudence while he is the only man that "*could translate all this loneliness, this groping, this dreadful bloody buffoonery into Christian terms that will make life more bearable for [them] all*" (*Philadelphia* 96). Nevertheless, it is the Church that does not respond to this young person's call. Friel, studying priesthood two years in St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, knows that restrictive Catholicism of Ireland does not meet the expectations of the modern generations. Recalling his own experience at this school, Friel says, "*it nearly drove me cracked*" ("Interview with Peter" 1). As Murray underlines that "*[l]oneliness was something he deeply understood from his Maynooth experience*" (26). Also for Gar, his Christian belief

neither bring a happy union with his society nor diminish his pain of cultural bereavement. Diverting from Eisenbruch's argument about religious relief, Gar's Irish Catholicism does not prescribe a remedy for his isolation but it becomes another source of it.

All in all, Friel's protagonist Gar, marginalised by his own society, experiences cultural bereavement and shows the symptoms identified by Eisenbruch. Although Gar does not experience a physical distance yet, the psychological distance between him and his culture and community force him to find certain individual solutions. His reality is constantly visited by past memories, he wanders with the invisible Private Gar nearby him and he feels angry, anxious and guilty for the unaccomplished tasks of the past. Moreover, though it is of no use, he resorts to his Christianity to relieve his pain and grief. American culture, meanwhile, serves both as a culture of relief and a source of threat for his cultural bereavement. Thus, Gar can be interpreted as a fictional example experiencing cultural bereavement, but besides that his condition proves that cultural bereavement does not emanate only from physical distance, and it is not only about passing political borders, but it can be a result of spiritual lack of connection someone feels with his/her own culture and society.

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