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*The Quest for Nationhood and Identity in Some
Irish Literary Productions*

Analyzing National Identity in Modern Fictions

James Joyce - Samuel Beckett – William Trevor

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Abstract

The quest of Irish national identity is a goal writers from the early Literary Revival to contemporary Irish fiction tried to achieve. In the current paper I analyze the issue of Irishness as represented by three different writers; James Joyce, Samuel Beckett and William Trevor in their works. The first part of the dissertation gives a focus on the two key concepts identity and nationhood in a philosophical framework. Further, the discussion is built on “national identity” as represented in Irish fiction focusing on representative works. Joyce and Beckett represent the issue relying on their own experiences in their home land. However, contemporary novelists like Trevor present the theme in an indirect way. He tends to focus on coping with the past and finding a solution by demolishing the stereotypes of the Irish environment and looking towards the future.

The Irish environment where social, religious and political principles held a strong grip on the moral of Irish identity played a significant role in the investigation of nationhood and identity. From three different angles, James Joyce, Samuel Beckett and William Trevor tried to offer the image of Ireland as an impotent nation whose weak national identity was due to the rigid cultural assumption of their land. When rejecting their birth nation, it is for the people of Ireland i.e. in the service of Ireland.

In their literary fictions that are represented in this dissertation, the Irish authors dared directly and indirectly to criticize the status quo. They saw Ireland and the Irish as extremely past bound, religion bound and full of limitations. The Irish according to them accepted everything opposed on them. They in fact objected any efforts at amelioration. Even at the age of ‘globalized Ireland’, the nation still carries the weight of its oppressive past. This past with its fervent Catholicism, conservative society and narrow nationalism represents an obstacle in the creation of a pure Irish national identity. This is to say that contemporary characters are still in clashes with their past which is a burden in their contemporary society. They find themselves in a world governed by authoritative families and a harsh subjection to the other. Hence, Joyce in common with Beckett and Trevor attempted to create a voice and a conscience for their own community. They aimed to establish Ireland as a world detached from the stereotypes of the Irish life. And their quest for nationhood and identity cannot be reached only if Ireland releases its past and looks toward the future.

General Introduction

The first half of the twentieth century was one of the most prominent eras in history that witnessed upheavals at the level of politics and the art of that time. Ireland in particular is a land characterized by its writers as being rebellious and usually engaged in civil strife due to the British imperial rules in it. The longstanding struggle between the Irish and the colonists made the Irish look to their land from different perspectives.

It is a truth universally acknowledged that in any new independent nation, the construction of national identity is of primary intension. Ireland, therefore, is a country that struggled to prove its national identity during the colonial period, after the independence and even after the Irish Free State and the Republic of Ireland. The quest for identity and nationhood was not an easy task for the Irish. The tragic past and the Irish history still represent a trapping to the construction of a productive Irishness.

As far as Ireland is concerned, Irish literature played a significant role in the representation of Ireland and its identity in the light of the twentieth century and contemporary Ireland. The quest for Irish identity is mainly Irish autobiographies main them. In the Irish case, this quest is linked to the quest for a home and individuality. Irish authors relied on their experiences in their homeland by writing fictions in which their protagonists feel oppressed with their family, religious and political conventions. Ireland was therefore, a country for their denial and rejection. They made a quest for nationhood in order to reject its conservative moral values. These writers found potent forces in Ireland where it was impossible for them to have a place in. By doing this, Irish exiles revealed the reasons behind their denial and departure from the land of their birth. They portrayed the Irish environment as profoundly anti-intellectual and backward leaving no options to Irish intellectuals but escape.

James Joyce who is hailed as one of Ireland's literary sons, was one its vehement critics and sceptic to '*exclude from the present nation*' (*critical writings*, 161-2). He portrays Ireland and Irish authorities as a hindrance towards his development as an artist. In *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* Joyce depicts the life of his main protagonist Stephen Dedalus as a series of unfinished clashes with authorities. Joyce shows that Ireland

did not know how to cultivate him. The limitations of religious freedom, politics and the strict social conventions all hung his desire to self realization as an artist. Patrick Parrinder in his book *James Joyce* views that Stephen's growth to artisthood and departure from Ireland in the *Portrait* are felt like the coming of a prophet, to answer the needs of the time; he goes to forge the "*uncreated consciousness of his race*".

In *The Dead*, James Joyce shows through his character Gabriel Conroy his viewpoints about Ireland which was in a deep riot at that time. He denies every aspect of Irish heritage, trying to throw off his Irish identity in a preference of a wide intellectual cosmopolitan one. Gabriel not only alienates his Irish language from his surrounding, but tries to challenge it at every opportunity. Gabriel switches off the validity of Irish national identity which represents a pride for the Irish he knows.

Furthermore, in common with James Joyce, Samuel Beckett shares his friend's attitudes towards his native land. In his two literary works, *Murphy* and *Molloy*, Beckett shows his ambivalent view toward his nation which he often considers as "*the land of my unsuccessful abortion*". Beckett makes his character Molloy ignore his region and absent himself from it. In the Ireland of Beckett, there is nothing to express and even no desire to express. And in *Murphy*, Beckett mobilizes his refusal of Ireland and Irish mythical heroes. It operates in the text, as a forgotten part of the world and a residual presence. Critics often consider Beckett's denial of Irishness and his ignorance of Ireland as a weapon to pursue a status of cosmopolitan writer. This effort of recasting himself in the sphere of cosmopolitanism triumphs over his country and identity which are overly symbolized as the 'other' and the 'enemy'.

To some extent, this situation is still present in contemporary fiction. William Trevor, in his two works, *Two More Gallants* (1993) and *Felicia's Journey* (1994) vehicles Irish identity as being shaped by the aspects of the Irish past that in both stories still carries the weight of colonization. Contemporary Ireland is still affected by the legacy of colonialism. And this is in fact so influent on the reformation of an authentic and elusive modern Irish identity. Through Trevor's works one can notice how much the past of Ireland is a burden and a hindrance in the progress of the perceived notion of Irishness. Hence, for the three writers, Ireland is put under the umbrella of criticism, denial and rejection where the gulf between them and their homeland is wide. Thus, how is the voice of each writer traced in his fiction work? And to what extent does this situation exist in contemporary Irish fiction?

In the light of what has been mentioned, this dissertation is an inquiry in the process of analyzing the Irish quest for nationhood and Identity through literature, and to see the way each writer has manipulated to represent Ireland and its national identity. For this reason, the current dissertation is divided into four chapters. The first one which is the key chapter is entitled *the Questions of Nationhood and Identity*. My intention in this part is to give a philosophical inquiry about the two concepts relying on some philosophers of the fields. The first section is devoted to the philosophical understanding of nationhood as seen by G. F. Hegel and Ernest Renan. And section two is totally concerned with the analysis of the concept of Identity in its varied interpretations like that of Erick Erikson's and Charles Taylor's.

The second chapter, however, takes the title of *Identity Traits in James Joyce's Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man and The Dead*. In this chapter, section one is devoted to give a glimpse on the prevailing constraints of James Joyce in Ireland. And section two, gives an analysis to the two pieces of fiction. The third chapter is called *The Vestige of Identity in Samuel Beckett's Molloy and Murphy*. In this part of the work, mainly in section one; I try to give an overview of the Irish Beckett and a glance on his notion of Irishness. As I attempt to expose Beckett's views of Ireland in his two works of fiction.

Finally, the last chapter is called *Traces of Ireland and its Historical Past in William Trevor's Fiction*. The first section is devoted to the process of redefining Irish identity in the age of global Ireland. The second section, then, is an attempt to study the voice of the historical past on the notion of identity in William Trevor's *Two More Gallants* and *Felicia's Journey*.

Chater One

The Question of Identity and Nationhood

I . 1. Introduction

Identity is a complicated concept that plays a central role in political and social sciences. It is a word that received a vast increased interest by many scholars in a spectrum of fields and sundry analysis were done to capture its current meaning. Due to the hotly debate of multiculturalism¹, and under the influence of postmodernism², philosophers, psychologists and historians paused a moment attempting to investigate the meaning of identity in its real sense.

In turn, nationhood is a mediating concept whose nature is very elusive. It has a remarkable history and its meaning witnessed a process of evolution. One of the characteristics that characterize the word is the plurality of its significance. Being very important and lively debated; identity and nationhood were taken with rigour by many writers who saw the necessity to forge the sense of these two concepts in their literary works.

In many of his fictions, the Irish author James Joyce took the concept with much care trying to show how the Irish nationhood is performed and to what extent the quest of Irish identity represents an inquiry for the Irish. Joyce made a valuable contribution to the politics and the culture of his country. He produced creative insights on one of the urgent political issues facing Ireland in the 20th century.

Hence, to understand this phenomenon, it is worthwhile to investigate the meaning of identity and nationhood within a philosophical framework, relying on scholars in the field among them Ernest Renan and Frederick Hegel who gave two different points of view on the notion of nationhood. And in defining identity Erick Erickson and Charles Taylor provided analytical arguments on how the person is defined and what are the characteristics by which a person is defined.

¹ It is a social and a political movement that shows the existence of different cultures and different groups of individuals. Multiculturalism is a doctrine which holds that several different cultures and religions can coexist harmoniously in a country. It holds the principle of respecting these cultures and encouraging them to exist peacefully and equitably in a single country.

² It is a movement that emerged in architecture, philosophy, literature and art after modernism; nearly in the 1970's. Postmodernism is an attack on sovereignty and authority. It holds a rejection against theory and methodology where no absolute truth is believed. Postmodernists are suspicious and they doubt everything. Postmodernism claims to be the successor to the 17th century Enlightenment. For over four centuries, "postmodern thinkers" have promoted and defended a New Age way of conceptualizing and rationalizing human life and progress.

I . 2 Nationhood: A Philosophical Inquiry

The meaning of the term nationhood is linked to its elusiveness. And to define this concept, the first path scholars and thinkers have to step on is to give a clear distinction between nation and nation-states. It is apparently clear that nation and nation-states can not have the same meaning. The two concepts are often used interchangeably. In the layman's mind, the concepts certainly imply a number of attributes that define them. The idea of a nation is a group of people sharing the same language, culture and history and under one government. These people are bound by a blood relationship. This relation derives from a common ancestor. Moreover, a shared cultural heritage that the nation has created represents the patrimony of the nation. This heritage and specifically the nation's cultural artefacts are bound with a high valuable feeling to the extent that any violence on them will be responded to it with violent attacks and aggressive emotions. Furthermore, the linguistic coherence is also a prominent factor in the nation building. The language is identified with national identity and it is required for nationhood.

On the other hand, a nation state is a problematic concept. The nineteenth century nationalist movement created this concept by referring the nation to the land. It shows that more than one nation can laid claim to the same territory. The nation-state evolved from the nationalist ideas which embodied that there should be a correspondence between nations and the states that govern them. Originally, the term "state" derives from the Italian term "*lo stato*" that Machiavelli used it to describe the whole of the social hierarchy that governs and rules a country. And it is the supreme legitimate authority.

Political theorists defined the state relying on Max Weber as a relation of men dominating men, a relation supported by means of legitimate (i.e. considered to be legitimate) violence.

Max Weber's political sociology is focused on the state as a unique organization of the rule of men over men³. A state is according to Weber a transitory political form and a source for political democracy. It succeeds to some extent in presenting itself as a stable, a fixed and a necessary form of political and social modern organization. Weber's definition of the

³ International Journal of Politics, Culture and Sociology. Volume 3, number1. Fall, 1989.

modal of the modern society as a society centred on national state, which has been today shaken by globality and globalization⁴.

Hence, from another philosophical point of view, Emile Durkheim understood the nation as an idea which remained in the social realm but is always under philosophical inquiry. He conceived a nation as a moral entity particular to a specific milieu. It is a unity of moral principles and values which exists through political and social bonds. It represents, therefore, a national society derived from morphological phenomena elaborated from collective moral values.

Generally speaking, one of the most distinguished aspects in defining a nation relies on culture. The understanding of nationhood according to some analysts focuses on cultural terms. They see a nation as a form of cultural community. It means people can be of the same nation, only if they share the same culture. But to some extent sharing the same culture can not be a criterion of nationhood. In one of the selected essays of George Orwell, he attempted to show to his readers the distinctive features of English culture and civilization:

It is somehow bound up with solid breakfasts and gloomy Sundays, smoky towns, and winding roads, green fields and red pillar boxes...the suet puddings and red pillar boxes have entered into your soul⁵.

These features are according to Orwell distinctive for English culture. England still has smoky cities but probably not the crowds in the big towns. For if it were the crowds or the gloomy Sundays or any other feature of English culture that made the citizens English people, the English nation would disappear with the disappearance of these features. This point is quietly similar to those thinkers who emphasize moral doctrines in the understanding of nationhood. John Grey, a British [political philosopher](#) and author who wrote about “the politics of cultural diversity” pins down that in order to have a real sense of nationhood; one should act as a member of a single moral community. This suggests that members of a nation have to act upon fundamental principles which are deeply religious and moral. It is, indeed, true to some extent that religion and nationhood are

⁴ Danil, Chernio, *A social Theory of the Nation-State: The political Form of Modernity Beyond Mythological Realism*, Routledge, 2008, p. 16

⁵ George, Orwell. *England Your England, in selected essays*, Pinguin Books, 1957, p. 64

closely linked. However, this point as Margaret Canovan suggests in her book “*Nationhood and political Theory*”, may raise the question of whether Catholics can be truly Irish or whether the Orthodox can be really Greek⁶

As can be seen, to define what nationhood is was not an easy task for scholars and philosophers. The conceptual grip of the word varies from one scholar to another. Some identify the term by emphasizing shared characteristics like language, culture, religion, etc. And others see it as a self-conscious community formed from one or different races. For German nationalists in particular, the sign of a genuine nation is the existence of a distinct language. In the words of Fichte:

Whatever a separate language is found, there is a separate nation exists which has the right to take independent charge of its own affairs and to govern itself⁷

Most modern literature on nationalism sees that nationhood is defined by the consciousness of the nation’s people not by shared characteristics. Hugh- Seton Waston announces: “a nation exists when a significant number of people in a community consider themselves to form a nation, or behave as if they formed one”⁸.

I . 2. 1 George Frederick Hegel

One of the key elements of the modern idea of nation is the German philosopher George Wilhem Frederick Hegel (1770 – 1823). He is one of the greatest German philosophers and creators of German idealism⁹. He is considered as among the great thinkers in the history of western philosophy. He is widely known for his profound thoughts and their impact on the political events of the 20th century. His influential contribution in philosophy, politics, and history made him a prominent philosopher in the eyes of the many. Hegel's philosophical encyclopaedia is divided into three big sciences: Logic, The Philosophy of Nature and the Philosophy of Spirit.

⁶ Margaret, Canovan: *Nationhood and Political Theory*, Edward Elgar Publishing, 1998, p.53

⁷ Ibid, p. 8

⁸ Ibid, p. 54

⁹ A philosophical movement that emerged in Germany in the early 19th century. Since it is developed out of the work of Immanuel Kant, It is sometimes called Kantianism. Idealism is the theory that shows that reality is made up of ideas and thoughts. It is the B belief that one's ideas are the only things that are real and that he/she can know about.

In his theory of the "Philosophy of Right" Frederick Hegel believed that a nation or as he called "*Volk*" is defined through the state and the law. He considered a nation the modern symbol of freedom. He viewed that the real history of a nation begins when it acquires its own state. The state itself is the core interest for Hegel and it is a crucial factor in the construction of nationhood. Hegel regarded a nation as a spiritual individual. He believed that the "*Volk*" should represent the spirit of its people. And the spirit of this nation represents in its turn its own consciousness. A nation for Hegel is formed by a spirit and it is animated by a spirit in all its actions and affairs like war, laws, institution, etc. It is unified by and constructed by common enemies and common friends. The history of a nation is the history of its essence or "spirit" asserting itself on the "stage of history". A nation's spirit represents the powers and the rules that govern it. He declared:

The spiritual individual, the nation, in so far as it is internally differentiated so as to form an organic whole, is what we call the state. This term is ambiguous, however, for the state and the laws of the state, as distinct from religion, science and art, usually have purely political associations. But in this context, the word "state" is used in a more comprehensive sense, just as we use the word "realm" to describe spiritual phenomenon. A nation should therefore be regarded as a spiritual individual, and it is not primarily its external side that will be emphasized here, but rather what we have previously called the spirit of the nation...in short, those spiritual powers which live within the nation and rule over it.¹⁰

Hegel attempted to show that a nation to be a real nation is in a deep need of a political state. It is not only defined by its ethical life, it should be coined with other materials which he referred to as "spiritual powers" that are found within the nation and contribute in its formation. And these powers namely are: religion, destiny, ethics industry, foreign relationships of this nation, all of these are tied together and form this political community. A nation, therefore, is a political community whose members share ethical principles.

¹⁰ Z.A, Pelczynski, *The State and Civil Society: Study in Hegel's Political Philosophy*. Cambridge University Press, 1984, p. 56

Moreover, what is very essential to a nation to be a "volk" is the state. Hegel saw the state as the absolute power on earth and it represents the spirit of the people. For him, a group of people may exist as a nation but this nation is not able to participate in world history without being a state. It achieves its historical job if it will be able to construct and form a stable state. The value of a nation in becoming is portrayed in its ability in contributing in the development of freedom in history as well as in the progress of the citizen's freedom. And this eventually happen by providing the individuals with tools by which they can understand their duties and laws. Hegel argued saying: "nations may have had a long history before they finally reach their destination that of forming themselves into states"¹¹

From the Hegelian perspective, the nation is based on the state, and the state should depend on the nation. Each one needs the other to fulfil their roles perfectly. Hegel saw that the State is formed of laws, but it lacks the connection to a nation's history and culture, otherwise it would be overly formal and uncompleted and its members would be unable to develop a self-understanding of themselves. Hence, because of the sense on understanding of one's self is an important element especially to freedom. A state with neither history nor culture through which it understands itself, it would be impotent to provide its members with the self-understanding people need to their independence. Therefore, individuals within their nation can easily achieve their freedom, when they are members of a nation that looks back to its own traditions and preserves its culture and heritage within traditional institutions. Hegel announced:

The external existence of the state, despite the rational laws and principles it contains, is an uncompleted present which cannot understand itself and develop an integrated consciousness without reference to the past ¹²

Moreover, Hegel emphasized the idea of the necessity of the constitution for a nation. For him, a constitution is one means in through which a nation expresses itself. It reflects

¹¹ George Frederick Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, Cambridge University Press, 1984, p. 134

¹² Lydia, L. Molan, *Hegel on Political Identity : Patriotism, Nationality, Cosmopolitanism*, Northwestern University Press, Evanston Illinois. p. 93

the history of this nation, and at the same time, it attempts to formulate codes and laws and conceptions of justice. When a nation becomes a state and presents its laws into a written document it will be a successful nation. Moreover, a nation according as Hegel notices has an advantage to the life of the state in the sense that it bonds the citizens to each other; and can produce a community that encourages the individual to look for his interests. A nation as a state has always the best luck and chance to combine the customs and the traditions that render life wealthy with the universal principles of the rational state. For him, a nation which has a state is by definition a nation that has reflected on itself¹³. This nation does not work on accepted traditional beliefs but it has re-examined those beliefs especially to codify tradition into codes and laws. The state is, henceforth, the locus of the citizens and of the nation which pushes it to become aware of itself.

Accordingly, as mentioned above, Hegel viewed the individual as profoundly linked to his nation. From his point of view, if the man can make a clear distinction between himself and others; when it comes to his nation, then, he can not make such difference between himself and the spirit of his nation. Consequently, the spirit of the nation is the necessary point of each individual and which integrate people together. The individual's connection to his nation also represents the nation's acts and actions. In his Lectures on World History, Hegel claims:

Every Englishman will say: we are the men who navigate the ocean, and have the commerce of the world; to whom the East Indies belong and their riches, who have a Parliament, juries, etc. The relation of the individual to the spirit of the nation is that he appropriates to himself this substantial existence; it becomes his character, and capability enabling him to have a definite place in the world to be something.¹⁴

In fact, Hegel's philosophical ideas on the political community or the idea of state are platonic views. From Plato¹⁵, the source of inspiration, Hegel strove to make his entire task to strengthen the power of the State as the main core to form the notion of nationhood. The

¹³ Ibid, p. 94

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 94

¹⁵ A Greek philosopher, a mathematician and the founder of the first institution of higher learning in Western World. He had a great contribution in political philosophy, especially with his views on the state. According to Plato, a state made up of different kinds of souls will, overall, decline from an [aristocracy](#) (rule by the best) to a [timocracy](#) (rule by the honorable), then to an [oligarchy](#) (rule by the few), then to a [democracy](#) (rule by the people), and finally to [tyranny](#) (rule by one person, rule by a tyrant).¹ Aristocracy is the form of government (*politeia*) advocated in Plato's Republic.

state for Hegel is an ethical community that is well organized politically, distinct and independent from other communities. It is the supreme point of social existence, and the process of mankind's development, from a family to a civil society to political groupings. It is made up of members and individuals who should be loyal to the state and subordinate to it, and can be sacrificed to its interests. This state according to Hegel should have a purpose and a will of its own.

I . 2. 2 Ernest Renan

Nationhood is a complex phenomenon that requires a clear and a good grip. And the conditions from which the term emerged puzzled many scholars among them Ernest Renan. The complexity of the concept swept into philosophy from Renan to Max Weber to Hobsbawn and others; as it conquered the modern life also. In order to break out this complexity, the following question is asked: what is meant by nationhood? What makes a country a nation? The answers of these questions, therefore, will be focused on Ernest Renan's viewpoints on the subject.

Ernest Renan (1823-1892) is one of the intellectual figures in France in the nineteenth century. He is best known for his influential historical works on the history of religion, specifically Christianity; his [political](#) theories, particularly those concerning nationalism and national identity, philology and the philosophy of science.

In the process of defining a nation, more than one hundred years ago, Ernest Renan delivered a lecture in Paris "Sorbonne" on the question: "What is a Nation?" In this speech, Renan criticized powerfully the ethnographic definition of nationhood. He gave a definition that is totally divorced from the objective criteria of a nation which are those of race, geography culture and ethnicity. Renan saw nationhood ought to be seen defined from a corner of subjective phenomenon. In his famous metaphor, Renan criticized the term nation as a 'daily plebiscite'.

Nationhood is not an ethno-cultural claim, but it is a claim on people's unity, loyalty and solidarity. It is not described by the culture and the language that exist in it. It is referred to as an entity that is created to change the world and change people's view of themselves. An interested thinker in the subject after Renan, Maw Weber, characterized

the concept of nation as a *Wertbegriff* (values and principles) which refers to the term that belongs to the sphere of values.

From another angle, in the context of nationalist movements, nations should be created to challenge the political order. Nationalists believe that nations are imagined communities in which territorial establishment is not taken into account. For Benedict Anderson, a nation is an imagined political community that is socially constructed. It is *imagined* because the members of this nation or even the smallest nations will never know most of their fellow members; they will not meet them or even hear of them. But, in the mind of each citizen, the image of their communion is always present. Moreover, he argues that the nation is truly imagined but at the same time it is *limited* because it may encompass a billion of human beings living in but, it has finite boundaries beyond which lie other nations. For Anderson, no nation imagines itself coterminous with mankind¹⁶ . This is to say for example Christians do not dream of a wholly Christian land or planet where no boundaries are to be considered. Furthermore, the nation is imagined as *sovereign* because the term nation came into light when the Revolutions and Enlightenment were destroying every hierarchical dynastic realm that represented the legitimacy force at that time. For this reason the concept nation can be seen as a modern idea. Correspondingly, it is imagined as a *community* because it is conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship¹⁷. This fraternal feeling that people share to their nation makes them willing to sacrifice their lives and even ready to die for such limited, sovereign, imagined community. Anderson declared:

In an anthropological spirit...I propose the following definition of the nation: it is an imagined political community- and imagined as inherently limited and sovereign¹⁸

Moving back to Renan, in his famous speech “what is a Nation?” He defined nationhood as the desire of people to live together. He questioned what makes a set of people a nation. Renan identified a nation both a soul and a principle. The soul refers to

¹⁶ Benedict, Richard O’Gorman Anderson, *Imagined Communities : Reflections on the Origin and spread of Nationalism*, Verso, 1983, p. 7

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 7

¹⁸ Ross, Poole, *Nation and Identity*, Routledge Publication, 1999, p. 10

the past with its memories and the principle represents the present and refers to the desire to live together. For him, nationhood can not be identified by objective criteria like race, religion, and ethnicity and so on. Yet, it should be based on people's strong wish to be together, having done many things and willing to do more.

Renan considered these criteria not sufficient to constitute the phenomenon of nationhood. Race is for him not a solid element for a nation's formation because a nation can be a mixture of races especially in Europe which is a multiethnic region. Similarly, language is truly an important element but it cannot be a factor that encompasses nationhood. For, one can notice that there are nations where more than three languages are spoken. In Renan's point of view, "*language invites people to unite, but does not force them to do so*"¹⁹. Additionally, religion is also very important. It is a sacred calling that is attachable to the country, and in some countries, religion helps to link geographical areas. However, presently, religion has become a personal and an individual choice. One can be French and at the same time he/she can either be Catholic, Protestant, Jewish or Atheist.

Generally, nations must not be connected with biological and ethnic ties but, they must be formed by memories of wars, success, glories and sacrifices of the people. What is very essential in constructing a nation, Renan believed is the memory of its people. People of a given nation should remember glorious events they shared in the past, and forget the obstacles and the conflicts they met before becoming a nation. A nation is a "spiritual principle" in which shared experiences are the key components that constitute it.

Renan's definition of nationhood seems to be legitimate because it stands for the choice of the individuals. He viewed nationhood as the commitment to go together and the continuity of past memories and historical values that tied people with each other and formed their nation. It is, therefore, the desire to live together. He urges people to come together and remember their acquaintances and no matter if these people share the same race, religion, language and geography or not.

More to the point, Renan believed that a nation is defined as the culmination of a long past of endeavours, sacrifices and devotion as well as a large scale of solidarity, constituted by the feeling of sacrifice that one has made in the past. Renan tried to say that

¹⁹ Ernest, Renan., *What is a nation ?*, 1882. (speech)
www.wikipedia.com/Ernest-Renan/what-is/a-nation

people have to be one hand. They should be unified by joy, grief, victories and sacrifices of the past. This way these people can advance together as on entity which is a nation. Renan declared

A nation is a soul, a spiritual principle. Two things which are really one, go to make up this soul or spiritual principle. One of these things lies in the past, the other in the present. The one is possessing in common of a rich legacy of memories; and the other actual agreement, the desire to live together, and the will to continue to make the most of the joint inheritance²⁰

As a whole, Renan tried to cover the sense of nationhood through offering two essential principles. Nationhood is built on a possession of past fascination. And the second principle is the “will to live together. It is the will of the people to consolidate their past and perpetuate their unity, and to still have the will and still be encouraged with what they performed even at the expense of great pains: and still be able to perform what they experienced in the present and the future. This is, in fact, Renan’s views of a modern nation.

Renan observed the phenomenon of a nation as an agreement of the inhabitants of this nation who have an expressive will to live together and perform great deeds together by holding their memories and willing to carry them in the future. It is symbolized by heroic and glorious great men. Hence, it is not an ethno-cultural fact. Rather, it is a claim on people’s loyalty and solidarity. It is, also, a means that help people to change the way they see themselves in. Renan saw the unity and the attachment of people as the way to create strong national identity that can confront anything as a solid and insuperable force of a nation. Renan demonstrated that the nation is “*the end product of a long period of work, sacrifice and devotion*”²¹

On the whole, nationhood is a phenomenon that is of vital importance and it is extraordinary hard to get a firm definition. The idea of a nation seems simple and clear,

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ Mac, Helbing, *Practising citizenship and Heterogenous Nationhood*, Amesterdam University Press, 2008, p. 45

yet it may lead itself to a misunderstanding. Language, nationality, geography, race and religion are, in fact, important elements that contribute in the construction of a nation, but they are insufficient to create it. For Renan nationhood depends on the collection of memories of glory and sufferings of the past made on the people's behalf in the name of their country. It is, therefore, the products which are inherited from the past, and this heritage is an essential will to continue together in the present and in the future. In the final consideration, a nation does not define itself by social groups, neither religious nor radical groups. This means that what binds together the nation's citizens is the product of a unique combination of historical events, and cannot be reduced to a single dimension; whether it is social, religious or cultural. What distinguish a nation and form a national community is that it pushes people to come together not for who they are, but for the memory of what they have been and what they shared in the past. Henceforth, a nation is the locus of a common triumph and a common endeavour. It is the locus of a common destiny. A nation can have no other definition but historical.

I . 3 Identity: Analysis of a Concept

One of the biggest questions in Modern philosophy is "identity". The debate over this notion has puzzled many philosophers since the time of the Ancient Greeks. The questions of identity have been taken with a high interest by scholars and philosophers searching for the exact meaning of the concept in a vast area of domain. Famous scholars such as John Locke, Charles Taylor and others have particularly looked upon what makes someone unique and the qualities that go along in forming one's identity.

Moreover, philosophy is actually not the only discipline that addresses these questions. However, history, politics, political science and other sciences encounter questions in this subject. Hence, identity was the subject of interest and the illumination for many lecturers and historians who sought for the historical and the cultural construction of identity.

In philosophy, identity derives from the Latin word *identitas* which itself comes from another Latin word *idem* which means "the same" or "sameness"; and it is the relation

each thing bears just to itself. The concept of identity leads to a vague of philosophical troubles. The notion matters theoretically as a concept that gives rise to lively debates about it.

Generally, the simple answer to the question: "what is identity?" is when someone answers the question: "who am I?" Identity here is the way someone defines who he/she is. It is the set of values and principles that form one's life. One's identity in this meaning consists of what makes someone unique as an individual and quietly different from others. Or it can be the way he/she looks at or define his/herself, or the network of values and convictions that structure one's life. Hence, the answer to this question varies from one person to another. It depends on the context and the circumstances that surround a particular person. One can answer this question saying: "I am a woman, a teacher, a mason, an American, a Muslim...etc. Therefore, identity in this case is the property and the quality that fits the person and is attachable to him/her. It means one can be a teacher and at the same time French and Muslim. Does this mean that he/she has multiple identities?

Extensively, identity can be used in two meanings, social and personal. On the one hand, it refers to a social category. It means a set of people forming membership in a society and characterized by specific features and attributes. On the other hand, an identity can be personal with some distinguishing attributes that a person takes a pride in. Therefore, identity can have two explanatory meanings. It is, then, explained as a social category and at the same time as a set of beliefs and principles that a person considers it as the source of a person's pride and destiny.

More to the point, if one looks at dictionary definitions of the term "identity", he/she probably will not understand its meaning. Scholars have evolved in their research concerning this notion. And the definition that dictionary provides can not catch up with their current usage. From this point, it is quietly noticeable that the present meaning of identity is new and modern since it evolved in the last forty years. This can be seen in the theory of Erik Erikson's "identity crisis" who gives successful ideas on the theme which renders it so important especially after loading it with more significance. Erikson's term "identity crisis" is defined as the condition of being uncertain of somebody's feeling about somebody's self especially with regard to aims, character and origins. These concepts

occur in a form of questions at the age of adolescence which represent the result of human evolution under fast changing conditions.

Thus, Viewpoints concerning the notion of "identity" differ from one academic to another. And the question "who am I?" had troubled philosopher for centuries. Identity seems to have been one of the greatest and illuminating concerns in the life and the theory of psychology of Erik Erikson.

I . 3. 1 Erik Erikson

Erick Erikson [1902 - 1994] is a German born American psychoanalyst and a theorist whose works centered on Identities Development. He is one of the most creative and influential thinkers. His contribution emphasized the study of infancy, childhood, identity and other major branches in psychoanalysis. Erik Erikson is best known for psychosocial development²², the architect of identity, Identity crises and many other prominent works.

The quest of identity is according to Erikson, the central theme of life. He defined the word as a subjective sense of efficient uniqueness as well as a remarkable predicate of personal continuity. For him, identity is a continuous work of the self. One of the most prominent properties of identity is the sense of continuity and sameness. Erikson described identity as a subjective sense and a noticeable quality of personal sameness and continuity, linked to some beliefs in the sameness and continuity of some shared world image. Although one can have a change in social or personal relations, in the context and the family; he/she can experience a continued sense of the self across time and space. This is what John Locke refers to as identity through time. Erikson defends this idea saying:

²² It is one of the best known theories of personality. Erikson believed that the personality of the individual develops through a series of steps. It showed how much do social experiences impact the process of personality development.

...even with all the changes in marriages, family, other relationships, and work circumstances, I am still me. I just keep on growing and finding better opinions for self-expression²³

Furthermore, in his [theory of “stages of psychosocial development”](#) Erikson believed that the person encounters crisis of his/ her identity at adolescence in which people struggle between their feeling of identity and their role confusion. This is what he called "*Identity Crisis*". Erikson defined this phenomenon as the period of a real self examination and self questioning of the individual's principles and his/her direction in life. He saw that the nut of adolescence is the real formation of the person's adult's identity. In other words, it is the challenge and the crisis which occur at the age of adolescence leads to the creation of self-identity. He coined this term "crisis" to show that this challenge is a normal way of development and leads to the construction of compatible values and beliefs and the orientation in life. For him, "*your identity is your sense of who you are and what you stand for*"²⁴

Therefore, Identity becomes important during adolescence when the person experiences the transition from childhood to adulthood. At this stage of life, instability invades the adolescent's life. For, at this temporary period the person experiences and struggles with confusions that he/she meets. In addition, children become free and think in terms of social and personal independence, and start to plan for their future in terms of jobs, social relationships, career...etc. During this period, they begin to form their own identity relying on the exploration of their selves. Hence, identity becomes the highest point of interest at the age of teens. Additionally, [Erik Erikson's](#) theory of psychosocial development is one of the well known theories of identity and personality at the same time. In [psychology](#), Like [Sigmund Freud](#)²⁵, Erikson believed that identity evolves through a set

²³ Kenneh, R Hoover, *The Future of Identity: Centennial Reflections on the Legacy of Erik Erikson*, Lexington Books, 2004, p. 62

²⁴ Jeffrey, S Nevid, Spencer Arathus, *Psychology and the Challenge of Life*, Chaper six, Lexington Books, 2004, p. 208.

²⁵ Sigmund Freud (1856 –1939) is an Austrian neurologist who founded the discipline of psychoanalysis. In his well-known stage theory of psychosexual development, Freud suggested that personality develops in stages that are related to specific erogenous zones. Freud believed that personality has three structures: the id, the ego, and the superego. These three elements of personality work together to create complex human behaviours.

of stages. His theory describes the impact of social experience across the whole life stage. According to Erikson, the person's ego identity is constantly changing because of the daily experiences, the news and the information the person acquires and received in his/her everyday interactions with other people. Ego identity represents the consciousness of the self that one develops through social interactions. Each stage in Erikson's theory is concerned with becoming competent in a particular space in life. If the stage works well, the person will feel a sense of confidence and mastery, which Erikson calls it the ego strength or ego quality. However, if the stage is handled poorly, the person will emerge with a sense of inadequacy and impotency. Erikson goes on to say that the study of identity becomes as strategic in our time as the study of sexuality in Freud's time.

Apparently, identity is said to be an individual characteristics by which a person is recognized. Philosophically, the identity of a person is the properties through which it is that person. Yet, for Charles Taylor, the question over identity is not only interpreted by "who am I?" It is something more valuable than this interpretation.

I . 3. 2 Charles Taylor

Among the most influential philosophers of the late 20th century is Charles Taylor. Charles Taylor [b.1931] is a Canadian philosopher and a political theorist. He is well known for his views on the history of philosophy, political philosophy and social science. Taylor's widely read book is sources of the self (1989). In this book Taylor studied and examined the history of upheavals of the notion of identity. He tried to explore the meaning of identity and its real connotation.

Taylor proclaimed that the question of identity is not just what people define and phrase as "who am I?", it is, in fact, something of paramount importance than a quality related to a name or a genealogy that stamps a person and associate him to be a particular one. Taylor defends this idea saying:

My identity is defined by the commitments and identifications which provide the frame and the horizon within which I can try to determine

from case to case what is good or valuable, or what ought to be done, or what I endorse to oppose²⁶

In Taylor's interpretation, identity is a network of moral goals and principles that structures a person's life and helps him to guide his actions. To know who you are is to be aware of knowing your place, and where you stand. For Taylor, Identity consists of elements that are essential and sacred for a person. Furthermore, in order to define your identity you should be capable of distinguishing the questions that come in your space about what is good or bad, what is worth or not and what is important and secondary. Hence, people may see their identity as defined by moral and spiritual commitment like a Catholic for instance. Or they may define it by the nation they belong to as well as by the tradition they have. This means that these people are closely attached by the spiritual background that provides the frame within which they can distinguish what is admirable and of value, and what is not. However, if these people lose these commitments or identifications, they will be involved into a sea of questions about themselves. This may result in a crisis for the individual where he/she will be disoriented and always expresses him/herself of not knowing who he/she is and what he/she stands for. This person will lack the horizon within which he/she identifies his/herself.

More to the point, Taylor considered identity as the way of self- understanding. It holds crucial elements that form the person's horizon within which he/she can evaluate and judge what counts for him/her. Taylor declared:

to define my identity is to define what I must be in contact with in order to function fully as a human agent, and specifically to be able to judge and discriminate and recognize what is really of worth or importance, both in general and for me. To say that something is part of my identity is to say that without it I should be at a loss in making those discriminations which are characteristically human²⁷

²⁶ Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The making of the modern identity*, Cambridge University Press, 1992, p. 27

²⁷ Brian, J, Braman. *Bernard Lonergan and Charles Taylor on the Drama: Meaning and authenticity*, University of Toronto Press, 2008, p. 30

According to Taylor, to define who I am depends not only on moral matters but also on other elements. It crucially depends on one's relation and interactions with others in a given community, for it is in these interactions and dialogues with other people that one knows who he/she is; where he/she stands and what is of worth and importance for him/her.

Additionally, it is in society that a person can grasp the full definition of identity. For Taylor, society is the cradle of the person's identity, and his/her environment represents its framework. Therefore, identity is perfectly understood inside the context of people relationship, precisely inside the community, because community as Taylor noted is constitutive of one's identity in the sense that the characteristics of the individual come from the interchange in the community.

In the same way, the concept of identity can cover various kinds of identities from personal to social; identity can also be cultural and national. Culture is a complex experience which is defined by the interaction with others. Cultural identity has itself important implications for intercultural communication which is a contact between people who identify themselves as culturally different from one another, or an interaction between culturally distinct people who present different identities in a dialogue or a conversation. Culture identity is defined by attitudes and beliefs and what a person from each culture believes is normal for that group. It, also, consists of racial, religious, class, gender, sexuality and familial identities. Additionally, national, social and personal identities also contribute to one's cultural identity, as these attributes form the whole person, making her/him who she/he is.

I . 3. 3 National identity

Each society has some unique features and characteristics by which it distinguishes itself from other societies. These characteristics let the society define itself in opposition to other societies. They are the stereotypes that mark a given society distinct from another one. And this leads the “us” and the “them”. According to A. D Smith and his milestone research and study on national identity, a nation is defined as a named human population

sharing a historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties, for all members²⁸. Therefore, what feature a national identity are a homeland, a historical territory, common myths and historical memories; common economy with geographical mobility for the members of the nation. In addition, common duties and legal rights for the members of the community and common culture are also required for a national identity.

National identity is a multidimensional concept that has been viewed and analyzed by scholars and philosophers in various fields; and that is relevant to a wide range of research. National identity is a phenomenon based on a sentiment of belonging to the same nation and sharing the same characteristics that distinguish it from other nations. Generally, it answers the question of "who are we?" When people share a national identity, they have a sense of belonging to a specific nation or state. It is, in fact, a product of society, in the sense that in order to avoid division and separation, people ought to frame and identify themselves socially; relying on common culture, history, territory language and destiny. Identity here entails a depiction of a country with its culture, politics and traditions. Through sharing a national identity people must possess common attributes, and they share this identity if they actually have something in common. National identity appears to imply the answers of the self within a defined national context.

With regard to Ireland, it is not easy to give an exact definition of Irishness. In the Irish land, there is a mosaic of identities. And in the process of finding its true identity, a community often starts with looking for the origins and for the specific characteristics that make the Irish distinct from the British colonizer.

Since national identity is a multidimensional term, it has many dimensions that shape and determine its creation. According to Keillor Bruce, the dimensions of national identity are characterized in belief structure, national heritage, cultural homogeneity and ethnocentrism²⁹.

²⁸ A. D, Smith, *National Identity*, Cambridge University Press, 1991, p. 14

²⁹ Keillor Bruce D, g. Thomas M. Hult, Robert c Erffmeyer, and Emin Babamus, *the Development and application of National Identity Measure for Use in International Marketing* "Journal of International Marketing. Vol 4, N° 257, p. 73

1- **The belief structure:**

It is in fact the degree to which religion influence cultural participation.

2- **National heritage:**

Refers to the significance that a given nation accords historical events, heroes and figures in history and emphasize its historical uniqueness.

3- **Cultural homogeneity:**

It is, however, the number of cultures found within a set of national boundaries³⁰.

4- **Ethnocentrism:**

And which refers to the capacity of judging other cultures by the criteria and the standards of the own cultural heritage that is believed to be superior.

It is important to emphasise that there is nothing ‘natural’ or ‘essential’ about national identities. They are in fact historically a recent concept. Stuart Hall (1996), for example dispatches the ‘natural’ connection between the individual and the nation-state he/she is born into by emphasising the role of identification; national identities are transformed through a process of identification and this process is shaped by the cultural meanings that serve to create the notion of a nation. As Benedict Anderson has always mentioned, national identities operate as an ‘imagined community. However, M. Billing in his book *Banal Nationalism* (1995), refers to the everyday ways in which national identity is constructed and re-constructed, or ‘flagged’ as he mentioned in his text. He argues that these reminders or flaggings are “*such a familiar part of the social environment that they operate mindlessly, rather than mindfully*”³¹.

³⁰ A. D, Smith, *National Identity*, Penguin Books, London, 1991, p. 14

³¹ M, Billing, *Banal Nationalism*, Sage, 1995, p. 38

Billig argued that for a national identity to be seen as natural and not imposed, it must remain near the surface of contemporary life and be daily perpetuated through language something he refers to as “flagging the homeland daily” (p.93). Unlike Anderson, it should not be imagined because for him, the survival of the nation depends on a daily act of collective will, but rather through the continuation of ‘banal national practices’ which prove the reality of the nation, and affirm its existence. Therefore, Billig asserts that the psychological study of national identity should not be based on determining ‘fixed’ national characteristics, but rather should “search for the common-sense assumptions and ways of talking about nationhood”. Billig believes that the focus on this issue should not be on asking what is a national identity? but rather on asking what does it mean to claim to have a national identity?

Billig, along with Anderson, tries to link the discourse of national identity with nationalism and the role of the nation-state in announcing these discourses. The focus of a social psychological analysis lies in the ways these discourses are taken up or rejected by individuals who identify with the nation. One might ask how national identities are articulated and how some national identities, come to be seen as authentic. In fact, national identities are reproduced in individual discursive practice:

The national identity of individuals who perceive themselves as belonging to a national collectively is manifested, *inter alia*, in their social practices, one of which is discursive practice. The respective national identity is shaped by state, political, institutional, media and everyday social practices, and the material and social conditions which emerge as their results, to which the individual is subjected. The discursive practice as a special form of social practice plays a central part both in the formation and in the expression of national identity³².

³² Wodak, de Cella, Reisigl, Liebhart, *The discursive construction of national identity*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.1999, pp. 29-30

I . 4 Conclusion

Research over the notion of identity and nationhood has extended in many fields. Nationhood is often used in a variety of contexts, and it almost produces confusing interpretations. As a discipline, philosophy has brought to the fore the concept with great interest and care trying to philosophy and give the term various explanations from shared characteristics to the belief to live together. Nationhood is, in fact, said to be a term that is difficult to arrive at its finite definition. The complexity of nationhood was the subjects of interests for the French thinker Ernest Renan and the German philosopher Frederick Hegel. For Renan, a nation is a soul and a principle. The first one belongs to the past and refers to a rich legacy of remembrance and memories, and the second one belongs to the present and explains the desire of people to live together and the will to honour this legacy. Hegel on the other side sees that a nation is the modern symbol of freedom. He viewed that when a nation acquires its own state, it starts to form its real history. Hegel considers the state as the first and the last power on earth and it represents the spirit of the nation and of its people.

In the same vein, identity is a phenomenon that has been much debated and its meanings are as many and as varied. Despite the popularity of the term, definitions of identity are hard to find. Scholars, especially psychoanalysts consider the question: who am I, as a problematic and a conflicting subject. Some define identity as a predicate that is attachable to a person. It is a property that belongs and characterizes the individual. Some others define identity as network of moral values and principle through which the person recognizes his/her place in the world and what he objective he/she plans for.

The concepts of identity and nationhood proved themselves at the forefront of many fields; politics, philosophy, psychology, etc. They find resonance in literature where they take hold in various literary products. Due to the important role they play, it will be worthwhile to discuss these two interesting subjects, and to see how they are grasped and articulated in literature which is the mirror of society and nation and represents its sense of belonging. The next chapter will examine two literary works of the Irish author James Joyce where the traits of Irish national identity are traced in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *The Dead*.

Chapter Two

**Identity Traits in James Joyce's: *A Portrait of the Artist*
as a Young Man and *The Dead***

II . 1 Introduction

In his two literary works, the short story *the Dead* (1914) and the novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), James Joyce utilizes the theme of rejection and political denial. These two narratives are filled with references from his experiences in the heart of the city of Dublin. In *Portrait*, Joyce portrays the main character of the novel, Stephen Dedalus as a young man who is in a crisis at the beginning of the 20th century. Joyce considers the complexity of Irish history, the Catholic religion and politics had a major influence on the behaviours and the minds of the Irish. Through his character, Joyce explores the nets of society which limit those Irishmen from intellectual freedom. These nets push Joyce to get fed up with Ireland, and consequently to deny everything Irish even his national identity.

James Joyce henceforth positions himself rigorously as a rebellious character who does not support the status quo. He refuses to support the majority by letting down his own principles and personal beliefs. By doing this, Joyce accomplishes the most sincere service to his country. Equally, Gabriel Conroy, the main and central character of *The Dead* is presented by Joyce as a well educated and a self absorbed Irishman who prefers a cosmopolitan identity and international horizons for his aims that always should keep in touch with European cultures. James Joyce portrays Gabriel as a character who is sick of his own country and its orders. He is a citizen who sees little values in his country, choosing instead the sophisticated culture of Europe. From Gabriel's point of view, Joyce tries to demonstrate that Irish identity is formed not by looking to the past, but it should be based on the reality of contemporary Ireland and its constant relation to Britain and Europe.

The coming chapter examines James Joyce's two literary works *The Dead* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* where Joyce decides to rise above the turbulent Ireland of the early 1900's , through a rebellion against society; and a struggle against his hereditary beliefs.

II . 2 James Joyce's prevailing constraints in Ireland

James Joyce Augustine (1882-1941) is one of the great Irish writers of the early 20th century. He is widely recognized as one of the best innovators of literature whose influence upon other writers got him the merit to be an outstanding Irish author of his time. Joyce

was a lord of his meaningful language and one of the famous stylists of his time in the sense that he attributed his proper use of the literary genre “stream of consciousness”. Joyce’s modernist style gave coming Irish novelists many possibilities in fiction. His famous works are the short story collection *Dubliners* (1914) which received acceptance and admiration by many writers and critics. *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young man* (1916) is a semi-autobiographical novel. *Ulysses* (1922) is James Joyce’s masterpiece. It was considered by many authors like T. S. Eliot and Hemingway as a work of genius. And finally, *Finnegans Wake*, a novel published in 1939.

James Joyce is a rebellious writer whose conceptions mainly opposed and criticized social conventions, religious upbringings, Irish identity and nationalist movements in Ireland through his literary writings. All these features represented the net of Joyce’s reason of his identity denial. James Joyce’s rejection of his Irish language, religion, nation and identity does not mean that he expressed a full separation with his motherland. But, he wrote about these issues because he felt an urge to change the image of Ireland, and improve its people’s conception of the Irish society. Joyce maintained that the Irish were forced by social constraints that made them back into powerlessness and submission. They were, in fact, beaten down by their domestic and passive environment.

II . 2 . 1 Joyce’s Social Repressiveness

One of the most essential motives of Joyce’s withdrawal of his native identity is his family’s constraints. The history of his family, his fellow citizens and his personal history were forces that helped to shape and translate his inner nature. The family is, in fact, the innermost part of the radiating lines of force connecting the individual centre with the whole of universal experience³³. Joyce’s family life bears a resemblance to Stephen’s, the main character of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*.

With a focused reading of James Joyce’s biographies, one can deduce that the historical background of the Joyce family was a road block that stifled Joyce, and from which he wanted to leave with an intense urge. Joyce was born into a comfortable middle class Catholic home. He was the oldest surviving and favoured child of the family. Joyce received his first educational steps at one of Ireland’s Christian schools Clongowes Wood College. When he was nine, the family’s finances began to dwindle. It declined from

³³ Charles, peake, *James Joyce the Artist and the citizen*, Routledge, p. 350

prosperity towards poverty. John Joyce (Joyce's father) led the family to a decline, and his political loyalties acted against him. He saw the loss of his fortunes was linked directly to the fall of the Irish politician and statesman Charles Stewart Parnell. This was also the cause of John Joyce's erosion of his job as a tax collector. Moreover, the expulsion of Parnell from the Head of the Irish Home Rule Party accelerated the family's financial drop which led to a steady decline into poverty and, therefore, little Joyce could not come back to the famous Jesuit Clongowes Wood, Ireland's most prestigious school.

Consequently, all these facts portrayed James Joyce's dissatisfaction. Now Joyce felt different from the world around him. He saw himself alienated and detached from school and friends. And he wanted to detach himself from home and from the world where he lived. What surrounded Joyce did not satisfy his desires and hopes. He saw in his family repressive and authoritative forces that blocked his creative and productive thoughts.

Although Joyce had a successful academic career, he remained guided by the intellectual and the spiritual independence that would characterize his life later on. He had, indeed, a ready grasp of the subject matter he studied. He was a distinguished student among his class mates and had wide facilities with European languages, and a good understanding of the literature of the age. He felt himself he had something special and extraordinary than the others. He, then, began to demonstrate the potential of his intellectual capabilities and his creative mind. Through art, he wished to perceive life aesthetically. He tried to move outside himself and outside the obstacles of nationalism; religion and the Irish family's closed mind. Joyce perceived his life in flight.

Therefore, the Irish family's authority still exercised a degree of restraint on the imagination of the little Joyce. The Irish family life with its stern Catholic morality represented the fetters of Joyce's freedom. Joyce hoped to detach himself from the dominating regime of an impoverished father and a high Catholic mother whose increased care and fear to his son began to bother him everywhere. In a letter to his wife Nora, James Joyce declared: "My home was simply a middle class affair ruined by spendthrift habits which I have inherited"³⁴

³⁴ [Doris, L. Eder](#), *Three writers in Exile: Pound, Eliot, and Joyce*. New York: the Whiston Publishing Company, 1984, p. 89

By the same token, when he began to grow up, Joyce turned his back on his family. He attempted to free himself from the misrule of his father. Joyce was always critical about his father's authority. And sometimes he holds a feeling of pity to him. He sees that his father was a victim of a political system which was that of Parnell that drove him into a financial crisis. Joyce announced: "when I looked on the face that I saw in the coffin, I understood that I was looking at the face of a victim"³⁵.

And after the death of Mary Jane (Joyce's mother), Joyce's life started to be unbearable and he could no more bear the prevailing situation. What remained for James Joyce was to listen to the call of his artistic soul and seek a life of his own. Consequently, the family dream of a pure Catholic life for James Joyce swayed when he threw off his religion denying its frustrating values. Thus, as a baby he took his parents' word as law and order, but when he grew up, he started to question what he had been taught more and more.

II . 2. 2 Joyce's Catholic discomfort

In Ireland's long history as a British colony, the Catholic religion was never just a question of religious faith, but also a matter of national identity. In the small country, the Catholic religion exerted a repressive grip over the Irish society and over Joyce's development. As an artist, Joyce was always against the Church that he rejected in most of his works. From Joyce's point of view, the Roman Catholic Church that ruled the Irish not only spiritually, politically, also, over more than one hundred years caused a domination which resulted in the backwardness and the frustration of the people.

As a young man in Dublin, Joyce could not avoid himself from seeing the heavy influence of the Church on the politics of his day. As an illustration, in *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* the separation and the division between the characters who respect the primacy of the Church in political and public affairs and those who do not is widely noticeable. It is portrayed in the conflict between Dante Riordan and Mr Casey. The Orthodox, like Dante is convinced that religion should take precedence in Irish culture; and the Secularists like Mr Dedalus and Mr Casey view that religion is keeping Ireland from progress. Dante is a fundamentalist who declares: "*God and morality and religion come*

³⁵ Ibid, p. 90

first...God and religion before everything". Unlike Dante, Mr Casey disagrees and if he has to choose between Ireland's independence and religion, he will choose Ireland. He reacted angrily by saying that Ireland should not have God: "No God for Ireland....we have had too much God in Ireland... away with God"³⁶ .

From these starting points, James Joyce's negative attitudes towards the Catholic religion began to take form. During this dispute, Stephen was silent and passive trying to consider who is right and who is wrong. From his family's quarrel, Stephen noticed that adults (Mr Casey, Dante...) have much problems and that the sphere of adulthood is filled with conflicts, riots and separation. Being in this difficult situation, Stephen felt himself confused about which authority to trust; Mr Casey r Dante:

Stephen looked with affection at Mr Casey's face
which started across the table over his joined hands...
but why was he against the priest? Because Dante
must be right then ³⁷

These complex authorities led Stephen to break with the institution of politics and religion. He wished to divorce his mother land in favour of exile.

During his schooling and his youth, Joyce remained a Catholic; but at an early age he rejected Catholicism. First of all, Joyce's education came from Catholic schools. Jesuit School and the Christian Brothers were his biased primary education. With the beginning of his twenties James Joyce switched his standpoints towards religion, and tried to get rid of the Catholic principles that were hanging him in order to move out of Dublin and pursue his aim as an artist. In Ireland Catholicism represented a source of betrayal, obedience, alienation and authority. Joyce considered the Catholic Church and the severe system of the field it embraced as an obstacle to the development of his country and that of himself. Stephen could not love the Church for one he was asked by his friend Cranly if he felt love towards anyone or anything, Stephen replies: "I tried to love God. It seems now I failed. It

³⁶James ,Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a young Man*, Penguin Books, 1916, p. 37.

³⁷ Ibid. p. 39-40

is very difficult”³⁸In a letter to his wife Nora Bernacle, in which he expressed his ideas of Catholicism and the Church, Joyce announced:

My mind rejects the whole present social order and Christianity home, the recognised virtues, classes of life and religious doctrines.³⁹

Like many of his fellow literary peers of the time, James Joyce explored the surrounding European aestheticism. He moved from Dublin, to Paris, London, Zurich and the USA. This exploration of the European continent allowed Joyce to discover other cultures, races and people. At this position he exposed himself to sundry categories of people of many different backgrounds. Joyce’s voyage throughout his life reinforced the alienation from his native ideals and upbringings. Due to his interactions to constant environments and cultures, Joyce’s far relation from religion became clearer and noticeable. Joyce like Stephen Dedalus of the *Portrait* saw that life is beautiful only within sins and the total separation from God. For him, it is in sins life is fulfilled. Moreover, in a *Portrait*, James Joyce shows a clear refusal to religious practices. He considered his friend’s religious devotion as hypocritical and not true. And what specifically annoyed Joyce was the matter of priesthood. The ways in which the Catholic Church appointed intellectuals like Stephen/ Joyce to serve the church as priests were not admired by him. Joyce tried to criticise the priest. In the novel, he was described with a face that ‘was in total shadow, and his voice was described as grave and cordial’. Joyce sees the priest face as dark which normally should be shining and angelic.

Therefore, what bothers Joyce was the way the church calls the intellectual people for priesthood. Joyce was against serving the church. He should follow his destiny out of the realm of religion which is his major constraint. This destiny is in fact found in the “snars of the world”⁴⁰ where he can find his pleasure and his pleasant life in sins which make him forget the constraints of his religious faith that will not stop annoying him dues to his

³⁸ Ibid. p. 274

³⁹ James, Fairhall, *James Joyce and the Question of History*, 1995, Cambridge University Press, p. 79

⁴⁰ James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Penguin Book, 1916, p. 184

presence in Ireland. A friend asked Joyce why he left the Church, Joyce replied: “*that’s for the church to say*”⁴¹

By taking the argument one step further, James Joyce was always aware of the impact religion had on him and on his country. To a large extent, religion for Joyce is a public, social, external force that obtrudes itself upon the Irish citizen. According to Richard Ellman, one of Joyce’s biography writers, Joyce had to conquer his Catholicism in order to become a writer. And if he still had something of his religious background, it was just from his essential education at the Jesuit School Clongowes Wood:

If Joyce retained anything from his education, it was a conviction of the skill of his Jesuit masters, the more remarkable because he rejected their teaching⁴².

Hence, as a writer, Joyce was not a friend to Catholicism, and his views of the Roman Catholic Church are best depicted and paralleled in portrait of the Artist as Young Man. His experiences with the Catholic religion began with a vague of doubt, suspicion and hostility. Authority and hostility were the dominating features of the Catholic Church according to James Joyce. These, in fact, what led him to announce his divorce, rebel and reject the priesthood of the Roman Catholic Church; and declare his fateful decision to become a priest of art. Certainly, Joyce’s deviation from religion reinforced his objective mission as a priest of art. The following passage from Joyce’s letter to Nora, demonstrates his objection to the Church:

Six years ago, I left the Catholic Church, hating it most fervently. I found it impossible for me to remain in it on an account of the impulses of my nature. I made secret war upon it when I was a student and declined to accept positions it offered me. By doing this, I made myself a beggar but I retained my

⁴¹ Bridge, Linda, *A Critical Companion to James Joyce: A Literary reference to his Life and Work*, Palgrave, 1995, p. 5

⁴² Geert, Lernout, *Help my unbelief : James Joyce and Religion*, Continuum International Publishing, 2010, p. 4

pride. Now I make open war upon it by what I write and say and do⁴³.

II . 2. 3 The Constraint of Nationalism for James Joyce

The basis of any investigation of Ireland's culture and literature is probably the well understanding of Irish nationalism. The latter which James Joyce rejected mostly, presents a central thread for him. Nationalism was among the visible and the interesting sources of change and conflicts for any country, as it was the subject of much debate. Meanwhile, it was so prominent as an ideology, that it became a part of contemporary conception of reality. It revealed many implicit rules of the time. Post colonial scholars study nationalism as the secret structure that underlined much of western intellectual and political life.

The history of Ireland is apparently marked by successive waves of invasion and colonisation. "*Ireland was a country which was being constantly invaded and resettled*"⁴⁴. The Normans conquered Ireland in 1169. More than fifty years, they expanded all over the country after being mixed with the Gaelic people, accommodated to the Irish society and acquiring the Gaelic tongue and culture. When they took control of the land and assimilated to the Irish environment, the Normans became more and more Irish. After the Norman Conquest to Ireland in the 12th century, the cycle of invasion paved the way to British colonization, over Ireland which rendered the small Island in an imperial relationship with Great Britain to this day. The British colonization to Ireland is typically known as the Tudor Conquest which identified Ireland as a colony of Britain. The relationship between the two countries had enormous impacts on Ireland and the Irish. Political, social, religious, economic and cultural effects mostly resulted from the Anglo-Irish colonial tie that developed over hundreds of years. This relation, in fact, produced difficult situations for the small land. The laws and the policies of the British colonizers were harsh on the Irish population.

Notably, the British destabilised the country through their interference in the religious side. They replaced the Catholic Church that had a strong grip on the Irish more than

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Robert Welch, *Changing States : Transformations in modern Irish writing*, Routledge Publication, 1993, p. 272

hundred years with the protestant one in 1537. This action opened a wide vague of wars and conflicts between the Catholics and the Protestants that lasted for centuries. Another key point is that with their imperial system, the British damaged the cultural and traditional atmosphere of Ireland “through a process of Anglicisation”⁴⁵. This was the result of replacing the King of Ireland by the British Tudor Henry VIII. This act caused a riot inside the Irish society. The British damaged the Irish tongue through imposing the British language as well as the British culture and religion. Therefore, the colonizers destroyed the Gaelic heritage aiming for future plantation and monopolizing Ireland as a part of Britain. The harsh policies of the British on the Irish made the Irish people feel fed up with Ireland and its rulers. The British were so brutal in front of those Irish ho rebelled against their authority. The harsh activities f the British pushed the Irish to be lore nationalists.

Indeed, these policies created many obstacles in Ireland that is still struggling with today, hoping to become a modern nation state with distinct culture. Ireland’s long history as a colony and the longstanding effects of the British colonizer made the Irish look for the realization of nationhood which is a major element of Irish identity.

Joyce’s life covered period of time in history in which intellectual and political lives were profoundly shaped by the decline and the growth of European empires, and the appearance of different Nationalisms around the world. At the time when James Joyce was born, the age of empire began, and when he died, the world was in the Second World War, a conflict that reshaped the universe into global powers. Ireland in this period witnessed various upheavals. Many omnifarious events arouse changing the world view of people.

Generally speaking, nationalism is basically a collective consciousness in which people have a strong belief in the loyalty to their nation. And their primary duty is to serve their country, and dedicate their soul and sentiment to the pride of their nation. Nationalism is an ideology that has a goal of the revival of one’s nation and it requires:

“the rediscovery of the nation’s history, the revival of its vernacular language through such disciplines as philosophy, lexicography, the cultivation of its literature especially drama

⁴⁵ Lamia, Gedouari: *the theme of exile in in James Joyce’s PAYM and Mc Court’s Angela’s Ashes*, unpublished magister dissertation. University of Boumerdes , 2011

and poetry and the restoration of its vernacular art and craft””⁴⁶

In Ireland, nationalism took shape with the rise of Charles Stewart Parnell, an Irish political leader who won not only the respect of his countrymen and women but the admiration of many other politicians. He was seen, in fact, as a great breaker of British rules. In the 1880's, Parnell was considered by the people of the small Island as the figure of Irish pride and nationalism. However, due to the rift that snaked its way through Ireland, the population of Parnell swayed. After being engaged in a scandal which intruded his political career, people and the Catholic Church came out against him. With the fall of Parnell, the Irish turned their visions of nationalism. They saw nationalism centred on culture than on political actions. In other words, Parnell had abolished their dreams of a pure Irish nationalist movement.

James Joyce felt exhausted. As a modernist writer, Joyce saw nationalism a sign of cultural degeneration. Critics often considered Joyce as indifferent to his country and its people. He recognized himself as a hero of the modernist vanguard, and his threads of the nationalist citizen were loose. He left Ireland for continental Europe at an early age. He, thereafter, never lived in his original country again. He saw himself as an exile and prided his person on his continental career. He separated himself totally from the trend of Irish nationalism. Emer Nolan commented on Joyce's attitude arguing:

...his embracement of Irish nationality was seen in its relationship to international culture and his break with parochial, self centred nationalism⁴⁷.

From his adolescence onward, Joyce held an ambivalent view of Irish Nationalism. At the time when he left Ireland, he felt an antipathy towards conventional Irish Patriotism. Ambivalence marked most of Joyce's attitudes toward his native land. This ambivalence in brief took form from a political mythology inherited from his Parnellite father. As a very

⁴⁶D. Smith, *Nationalism*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010, p. 8

⁴⁷Emer, Nolan, *James Joyce and Nationalism*, Routledge publication, 1995, p. 16

young boy, Joyce shared his father's Parnellite sympathies that symbolized sacred and specific beliefs of Joyce's father. At a given stage of life, Joyce felt a need to free himself and establish his independence not only of Irish nationalism, but, of any political movement, institution or group. Henceforth, this ambivalence is portrayed in Joyce's anger at the failings of Ireland's leaders (like Parnell) and their followers (like John Joyce), mixed with the deep regret of the patriots. This idea is illustrated in Joyce's quotation: "*Ireland is horrible but unforgettable*"⁴⁸.

Equally important, the fall of Parnell who was considered as the symbol of Irish Nationalism, contributed significantly in a very traumatic event for the Irish people, and to a dramatic effect in the Joycean household. The Joyce family fortune deviated to inflation. And the loss of this wealth was a turning point in Joyce's life. Soon enough, James Joyce realized that the loyalty of his father to Parnell led the family's downhill slide; and the cause as the young Joyce considered was Parnell. The great politician Parnell had betrayed his followers, and for Joyce, betrayal became a fervent, fixed idea in the country's national life and in his own life as so. In literary works such as *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, *Ulysses* or *The Dead*, the days of glory for Irish Nationalism lie in the past. They are dead, and buried with Parnell.

II . 3 The Analysis of *The Dead* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*

The 20th century Irish literature was highly marked by the occurrence of important themes that were explored in poetry, drama and fiction. Irish authors tended to focus on the relation to their country, history and politics. Ireland represents, in fact, a source of inspiration to many writers of this period who felt an urge to portray their homeland and to question thematic issues that presented prominent part in the life of the Irish. Depicting the history of Ireland and its national identity was the focus of Irish writings of the 20th century. Many old famous writers took a stand and questioned Ireland's past who had been seen as a hate love relationship with England.

For his part, Joyce's new style of writing where the "internal monologue" and the "stream of consciousness" technique are extraordinarily used led to a swift revolution in the structure of the novel. This remarkably made Joyce one of the key authors who rank with the great Irish writers of the 20th century.

⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 10

The place of the novel or the short story represents a mirror and an inspiration to the author. Like other writers, Joyce's works took place mainly in his native country Ireland. The city of Dublin is the location of all his writings and the representative of the Irish experience. James Joyce was fascinated by Ireland, its people, its way of life, politics and history.

To investigate what relations are between the author and his environment, how he addresses his country's past, how he sees his identity within his nation and how it is framed and received within the Irish context and the Irish mentality, it is widely preferable to have an analysis of two of Joyce's four main works: *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *The Dead*. These two works are persuasive portraits of Joyce's location in Ireland and how identity and the Irish Past are articulated, viewed and questioned in the 20th century Ireland on the edge of the Revolution.

II . 3. 1 The Dead (short story)

The Dead is one of the greatest short stories in Western literature. It represents the final chapter in the 1914 collection of the short stories "Dubliners" by James Joyce. It is considered by many to be the best of Joyce's shorter works. James Joyce's ambition to write *Dubliners* sprang from a profound consciousness of the political, the cultural and the economic neglect of his native land. Hence, in order to fashion up Ireland and make it integrate into the European culture and environment, and to retrieve its lost and abolished pride Joyce attempted to give to the world its detailed wonderful centre, Dublin. He saw himself as a doctor who diagnosed the malaise of his country and initiated the people to react to it:

When you remember that Dublin has been a capital for thousands of years, that it is "the second" city of the British

Empire, that it is nearly three times as big as Venice it seems strange that no artist has given it to the world.⁴⁹

The Dead was written in a period when nationalism reached its peak in Ireland. It was a time when the search of one's identity was standing in the turmoil of the historical past and culture of the country. It explores the issue of identity and nation which are considered at that time as daily questions in the life of the Irish, and subjects that offered lively debate due to the longstanding political whirlpool after colonialism. The story is not completely autobiographical. It deals with some of the issues that James Joyce experienced in life, such as the relationship between the Irishman and his country.

II . 3. 2 James Joyce / Gabriel Conroy

The Dead tells the story of Gabriel Conroy, the main character, and his wife "Gretta Conroy" who attended a dance party thrown by his elderly aunts "Kate and Julia Morkan" for the Feast of the Epiphany⁵⁰. The mood of the story is festive as well as sad. The plot serves the thoughts and actions of Gabriel Conroy who represents the hero of the tale. Gabriel is a teacher, a well educated and a well mannered Irishman who wants to be a writer (Gabriel is a future potential artist). He is beloved and favourite nephew in the family. Gabriel arrives at his aunts' party where he meets the other characters of the story.

The story centres mainly on Gabriel's social embarrassment and discomfort. When arriving at the holiday party, he faces many confrontations with some of the characters that make him insecure about his Irishness and relationship with his wife. The climax of the story is when Gabriel discovers that he knew nothing of his wife's past through years of marriage.

Once in the party, Gabriel has the first confrontation with "Miss Lelly maid", the serving girl who responded harshly when she was asked by Gabriel about her love life. She does not accept to play the role of a female when refusing to get married. Gabriel is unprepared to hear this confrontation.

⁴⁹Richard, Ellman, *Letter to Stanislaus Joyce, 19 November 1904, Letters*, Vol III. Richard Ellman, London : Faber, 1966, p. 111

⁵⁰ Or Theophany ([Ancient Greek](#)), which traditionally falls on 6 January, is a Christian [feast day](#) that celebrates the revelation of [God the Son](#) as a [human being](#) in [Jesus Christ](#)

Later, Gabriel thinks of quoting a poem to the audience of the party, but he fears to be understood as proud and pretentious. Similarly, another confrontation in this story is with Gabriel's dance partner Miss Molloy Ivors. She is portrayed by James Joyce as Irish nationalist who speaks of the Irish Past and praises the Irish people. She accuses him to be a West Briton⁵¹ when hearing that he writes in the "Daily Express". Afterwards, the story goes into details about the guests being in attendance and having fun in the wonderful party.

The end of the story, Gabriel finds himself ridiculous when he discovers the puzzling truth in his wife's confrontation which shakes him profoundly. Gretta, cries when hearing the song "the Lass of Aughrim"⁵² which reminds her of the guy she loved sincerely. The story climax is portrayed in his discovery that his wife had been in love with Michael Fury, and that he died for her. Finally, Gabriel's wish to make himself superior and authoritative and to air his superior education has swayed in the air after this harsh reality.

In one way or another, Ireland substitutes a core of interests for James Joyce in *The Dead*. Joyce shows through Gabriel his standpoints about his native country which was in a deep riot at that time. The main character's weak identity in the story is reflective of the hindrances that Joyce knew in his life. For Joyce, Gabriel has the desire to get away from Ireland in the sense that his interest has been in the continent not in roots. Joyce's artistic aspiration pushed him to escape from his mother country to the continent of Europe where he could merge his potential and artistic career in the light of exile.

Moreover, James Joyce places a character in the story to merge the theme of national identity which was ranging at the crossroads of history and culture in the Irish context.

⁵¹ West Briton : an Irish person who is loyal to England and favours Ireland to remain a colony.

⁵² Lass of Aughrim : a name of a famous defeat of the Irish by the army of William of Orange.

Miss Ivors represents an Irish nationalist figure who provokes Gabriel teasingly to be a West Briton.

At the time when the story *The Dead* was written, a new movement flared up in Ireland that took the name of “the Irish Revival”. The Irish people began to move to the West, the countryside, where they found their vivid origins, traditions and the modesty of their rural life. In the West, people spoke Irish and they were not touched by British rules and values. There were many Irish principles that still survived in the West that the Dubliners lost under the oppression of the British colonists.

Furthermore, when the Irish Revival smuggled into literature, it pushed writers of the period, who were called “writers of the Irish Revival” or “the traditionalists” to motivate people through their writings to “ go West” and to portray the West of Ireland (like Galway, Aran Islands...) with beautiful and attractive scenes. So many authors wrote about the West like William Butler Yeats, Synge and others. This cultural revival offered the Irish a sense of pride in their identity.

Those traditionalists emphasized the revival of oral traditions and stories of the Irish people. In order to create a pure national identity, the revivalists mainly with political, cultural and nationalist impulses, believed that lonely resort was to turn back to the peasant like Ireland to restore the ancient civilization. However, James Joyce criticized the cultural idealization and assumptions of the Revivalists who portrayed the Irish character in a stereotypical image of the past. Joyce objected the Revivalist assumption of peasantry. He viewed that the Traditionalists neglected to view the resent and diagnose its maladies. Instead, they moved away to write in the romantic method. Joyce once commented that the Revivalists whose faith in Irish anthropology blinds to the contractedness and the interestedness of realistic representation. In other words, the Revivalists took care of what the colonizer left through representing the Irish character as hero.

According to James Joyce, what is of paramount importance for the Irish writer was not patriotism, but, to depict the present of Ireland with its cultural, economic social and political riots. As a result, he commented that the traditionalists neglected the prevailing

situation of the country's present and continued to write in the romantic way. Consequently, James Joyce emphasized the obstacles that faced the Irishman in the city and how he lived with the social, religious, economic and political constraints in the rural life. He proclaimed:

The Urban proletariat, the lower classes, the petite bourgeoisie, the unemployed, single men and women, children which underscored the double justice done by misrepresentation of both nationalists and revivalist for not only did they idealize or mystify the peasant, but the figure of the peasant had come to stand for all Irish people regardless of the fact that many were increasingly residing in cities⁵³.

James Joyce in his story shows no interest to Ireland. His major objective is to get away from it, preferring not to explore and visit his land which he discovers that it has amazing and nice imagery at the end of the story.

In addition, James Joyce expresses the strong political feeling that smuggled in Ireland in the beginning of the 20th century. He emphasized the theme of nationhood and politics to show to his readers the modern image of the Irish who were striving to search and rediscover an Irish cultural and national identity. For that stuff, Joyce presents a conversation between two characters in the story "Gabriel Conroy" and "Miss Molloy Ivors" where the issue is notably discussed.

At his aunts' dinner party, Gabriel shares a conversation with his dance partner "Miss Ivors" who expresses to him her high Irish nationalist passions and belongings. "Ivors" is a character portrayed by Joyce as an Irish nationalist figure. She accuses Gabriel for publishing reviews in a non-Irish magazine which is the "Daily Express":

"I have found that you write for the daily express. Now aren't you ashamed of yourself?"

"Why should I be ashamed of myself?" answered Gabriel.

⁵³ Ibid P30.

“Well, I am ashamed of you,” said Miss Ivors frankly, “to say you’d write for a paper like that. I didn’t think you were a West Briton”⁵⁴

Furthermore, this misconversation continues and Gabriel’s friend and dance partner goes on to call him a West Briton. This term is generally a negative calling for an Irishman or an Irish woman who sympathises with England and believes that Ireland is a colony and an extension of Great Britain. Here, Miss Ivors prompts to accuse Gabriel of being disloyal to Ireland. Although he tries to state and clarify that literature is not politics, and should be apolitical, Miss Ivors insists on calling him a West Briton. For Ivors, the call of the land is stronger and louder than any material opportunities.

Henceforth, Gabriel is bound between an Irish West which concerns the sexual and the primitive that is associated with his wife Gretta, and at the same time between the East which reflects his cosmopolitan and continental horizons. James Joyce’s use of some chosen words in the story is not spontaneous but, they are used on purpose. Gabriel’s use of galoshes as well as Browning in the story is to situate himself in a transnational European culture that is favoured by James Joyce.

The passive conversation between Gabriel and Miss Ivors is still prevailing and her negative claims to him come up again. Although these claims come from illiterate characters in Joyce’s works, Miss Ivors, however, is portrayed as an intellectual and an intelligent woman who shared a career and a friendship with Gabriel. In what follows Ivors chats to Gabriel about his eagerness to travel abroad and she is against his claims that the European languages are fashionable and cultured than his Irish language. For her, Gaelic (the Irish tongue) is the pride of Ireland:

And why do you go to France and Belgium, said Miss Ivors,
instead of visiting your own land?

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

⁵⁴ James, Joyce, *The Dead* ; Penguins Books, 1996, p. 214

“Well said Gabriel, if it comes to that, you know, Irish is not my language.

In this story, James Joyce tried to contrast the language and the values of the West of Ireland that symbolized Irish nationalism, a concept which through Gabriel one can notice Joyce’s dislike to it. Miss Ivors sees Gabriel as the antithesis of everything Irish. As a result, two viewpoints occur in the Dead. Gabriel is an educated and a cultured man who will be an Artist. He sees nothing valuable in his nation, preferring and imitative European culture and identity. However, Miss Ivors thinks that to be cultured one has to learn towards the Irish traditions and culture. Gabriel in this case according to Ivors is a traitor of his Irishness.

This calling and accusation seems to be true, in the sense that when Gabriel makes his speech, he chooses the British poet Robert Browning and criticized the new generation that is “growing up in our midst”⁵⁵ that refers to people like Miss Ivors. Thus, Gabriel’s denial to his native identity and his desire to belong to Europe and England draws him to the paralysis of his social, cultural and political life.

James Joyce is depicting, in fact, an Irish identity and an Irish mentality in which transnational modernity is struggling to be born and survive. In the story, he describes Miss Ivors as a modest and a non fashionable woman who puts a large brooch as an “Irish device motto”. This description (brooches were popular during the Revival and were of interests in the Irish heritage during the 1890’s) represents the conventional vision towards an Irish nationalist who is still attachable to the national loyalty and identity.

Equally important, Ivors’ provocative questions towards Gabriel intensify his emotional uncertainties and his cultural, national and political identity; especially when Gabriel says: “I am sick of my own country, sick of it”. Here, Ivors succeeds in shaking Gabriel’s restrained actions towards his nation.

By the same token, from an artist point of view, James Joyce tried to be always against the ways of the Irish Revival. For him, the call of the Irish Identity should be moulded by a

⁵⁵ James ,Joyce, *The Dead*

special form. He believed that authors had to make strength on the Irish capital not on provincial folklore which characterized the Revival writings. He insisted that the history and culture of Ireland were shaped by its relationship with Great Britain that could not be ignored:

Ireland is what she is and therefore I am what I am because of the relations that have existed between England and Ireland. Tell me why think I ought to wish to change the conditions that gave Ireland a shape and a destiny? ⁵⁶

From Joyce's point of view, one can deduce that the future of Ireland could not be portrayed in cultural separation with England. Ireland, especially the capital Dublin was not the centre of interest in literature like the city of London (i.e. there was probably no intense literary focus on Dublin) that still attracted many Irish authors who exiled from the bad conditions:

When the Irishman is found outside of Ireland in another environment, he very often becomes a respected man. The economic and intellectual conditions that prevail in his own country do not permit the development of individuality. The soul of the country is weakened by centuries of useless struggles and broken treaties, and individual initiative is paralyzed by the influence and admonitions of the church, while its body is manacled by the police, the tax office, and the garrison. No one who has any self-respect stays in Ireland, but flees afar off as though from a country that has undergone the visitation of an angry Jove⁵⁷.

⁵⁶ B enoit, Tadi , James Joyce : *Dubliners*, Didier Erudition CNED, 2000, P. 15

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, p. 30

II . 3. 3 A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man

When the soul of a man is born in this country there are nets flung at it to hold it back from flight. You talk me of nationality, language, religion. I shall try to fly by those nets⁵⁸

The above quotation is taken from the novel *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* of the Irish writer James Joyce. In January 1904, eight months before he left Ireland to an exile, Joyce wrote an autobiographical paper entitled “A portrait of the Artist”. When the paper was refused and rejected by editors, James Joyce decided to enlarge the paper into a novel. In this piece of fiction, James Joyce attempted to trace the development of the life of his artist, Stephen Dedalus from boyhood to his university days. Hence, in the “*Portrait*” a mature artist looks back to his own youth, remembering his past experiences. Stephen tried to perceive what was prominent to his evolution as an artist, distinguishing what was vital and what was not in that evolution; and seeing his early life in Ireland with an ironic eye.

As mentioned above, a “Portrait” is entirely autobiographical. And undeniably it grew out of an outstanding plan for a *kunstlerroman* which refers to a novel about the development of an artist. It is, in fact, concerned with the development of its main and central character Stephen Dedalus. Both his surname and his name have symbolic significance. Stephen was the name of the first Christian martyr, stoned to death for his religious convictions. Dedalus was the mythical “fabulous artificer” who made feathered wings of wax with which he and his son Icarus escaped imprisonment on the island of Crete.⁵⁹

II .3 .4 James Joyce/ Stephen Dedalus:

⁵⁸ James, Joyce. *A portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. P. 231

⁵⁹ Michael, Patrick, Gillespie, *The Critical Companion to James Joyce : A literary reference to his life and work*,.Library of Ccongress, 2006, p. 145

The very first aspects of Stephen's early development go on internally. James Joyce intends to take his readers right to the mind of his character so that they could see the intellectual and the emotional sides of Stephen, and how they did develop. From the first chapter, one can notice that Stephen is an alienated character from his social environment and from the closest people around him. As a young child, Stephen appears to have an intuitive desire towards rebellion. His rebellious attitudes are necessary for him to preserve his own beliefs and viewpoints in front of the authoritative forces that make him in conformity with the Irish repressive environment. The first authorities Stephen comes across with are father, mother, Uncle Charles and Dante. Specifically, Dante is authoritarian and cruel. Stephen's relationship to her is expressed in fear and obedience. However, Mr Dedalus is portrayed as gentle and authoritarian too, and Stephen accepts and believes all that he gives to him.

The opening paragraphs of the *Portrait* are introduced in a child-like language to show Stephen's earliest memories. It is a story his father told him which represents an image of life his father teaches to him and that should be stuck in his mind. Joyce writes:

Once upon a time and a very good time. It was there a moocow coming down along the road and this moocow that was coming down along the road met a nicens little boy names baby tuckoo.....his father told him that story⁶⁰

This story presents a lesson for the little Stephen. It means that home, Ireland and the church are very peaceful like the "cow". And that they are disposed to Stephen to worship them, and this is what he believes at this age. Immediately following this opening lines, readers notice the disturbing images of punishment and fear. When the young boy Stephen hides himself under the table he automatically learns that the result of disobedience has a harsh authority: "*Eagle will come and puck out his eyes*".⁶¹ This sentence represents a voice of authority.

In each chapter the theme of rebellion is present. Everywhere Stephen Dedalus encounters stern authorities from which he gets fed up. Like at home and at school Stephen is very sensitive and alienated. And his name and identity are always being challenged.

⁶⁰ James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, p. 3

⁶¹ Ibid.

He finds himself marginalized that he can not participate in the activities like the other boys. At this place, he is in a kind of exile:

All the boys seemed to him very strange. They all had fathers and mothers ad different clothes and voice. He longed to be at home and lay his head on his mother's lap⁶².

Stephen continues his rebellion against authority. The church, Ireland and family are his trappings and his common obstacles.

Throughout the novel, Stephen has passed through a series of unavoidable steps in his childhood. At the end of the novel, he may not achieve full maturity, but he achieves a degree of freedom from what he considers as the “nets” over which he had to fly. This action or wish represents for Stephen a good beginning to independence.

Equally important, Stephen is a modernist character. He seeks his own identity in the whirlpool of modern experience through art, rather than accepting the identity he receives from the traditional society and culture. Stephen is seen as a revolting person against his family, his race and the political establishment in Ireland, he rejects all the ideological pressures of society that may construct of him an identity which is limited by the Irish traditional values. Therefore, he attempts to find out his own meaning of life by intellectual means, rather than accepting the nets of his society. Furthermore, in *Portrait* Joyce portrayed Ireland with its culture and national identity as brutal and irrational. These organisms (religion, culture, politics, and nationalism) crush and diminish the beautiful side of the private world like art, love and freedom.

It is also important to realize that in *Portrait* the spirit of Ireland is embodied in the young Stephen Dedalus. Stephen aims to grow wings so he can fly above the troubles of his life. When starting to grow up, Stephen begins to be aware about his position in Ireland; and becomes willingly ready to overcome the turbulation of the early 1900's in a rebellion against his native land, a struggle against his society with its beliefs and heritage. This period was a riotous time for Ireland. It was time when many individuals aimed to be free and made attempts for an independent Ireland. Stephen felt the need to rebel about what was happening in his country in order to express his inner thoughts. Slowly, when he grows

⁶² Ibid, p. 13.

up, Stephen arrives to understand that his future cannot be realized in his subjection to the Irish land and language. His soul becomes increasingly impotent to harbour Irish principles, values and traditions. He views the life that is offered to him as painful, and the Irish surrounding does not fit his ambitious dreams of better things in life.

University provided Stephen with intellectual background that is useful in his development. His talent as a future artist started to appear at this level of education. Stephen's ways of rejecting, reasoning and questioning show that his artistic theories are profoundly influenced by Aristotle and by the Jesuits education he received at Clongowes Wood College. While at University, Stephen reads the philosophy of the past like that of Aristotle (384 BC – 322 BC), Plato (424 BC) and Aquinas (1225-1274) and the poetry of the Romantic Age as that of Shelley and Lord Byron. His constant readings enable him to look for a sense of harmony for his confused feelings and uncertainties. His high influence of the philosophical and the poetic view, leads Stephen to question and doubt every aspect of life, and at the same time desire to perceive an aesthetic life. Joyce's readings of the romantic poets trace a noticeable mark on the book. Particularly the influence of Shelley is seen and portrayed by the intellectual freedom of the artist through using imagery of bird's flight like in Shelley "Ode to Liberty". Stephen gets everything he needs from university. He has a crucial bag of knowledge. As a future artist, Stephen wishes to maintain life aesthetically. By moving outside himself and overcoming the boundaries of religion, Irish society and nation, Stephen perceives "his soul ... in plight". He desires to free his soul from the plethora of the stern Irish morality. He is, in fact looking for a refuge to his self where it will find a new mode of life. A mode of life or of art whereby spirit could express itself in unfettered freedom.⁶³

For the most part, in Portrait Stephen emerges to be very satirical and critical to his nation. He tried to question the Irish identity aiming to forge the consciousness of his race. He thinks that the Irish are subservient people because they allow foreigners to subject them. James Joyce emphasized this idea by offering a conversation between him and Davin. Davin is one of Stephen Dedalus's classmates at University College in Dublin. He is a simple nationalist boy from the country who holds a big love to Ireland. Stephen wishes to escape from his Irish heritage willing to become a courageous man and able to risk his life and leave his native land for his convictions. In his conversation with Davin,

⁶³ James, Joyce, Kevin, J.H Dettmar., *A Portrait of the Artist as Young Man and Dubliners*, Published by Barnes & Noble books, 2004, p. 219.

Stephen rejects all the shackles that his ancestors accepted and which forbid his freedom. Stephen declares:

‘My ancestors throw off their language and took another’,
Stephen said. ‘They allowed a handful of foreigners to subject
them. Do you fancy I am going to pay in my own life and
person debts they made? What for?’

This passage shows James Joyce’s view that the Irish are oppressed people who allowed outsiders to control their lives in their country. It was the Irish who “threw off their native language”, and allowed themselves to be subservient to the British. James Joyce wanted the Irish to construct a new national identity which according to him should be deprived of oppression and obedience to the British. He desired to see the Irish define their identity as no more an oppressed people seeking for their independence, but by their success and personal experiences. Joyce saw that his race needed to create a new identity that fought the fetters of the past and saw the future with an opened eye. Stephen/Joyce wishes to “*forge the uncreated consciousness of his race*” by seeking a spiritual liberation for Ireland that looks to a wider internationalist perspective, just as Stephen sets out to create a new identity for himself in *Portrait of the artist as a Young Man*. In the final analysis, it is clearly seen that in tackling questions of Ireland’s quest of national identity, James Joyce refuses to see Irishness as the view of the past; rather, it should be an identity based contemporary Ireland; and its relationship to Britain and Europe.

Once more, in the novel; Stephen is asked by his University colleagues to join them in a nationalist group, he refuses. He does not want to waist his life for a nation that abandoned its heroic and important leader.

“Try to be on of us” said Davin.

“ no honourable and sincere man, said Stephen, has given up to
you his life and his youth and his affections from the days of
Tone to those of Parnell, but you sold him to the enemy or

failed him in need or reviled him and left him for another. And you invite me to be one of you. I'd see you damned first"⁶⁴

Nationalism that is embodied in the character of Davin is hatred and rejected by Stephen. From Stephen's point of view, Davin is a sorrowful Irish gentleman who worships a sorrowful legend of Ireland. Davin's nationalist thoughts represent Stephen's antitheses which itself represents Joyce's attitude to nationalism and its believers at that time. Furthermore, Davin's patriotic ideas oppose strongly with Stephen's particular and complex viewpoints of Ireland. Davin is, in fact, a prisoner of Ireland and of all that Stephen wishes to leave behind and escape. Moreover, in the above quotation, Stephen is clearly angry about how his country was treated and ruled by the patriots or the so-called nationalists. He responds indignantly to Davin, trying to explain the way Ireland was cheated by its people. Stephen explained to Davin that he cannot dedicate himself to the Irish nationalist movement because of the patriots' hypocrisy. The betrayal of the nationalists is the result of this country which bred them. And it is from those patriots that the country should be protected and defended.

By the same token, Stephen once more portrays himself as the product of the Irish stern morality. And at the same time, he pictured Ireland as the nation or the animal "sow" that eats its children: "*Ireland is the old sow that eats her farrows*". In other terms, Ireland is a country that pushes its young men to die. In this metaphor, Joyce gives an image of unnatural phenomenon which is that of eating the young offspring. Naturally, animals cannot eat their young offspring, but Ireland or mother Ireland is like the sow that devours its own children. This powerful image of the sow eating her young leads the reader to discover to what extent Joyce's relationship to his mother land is complex. Ireland deprives its people from life and freedom, and pushes them to die due to its catholic, political and social stern establishments.

For the most part, Stephen is continuously considered as revolting against the cultural, religious, political and family orders of the Irish society in the late 19th century. His identity is fragmented by the desire of intellectual beauty and freedom. However, these values are out of reach in the existing pressures of Ireland, this is on the one hand. On the other hand, Stephen is a character who rejects all the cultural and ideological "nets" of society which

⁶⁴ James, Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.*, p. 230

block his development and stifle his intellectual creation. He sees these values as nets that demand a sense of identity that is stable, uncreative and limited with boundaries.

As can be seen, in a *Portrait*, the representation of Stephen is a means Joyce used to portray an Irishman in a crisis of identity in the early decade of the twentieth century. Stephen is represented as unstable in his social, political and religious principles. He is continuously represented as revolting and fluid in his wishes for freedom. But his aims could not be reached within the existing values of the Irish society. Stephen therefore, isolates himself from society which he considers as a source of pain and failure to his artistic horizons. The Irish society fails to be an objective validation to his principles and beliefs. Stephen/Joyce chooses “*to meet in the real world of the unsubstantial image which his soul so constantly beheld*”⁶⁵ Stephen cannot accept the oppressive ties; he needs a wide and unlimited arena that is adequate for his talents. He isolates himself extremely from society, which fails to be an objective, stable validation to inherited structures of beliefs, yet he prefers to meet in the real word the unsubstantial image which his soul so constantly beheld”. Instead of the identity that is constructed by the traditional beliefs, Stephen strives to look for his own vocation and talent in life. He tries to search for a new and a modern meaning of life by tools of intellectual analysis. In *Portrait*, Joyce signifies that the old, oppressed traditional stability of the character (Stephen) disappears permitting a new view of identity as vague, indeterminate and inconclusive which is in conformity with the varying modern experience.

Stephen sees no future for himself unless he rebels. And instead of constructing an Irish identity based on Irish values, Stephen attempts to discover his own talent and meaning of life out of Ireland rather than accepting what the Irish society urges him to accept.

As a modernist character, Stephen is unstable and unfixd. He cannot establish for himself a harmonious image of life. He is, in fact represented as incoherent character that is continuously revolting. Like Virginia Woolf, James Joyce portrays to his readers the view that the identity of a person cannot be easily grasped. In the following passage, James Joyce represents clearly Stephen’s condition as a modernist character who cannot accept anything given to him:

⁶⁵ James Joyce, *The Essential James Joyce*, London, Johnathan Cape. 1961, p. 222.

Now come to be hollow sounding in his ears. When the gymnasium had been opened he had heard another voice urging him to be strong and many and healthy and when the movement towards national revival has begun to be left in the college yet another voice had bidden him to be true to his country and help to rise up her language and tradition. In the profound world, as he foresaw, a worldly voice would bid him raise up his father's fallen state by his labours and meanwhile, the voice of his school comrades urged him to be a decent fellow, to shield others from blame or to beg them off and to do his best to get free days for the school. And it was the din of all these gave them ear only for a time but he was happy only when he was from them. Beyond their call, alone or in the company of phantasmal comrades⁶⁶

Stephen Dedalus' status in the above quotation is unfixed and incoherent. He still constantly wavers between the "hollow sounding" voices which urge him to be a person that society demands, and "another voice" that weakens his ascillation in life. Stephen is not competent of establishing a coherent view of life in his Irish society. He is always vacillating in his opinions about his country, religion and nationalism. Stephen's life is seen in his desires and wishes not in the frustration and the complexity of the Irish society. When Stephen examines his life with regard to the hollow sounding voices of his school mates, country and father, he comes to realize that cultural and religious beliefs and the values of the Irish society can never be a solution to his aims and to his own interpretation and perception of life.

Stephen, therefore, understands that he is in a need of these voices. He wants to free himself from the trapping of Ireland through taking refuge with his proper views. He wants to discover the mode of life whereby his spirit could express itself in unfettered freedom⁶⁷. What can be grasped consequently from the "other voice" is another life for Stephen and another identity in another future world as well that is from oppressions. The vacillation of Stephen indeed is a feature of him as a modern character. It is a condition of Joyce's artistic

⁶⁶ *A Portrait*, p.236

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, p. 28

creativity. Hence, Stephen as a modern character looks for the essence of beauty and has a big wish to: “live, to err, to fall, to triumph, to recreate life out of life”⁶⁸

In the whole novel, Stephen realizes that his perception of life cannot depend on religious, cultural and political values. But, it can be fully expressed in another place which is *exile* where he can find an opened career for his talents. This is to say that Ireland never gives way to Joyce’s hopes and wishes. His redeeming mission is totally shaped by the nets that he describes as Irish identity, Irish nationalism and Irish Catholic Church. Stephen through his art, desires to perceive life aesthetically. He wants to move outside himself and outside the boundaries of Irish nationalism, religion, politics and society in order to perceive “his soul in flight”⁶⁹. His creative and talented mind enables Stephen not only to escape and deny his native identity and nation but also to show progressive attempts to shape an independent self deprived of the excess of the influences he experienced. Stephen’s image of a ‘free self’ like birds provides him with an immense will to escape from the bleak vision of the life in Ireland. Stephen was angry with himself for still being present in his repressive environment where the atmosphere was highly dominated by religion, nationalism and politics.

Eventually, since he was dissatisfied, Stephen goes to develop his aesthetics which according to David Daiches to look at the world with the eye of the artist who combines the naked sensibility and the pure aesthetic eyes and be satisfied with the artist god-like power to recreate the world with words.

⁶⁸ Ibid, p. 103

⁶⁹ Op.cit, p. 301

II . 5 Conclusion

From the very beginning of the novel to its final chapter, the life of Stephen Dedalus is portrayed as a trip. It is a series of unfinished quarrels about politics, religion, family and Ireland as a whole. Through the views of his fictional character Stephen, Joyce dares to criticize the nets that block his way to individual freedom. Moreover, James Joyce makes a clear shift in the development of his character's mind. This shift enables Stephen Dedalus to transcend his physical world where he used to live and develop a new vision of life beyond the static and the determinate perception of identity.

In Ireland, there were potent forces where it was impossible for a creative young gentleman like Joyce to have a place in. The absence of social, political and religious frameworks that fit his wishes let the young artist deny every Irish material found in his motherland even identity. The lack of Irishness makes Dedalus feel he has no role to play in the country that sold and pushed its men to die. For this reason, he prefers to practise his proper freedom in exile letting behind all the oppressive constraints that lead the writer to lose his first aspect of nationhood which is that of national identity.

Therefore, with his pen ready, Joyce alienates himself from the squabbles of his daily Irish life by finding a release for his soul in writing beyond his homeland. Stephen/Joyce accepts that it is impossible to change the prevailing situation of Ireland. His only and last hope to live in peace is to escape to Europe where he marks the culmination of his process of "self discovery".

Similar to his short story *The Dead*, James Joyce through his character Gabriel seems to deal successfully with the problem of his place in a colonized country. And this has been done by rejecting Irishness and choosing a wide cosmopolitan identity. Gabriel is portrayed as an Irishman unswayed by patriotism. He not only denies his identity and language, but he challenges it at every occasion. Joyce contrasts the values of the Irish land especially those of the West where nationalism and the Gaelic language are highly encouraged, against those of Europe in order to create a national tension; that is depicted in Gabriel Conroy. Thus, Joyce in his story shakes one of the very prominent elements of national identity which is that of language. He ignored the validity of the Irish language which gives a sense of pride in the identity of the Irish.

Joyce's strategies of national identity sum up at the end of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* as "silence, exile and cunning" resemble Gabriel Conroy's image of the snow covering Ireland which shows his personal and political frigidity or paralysis. Gabriel's paralysis can be seen as a result for his denial to his fellow Irishmen. Apparently, in order to fulfil his artistic aspiration, Joyce should identify himself with England and Europe.

As a result, the noticeable choice of lifelong exile in Europe shows Gabriel's and Stephen's wish to free themselves from the crisis of Irish society. Hence, Europe is the Promised Land for both characters. This is why James Joyce is named by many as the "wild Goose" that prefers the European Continent. In the final analysis, Joyce's migration signifies a straightforward escape from the local stupidity. In leaving Ireland, he discovers the space of modernity, and enters its alternative history.

Chapter Three

Vestige of Identity in Samuel Beckett's

Molloy and Murphy

III . 1 Introduction

As the age of modernism had influenced James Joyce, the shift from high modernism to postmodernism has influenced Samuel Beckett and his writings. These upheavals touched every aspect of life. People's perception of politics, religion, and nationalism changed with the age of modernization and the effect of post World War II in Ireland.

In a climate where questions of identity, place and displacement and the role of the artist within his native land were higher charged, critics looked and studied Samuel Beckett's experiences trying to find him a seat and locate his place vis-à-vis Ireland and Irish identity. Many of them assembled an idea that Beckett had ambivalence towards his native country. He saw his nation as an atmosphere that is stifling the seeds of innovation and artistic creation.

When considering an Irish identity, one may be attempted to describe a typical Irishman or Irishwoman in terms of his genial nature: a nationalist, catholic, witty and a firm believer in his nation's conservative values and principles. However, according to some critics; the Irish are described as "the great Gaels" of Ireland (they are the men whom God made mad, whose wars are always merry and their songs are always sad). The Irish author Samuel Beckett reveals this fatal identity of the Irish male through two of his famous novels *Molloy* and *Murphy*. These two characters are imbued with misery, violent nationalism coupled with and abjection and a rampant denial of everything Irish. The typical Beckettian character finds him constantly engaged in an exploration of an identity that cannot be confirmed without the verification of an opposing other. This characterization of the characters reveals that Beckett is still searching for an identity to assume. And eventually, through Murphy and Molloy he succeeded to establish his own identity as a member of the cosmopolite literary men.

However, this identity comes as he always confirmed after his celebrated revelation that “Joyce had gone as far as one could in the direction of knowing more ... I realised that my own way was in impoverishment, in lack of knowledge and in taking away, in subtracting rather than in adding”. Of this vision, Beckett also admitted: “*Molloy and the others came to me the day I became aware of my own folly. Only then did I begin to write the things I feel*” (James, Knowlson, *Damned to fame: The Life of Samuel Beckett*, Simon and Schuster, 1996, p. 319)

As his predecessor Joyce, Beckett wanted to show how much Ireland’s people were still subjects to their oppressors. They never choose their destiny, rather it is always imposed to them. In *Murphy* as well as *Molloy*, Beckett showed that the people of Ireland found themselves subject to a political system that they did not enter into of their own free will. Ireland liberated itself from the colonial binary of imperialism but it subjugated itself to a new colonization by its own people. Therefore, Beckett wanted to say that Ireland would never create its own sense of identity. Ireland was still in the process of searching of its own nationhood. The Irish bid for independence seems to represent merely a switching of roles whereby Ireland's founders essentially "conquered" their own people.

III . 2 The Irish Beckett in Ireland

III . 2. 1 Ireland in the Years of Samuel Beckett

When Samuel Beckett was born, the whole of Ireland was still part of the United Kingdom as it had been before since the Act of Union in 1800. It was also under British rule as it had been since the English Reformation and the re-conquest of King Henry VIII's to the land. The Home Rule movement had failed after the split of the Home Rule Party and the death of its leader Charles Stewart Parnell in 1891. The Irish Free State which took hold after independence in 1922 has often been seen as failing utterly to live up to the promise of the revolution that helped give it birth. No doubt the new state faced a number of challenges like establishing an Irish civil administration, dismantling a large militia and even managing the country's partition. The new government strove to legitimize itself as a unique and a unified force for a nation that suffered from fragmentation since the British colonization more than seventy hundred years. And what was more disappointing at that time was that the people of the administration lacked the vision on how to manipulate a country in a postcolonial period. In their focus on political and social stability, they attempted to adopt the institutions of the former British colonizing power.

Meanwhile, the nationalism of the pre- independence period was intensively adopted by the state which did not give more interest and time in legislating the image of Ireland as Catholic and Gaelic into existence. Through establishing itself as the official ideology state of the nation, the new state (Irish Free State) represented a failure to the national imagination. It transformed the revolutionary energies into cultural hegemony and repeated in many ways the restrictions of the former British imperial administration.

By the end of the 1920's and the early beginning of the 30's, the new state expanded its roles and services through intervening in the realms of divorce, censorship and contraception. And with the rise of Eamon de Valera to power in 1932, he began to revive the charms of Gaelic Ireland and the moral mission of Catholicism. However, nationalism was not taken with rigour and care during de Valer's period. If nationalism had previously served Ireland in resisting British colonization and resulted in the island's independence, the new state nationalism inclined toward the spot of a restrictive ideological authority. Nationalism of the late colonial period brought the common heritage and myths of cultural purity all together and claim for a free nation. But, the new nation sought to redeem these

myths forcefully by getting them rid of the stamp and the taint of colonialism aiming to create an authentic Irishness in the name of a fully independent people.

The nascent state's aims were to protect Ireland from the impure influences of the modern world and of Great Britain in particular. To accomplish its mission in protecting the Irish land, the state started to suppress those influences that might shake its vision of Irishness political were or cultural. As an illustration, in 1923 the state formulated the censorship of Films Act in which films should be censored with the authority to edit or even refuse a license to films that were deemed "subversive to public morality"⁷⁰. And in 1929, the state launched Censorship of Publications Act which prohibit the distribution and the sale of any book which was seen "in its general tendency indecent or obscene"⁷¹ The state therefore desires cultural protectionism for Ireland, and any author whose work encountered moral disapproval could be suspected for a lack of national authenticity.

During the whole years of Samuel Beckett's life, Ireland was experiencing a sea of change that resulted in a deeply divided society with some problems and turmoil on how the Irish society had to move forwards. This was reflected in many successive referenda on social issues like abortion and divorce and on political matters was the continuing debate about the conflict in Northern Ireland, as well as problems of unemployment and emigration. These facts were new symptoms in Ireland and reached unprecedented levels that were not seen before. Indeed, the land was confronting a new cycle of changing waves. Ireland as the journalist Mr Cheryl Herr has noted in his essay:

Ireland was confronting not only economic turmoil and the onslaught of modernization but also widespread civil rights agitation, parliamentary violence, the oil crisis, increasing unemployment, feminist activism and a growing understanding of postcolonial trauma⁷²

These important upheavals and challenges that the Irish society was confronting prompted significant debate about Irishness. In response to these changes Irish intellectuals were engaged in cultural debate about the issue of Irish identity. During the 1970's the Irish lacked many aspects of their nation that made their vision and hope of

⁷⁰ Patrick, Bixpy, *Samuel Beckett and the post colonial novel*, Infobase, 1943, p. 10

⁷¹ Ibid, p. 10

⁷² Iren, Gilsenan Nordin and Garmen Zamorano LLENA/ *Redefinitions of Irish Identity : A postcolonial Approach*, library of Congress, 2010, p. 3

their land meaningless. The Irish in that period suffered harsh traumas from the loss of land, the loss of language, the subsequent migration and the noisy rift of the famine. The 1970's the Irish lacked the national image of their land:

Our self definition as a nation began to crumble in the 50's, was assaulted through the 60's, and faded away in the 70's. All that is left in its place, as public image of Irish identity, is the fatal 26 country state, without any cultural or ideological overtones other than 'democratic'. We haven't chosen to be quite invisible to ourselves and others⁷³

III 2. 2 Samuel Beckett's Irish Identity

Samuel Beckett (1906-1989) is an Irish novelist and playwright, and one of the great names of the Absurd Theatre. He was born into a prosperous protestant family. His father William Beckett was a surveyor and his mother Mary Roe was a nurse. Beckett was specialized in Italian and French. He became a friend of James Joyce and one of his students. He is regarded by recent study as a postmodernist writer. His plays are mainly concerned with the struggles, and the sufferings of human; and his characters are always conflicting with the nothingness of the world around them. He was awarded the Noble Prize for literature in 1969.

As a novelist, Samuel Beckett started his career with *Murphy*, a novel which depicts the character's inner struggle between the desires of his body and the darkness of his mind, in which he sees everything surrounding him senseless. Most of Beckett's literary works are in French and subsequently are translated into English under some changes. Beckett announced that when he writes in French it was easier for him to write "without style". Beckett did not want to be stylish in his writings. In 1956, Samuel Beckett announced that it was more exciting writing in French, and in 1957, that what he disliked in the English was a lack of brakes; yet in the 1960's, he acknowledged English as a good

⁷³ Ibid, p. 95

theatre language because of its concreteness, its close relationship between thing and vocable⁷⁴.

The decade when Samuel Beckett started his literary career witnessed the awakening of a “new Ireland” that was experiencing an unprecedented impulsive progress of modernization. It was a period when the Irish government underwent sundry achievements in politics, economy and culture. The Ireland of the 1990’s was characterized by the church scandals, the Celtic tiger and also the spring of what has been called the post-nationalist Irish literature.

In the works of Samuel Beckett, one can notice the progress from his disciple Joyce to his new created voice of modernism. Beckett’s early works show his influence to Joyce in the language, the style and specifically his imitation of an Irish expatriate. Beckett’s Irish roots were not solid to his country. Similar to James Joyce, Beckett saw the alienation and the separation from Ireland was the only way to find one’s self and identity. Apparently, his sense of Irish isolation started to merge in his use of a different language. If Joyce declared through Gabriel Conroy that Irish is not his language, Beckett announced through writing in the French language.

Samuel Beckett developed an interest to France and to the French tongue when he was a young man. He achieved his interest of the French language at Trinity College, and an academic exchange at the Sorbonne and then he moved to France. Beckett found his hobby in French as he considered this language as a means of achieving his literary aims. The French language played an important role in Beckett’s life. Through this tongue, he arrived at serving to his career a tool by which he could refashion his writing than he could in English.

Moreover, for Samuel Beckett, to claim an Irish identity beyond the influence of the Irish society, he needed to make a break. And this break is shaped through exile. From an analytical point of view, Irish writers especially those who exiled themselves accepted and were accustomed to the absence of national culture in Ireland. Daniel Coorkey, who was writing on the Irish writer John Millington Synge suggests that the perpetual condition of

⁷⁴ Ibid, p. 69

expatriation that Irish writers accepted has produced a virtually pathological absence of national culture in Ireland. For Beckett, Paris was the seat of ‘avant –garde modernism’. Under the influence of James Joyce, who was a star that shines brightly in its literary sky, and of course as one of the famous avant garde writers in the world, Beckett found that he had much in common with Joyce as both expatriates Irishmen:

In addition to being Irish and short sighted they were both playglots...they were both agnostics...they were both apolitical, and took a very cool view of the nationalism which had been the dominant factor in Irish politics during both their lifetimes⁷⁵

Samuel Beckett considered and described the period 1946-1950 of writing as “the siege of the room”. It was a time when he made his break with James Joyce in the project of self construction:

If summer 1945 brought about in Beckett a commitment to a project of self definition in relation to the artist ‘father’ Joyce, it also marked his decision to abandon the mother tongue⁷⁶

Beckett’s decision to divorce the mother tongue was considered as both a harsh separation and a rejection of the Irish language and an as impose of his own style. Since language is a part of one’s identity, critics therefore, considered Beckett’s refusal of his native language as a rejection of his identity.

Furthermore, Samuel Beckett’s high influence and wide training in European literature like that of French and Italian is a strong element in his mind. This is why placing him in terms of national context is probably an impossible task. He may be seen in different ways as a European.

⁷⁵ Ibid, p. 73

⁷⁶ Op.cit.p. 75

Henceforth, Samuel Beckett's claims found their place in the isolation of his soul from his Irish environment. It is, in fact, this alienation that is either seen in the stage through his plays or read through his fictions that sprang from his consumption of Irish identity. Beckett felt himself apart from his native culture and land and he had little relation to it.

In addition, as an Irishman, Samuel Beckett was far from any nationalist movement in Ireland. He was born in a wealthy English-speaking Protestant family that had embraced neither the Gaelic language nor the Irish nationalist movement. Samuel Beckett was against the traditionalist claims of nationalism, nationhood and Irish identity. The long British colonial period brought the destruction of the Gaelic language by the time Beckett was born. The native Irish dialect has a very minor influence on his writings. Beckett as some critics argued was born into a linguistically divided nation. And this division is of wider importance for the Irish culture. Gaelic served to unify people and resist the British colonial dominance over Ireland. This linguistic division of the early twentieth century had a major influence on Irish writers especially the nationalists or the revivalists who attempted to recreate the Irish voice initiating through their writings the Irish culture, heritage and the role of the nation in serving its people. The Revivalists aimed to consolidate people's unity to their nation, and tried to explain what it meant to be Irish at that time. Irish identity for them was at once a Gaelic ancestry, and a proud rural labouring community. They saw Irish national identity sprang from the nationalist West of Ireland. It is from there all had risen: the dead men, the living men, the clever men, the stupid men, the wise and the art⁷⁷. However, Samuel Beckett was out of the realm of nationalism and revivalism.

Beckett's voice twittered in its sky as a European writer. He felt himself more European than Irish. His thread of native nationalism and the Celtic language and heritage were loose. For him the Celtic minds were still in the so-called pre-history:

“Beckett had no time for the native nostalgia of the Celtic Twilight... if contemporary European culture was undergoing a crisis of modernity typified by its art of ‘pure interrogation’, the Celtic hinterlands were not

⁷⁷ Lawrence, J. Mc Caffrey, “*Trends in post- Revolutionary Irish Literature*”, (national Council of Teachers of English, 1956)
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/372766>

to be sought after an alternative...this is why he followed Joyce and Mc Greevy to Paris, preferring “France in war to Ireland in peace”⁷⁸.

Additionally, to look at Beckett’s predicaments in Ireland, Protestantism has a considerable constraint on him. His attitude towards both religions (Catholicism/Protestantism) was as complex as the socio-political situation of Ireland. His relation to his own southern Protestant identity was similarly conflicted and complicated. He tries many times to dismiss it as having no value than an old school tie. In a letter to his friend Mag Greevy, Beckett described himself as a “dirty Irish low church Protestant. Beckett’s Protestantism seems to offer a remarkable vein of inquiry. Even if it was not within a wide frame, Beckett’s religious filiations represented an anxiety to his person. And as a member of the Protestant minority in a largely Catholic nation, the young Beckett was seen as “an outsider”, an experience that fed his exploration of marginalized conditions. Vivian Mercier, his autobiography writer described Beckett as:

“The typical Anglo-Irish boy...learns that he is not quite almost before he can talk; later he learns that he is far from being English either. The pressure on him to become either wholly Irish can erase segments o his individuality for good and all. Who am I? Is the question that every Anglo- Irishman must answer, evn if it takes him a life time as it did Yeats”⁷⁹

The Beckett family's loyalties were Unionist rather than Nationalist. And they made clear-cut distinctions between itself and its Catholic "neighbours." Since the Beckett family sheltered Beckett from Catholic Ireland, it also sheltered him from the Irish culture which would become central after the nation gained its independence. And in distancing themselves from Catholic Irish culture, the Becketts simultaneously marginalized themselves within the nation in which they would come to live. Beckett therefore, found

⁷⁸ Sean, Kennedy, *Beckett and Ireland*, UK, Cambridge University Press, 2009, p. 4

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, p.10

himself living between two worlds : a world of Protestantism and a world of Irishness. His difficulties with with national identity are similar to those difficulties his characters confronted in finding their own identities .Specifically, Beckett’s conflict over his identity and his inability to locate himself comfortably either in France, England or Ireland, offered Beckett the status of a cosmopolite writer.

III . 3 Beckett’s views of Ireland in fiction

For many twentieth century readers, Samuel Beckett’s work *Murphy* and *Molloy* symbolized a successful removal of context and setting. This is in fact done in a purpose of depicting fundamental human problems among which, the problems of identity and the land. Through his works, Ireland for Beckett was almost ignored and invisible as if he bears no importance to it. In his *Molloy*, Beckett tries to detach himself fully from the particularity of place. He represents Molloy as an unidentified man who ignores the environment where he is. Similar to Molloy, Murphy is a kind of a character who wants to free himself and empty his mind from his surroundings. Isolation from the milieu is a major element in these two works.

In the introduction to Grove Companion to Samuel Beckett, S.E Gontarski notes that when Ireland disappears from Samuel Beckett’s works it becomes an aura. Moreover, he insists that Beckett’s modernism is different from Joyce and other literary men because it is not linked to a physical environment which refers of course to Ireland. This point leads to the claim that despite his Irish roots, Samuel Beckett was a consummate European. He feels more at ease in the intellectual environment of Europe than that of his native country.

III . 3. 1 Beckett’s Ireland in *Murphy*

Murphy is Samuel Beckett’s first published novel and his third work of fiction. The novel was written in English and during his own journeys back and forth between Dublin and London in the mid 1930’s. It is considered Beckett’s early English writings. He often called it “slightly obscure and hard to follow”. Murphy is a novel of conceptual arrangements that succeeds to put the rhetoric of nationalism and exile in creative opposition, articulating a desire for home, and at the same time interrogating the notions of fixed cultural origins and inflexible national identities.

The story of the novel is about Murphy, an eccentric man who is struggling to support his prostitute mistress and consequently he goes mad and blows himself up. The novel opens with Murphy, the main character of the story, sitting naked in his rocking chair. He ties himself well to the chair in order to free his mind and flavour his body a pleasure. While in the chair, Murphy can attain an almost total isolation of his mind as well as he seeks to go further and keep out the world and his surroundings. The narrator shows the readers that Murphy is a Cartesian⁸⁰: Thus, Murphy felt himself split in two, a body and a mind⁸¹. Murphy looks for calm and peace, for a refuge into his mind where he may be withdrawn from the riots of the world around him. Midway through this work, Beckett offers a detailed description of his Cartesian aspect of Murphy. He depicts Murphy's mind pictured itself as a large hollow sphere, hermetically closed to the universe. This sphere is divided into three zones of increasing depth called light, half light and dark. Murphy wants to isolate and separate himself from the world in the very profound and deepest zone of his mind where he is deprived from desire, will and pleasure and where he will be utterly deferent to everything around him.

Murphy begins a work as a male nurse at the Magdalene Mental Mercy (M.M.M.) in North London. He meets a patient there Mr Endon whose mental disorder makes him unreachable. Murphy becomes a friend of Mr Endon, because they share the same characteristic which is that of the detachment of the world around them.

Neary is another character, a practitioner of Eastern mysticism seeks Murphy as a love rival and then as a compatible friend in the absence of all others. Miss Counihan is also another character and she is very attachable romantically to the main character Murphy.

The nature of the chaos and the disorder in *Murphy* is principal to the perception of the world by the characters within it. It is the inadequacy of these characters to accept or function within the rules created by their society that results in their isolation and alienation to the sides of society. The characters do exist in a confusing nonsensical world; face a conflict with three co-existing ideologies. The nature of polarity, duality, and

⁸⁰ Pretaining to René Descartes, his philosophy especially that of identity which consists in the continental existence of a unique mind and that the mind and the body are connected usually.

⁸¹ Samuel, Beckett, *Murphy* (in *Three Novels by Samuel Beckett: Murphy, Molloy, Malone Dies*), Grove Weidenfeld, New York, 1991, p. 33

compromise reoccur consistently - represented in myriad ways. There is light, half light, and dark. There is also conscious, sub-conscious, and unconscious - there is paradise, purgatory, and inferno. Each of these contradictory states of mind are presented as dependant on one another - as Brian Finney puts it in his essays Samuel Beckett's Postmodern Fiction: "[in *Murphy*] love is exile from reality, birth is a form of death, sanity is insanity, activity is non-productive"⁸²

From his part, Samuel Beckett felt unease with Irish political system of the Irish Free State as well as he commented too with disbelief upon Eamon de Valera's ideal of Ireland:

"An Italian told me de Valera was a great man, would never let his country down, would stick to his point. Bravo! But the night porter at the Shaftesbury, from Dublin, is very annoyed indeed about the whole business. He will be the ruin of the country, he said. And between the two positions the rustle of the cockneys rubbing their hands"⁸³

Moreover, Samuel Beckett in *Murphy* articulates a desire for "home" while simultaneously interrogating the notions of fixed cultural origins and inflexible national identities. He also tries to see and analyse from another angle the view of Ireland and its national identity in *Murphy*. De Valera defined 'home' as a site ideological closure of fixed origins and authentic identities. In his inaugurated speech of the 1926, de Valera aimed to see his country free and based on the conviction that in "*the heart of every Irishman there is a native ending desire to see his country politically free, and not only free but truly Irish as well*"⁸⁴

⁸²Brian, Finney, *Samuel Beckett's Postmodern Fiction*, Cambridge University Press, p. 45
<http://www.csulb.edu/~bhfinney/beckett.html>

⁸³ Sean, Kennedy, *Samuel Beckett and Ireland*, Cambridge University Press, 2009, p 63

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, p. 81

De Valera desires to see the life of Irishmen based on the peasant life and folklore of the island's rural western land. Equally, Irish identity for de Valera should exclusively be grounded in the Catholic Church and the Irish language. It is therefore, linked to rural frugality and Christian spirituality. These aspects are essentialist characteristics in a pure national identity. Samuel Beckett mocks this kind of essentialism in *Murphy* when he articulates the scene of the turf: "turf was truly Irish in its *eleutheromannia*, it would not burn behind bars"⁸⁵. This sentence refers to the perennial source of the nationalist imagination. The turf refers to the rural and the peasant life.

In addition to what has been mentioned, Beckett tries through *Murphy* to show his to readers that his character is homeless. This does not mean that he is without home but rather to say that he occupies a space in between his society and his private sphere. Beckett was not satisfied with Ireland of his time. He wants to recreate his own authentic homeland. *Murphy*'s desires to leave the land of his birth are not spelled out in the text. It appears to readers that he looks for escape as much from the restrictive social and cultural norms of the Irish Free State.

Beckett employs a character, Miss Coughlin⁸⁶, a Dublin prostitute with whom *Murphy* enjoyed a brief romance. On the level of metaphor, as several critics pointed out, the young prostitute's name gives an echo to the legendary figure of *Cathleen ní Houlihan*⁸⁶ who was the title of William Butler Yeats play (1902) at the turn of the century. As a nationalist and a revivalist as well, Yeats praised the play and made *Cathleen ní Houlihan* embody 'Ireland herself', the motherland of an ancient rural nation that call her people (sons) to fight for independence. *Murphy*'s escape from Miss Coughlin in the novel who is ironically transformed from a queen to a prostitute, suggests a flight from the stifling environment of Ireland and the nationalism it covered in the 1930's as he leaves behind an identity based on conservative and narrow identifications for the hybrid possibilities of cosmopolitan identity that he always dreamt of and preferred.

⁸⁵ *Murphy*, p. 46

⁸⁶ Is a mythical symbol of Irish nationalism found in literature and art. It sometimes represents Ireland as a personified woman. The woman is generally depicted as an old woman who needs the help of young Irishmen willing to fight and die to free Ireland from colonial rule.

Moving back to the problematic status of ‘homeland’ that is gestured in Murphy, the Irish notion of home has always been complicated by a history of Diaspora. R. F. Foster argued that emigration is “*the great fact of Irish social history from the early 19th century*”⁸⁷. And de Valera himself often addressed this issue of Diaspora by advocating a modest agriculturally policy to keep people especially workers in Ireland. In opposition to England which was seen at that time as industrialised and urban country, his vision of the small island was grounded in rural places which demonstrate a pure Irish identity. But, after taking office, the economic situation of Ireland began to get worse and to have serious repercussions. As a consequence, this destabilisation increasingly drove young men and women away from Ireland to look for jobs towards London which is symbolized in the novel by Miss Counihan as: “*the Mecca of every young aspirant to fiscal distinction*”⁸⁸

In this immense movement, Murphy takes part in as an Irish ‘everyman’. Given this state of affairs, abroad Murphy can find a nice companion to a young Irish woman, Celia Kelly. She is a prostitute who was translated to London and where she resides with her impoverished paternal grandfather. For Celia, London is a city where the outsiders spent years of lonely destitution. This scene of loss what makes Celia produce a tremendous nostalgia for her homeland which has not visited since she was four. What remains for Celia from the memories of her motherland Ireland is just: “the sky cool, bright, full of movement, anointed her eyes, reminded her of Ireland”⁸⁹

Beckett, on the one hand, figures Miss Counihan who is a sweet – sad mother who suggest a perversion of that familiar nationalist trop, Ireland. Celia, on the other hand, evokes a wraith-like figure of the nation, a figure of the Irish Diaspora; living beyond its geographical boundaries and can have any connection with home. For Beckett, the Irishman or the Irish woman abroad invades the in-between space of the postcolonial metropolis and claims it in the name of his/her own memories, elaborating new signs of identity and innovative sites of contestation.

Murphy, then, tries before dying with a mysterious gas explosion to design his final resting place. He prefers the Dublin’s Abbey Theatre as a place of his asylum. At the turn of the century the Abbey Theatre became a site for the redefinition of Ireland and the place

⁸⁷Brian Finney, *Samuel Beckett’s Postmodern Fiction*
<http://www.csulb.edu/~bhfinney/beckett.html>

⁸⁸ Ibid

⁸⁹ *Murphy*, p. 98

of nationalist ideological investment. And this is though initiating for a return to the Irish folklore and the Celtic mythology. The theatre gave the opportunity to the performance of some national theatrical pieces such as W. B. Yeats' *Cathleen ní Houlihan* and *the Playboy of the Western World*. Murphy's wish, hence, pins out ironically towards the cliché of the Irish Diaspora. This shows ambivalence about the notion of home:

“With regard to the disposal of these my body, mind and soul, I desire that they be burnt and laced in a paper bag and brought to the Abbey Theatre. Lr. Abbey Street, Dublin, and without pause into what the great and good Lord Chesterfield calls the necessary house, where their happiest hours have been spent...”⁹⁰

Murphy's final wish and making specifically the Abbey Theatre his final resting place, leads him to marry his fate to the immemorial past for hundreds of years and to the great future of the nation. Although this statement, Murphy's ashes never make their way back to Ireland and to the Abbey theatre. Rather, they end up and spread far apart over a wide area and a long period of time in London.

Between Ireland and England, the novel is satirical at the expense of the Irish Free State. Beckett portrays the character of Neary in a comic way as an image of a man in history, illustrating with some historical materials like the status of Cuchulain, an Irish mythological hero. Through Neary, Beckett mocks his chauvinism when he gazed the Cuchulain status in the general post office. In spite of its appearance as futility, Neary's demonstration on the “holy ground” of the Irish nationalist movement shows that no political ideologies, particularly those that would limit the newly independent nation in archaic image of Irishness, can claim transcendent or authority.

However, what is perhaps remarkable in this scene is Beckett's attention to Ireland and Irishness. Murphy demonstrates Neary as follows:

⁹⁰ Sean, Kennedy, *Beckett and Ireland*, Cambridge University Press, 2009, p. 90

In Dublin...Neary...was recognized by a former pupil called Wylie, in the General Post Office, contemplating from behind the statue of Cuchulain. Neary had bared his head, as though the holy ground meant something to him. Suddenly he flung aside his hat, sprang forward, seized the dying hero by the thighs and began to dash his head against his buttocks, such as they are. The Civic Guard on duty in the building, roused from a tender reverie by the sound of blows, took in the situation at his leisure, disentangled his baton and advanced with measured tread, thinking he had caught a vandal in the act⁹¹.

In 1935, Irish Prime Minister Eamon de Valera dedicated a statue of the mythical hero Cuchulain in the commemoration of the nineteenth anniversary of the Easter Rising at the Dublin General Post Office. In this place, the Irish had proclaimed the total independence of their country from British rules. When offering up this statue, de Valera sought to legitimize his post-independence regime by aligning it with not only the heroic deeds of 1916, but also the mythic heroes of Gaelic antiquity. In selecting the Cuchulain statue to honour the Easter Rising, the Irish Prime Minister called on the symbolic force generated by the greatest knights, whose courageous self-sacrifice had inspired the architects of the 1916 rebellion and whose name offered a timeless, metaphysical authority to the new government. The statue of Cuchulain symbolizes the great deeds of the Irish who died for their country's liberty and represents the source of a pure, original and unchanging national identity that is deprived from British influence. De Valera identified the statue as the site of one of the most glorious events in the nation's history. In his dedication, de Valera drew on:

“I hope that the statue will serve to keep in the minds of the youth of this country the great deeds of those who went before us and

⁹¹ *Murphy*, p. 18

what will also serve to spur up on the emulate their valour and their sacrifice”⁹²

For this occasion, de Valera continues saying:

From this place nineteen years ago the Republic of Ireland was proclaimed. This was the scene of an event which will ever be counted an epoch in our history – the beginning of one of Ireland’s most glorious and sustained efforts for independence. It has been a reproach to us that the spot has remained so long unmarked. To-day we remove the reproach. All who enter this hall henceforth will be reminded of the deed enacted here. A beautiful piece of sculpture, the creation of Irish genius, symbolising the dauntless courage and abiding constancy of our people, will commemorate it modestly, indeed, but fittingly.⁹³

Samuel Beckett would soon rejoin his narrative *Murphy*, albeit in a comical way, by setting a scene of the General Post Office, where one character Mr. Neary performs his own awkward self-sacrifice on the altar of Irish identity.

Beckett’s General Post Office scene, which was written within months of de Valera’s dedication, gives the readers of *Murphy* a glimpse of a writer whose concerns are decidedly political as he calls into question dominant cultural values. While de Valera’s commemoration asserts the importance of a univocal history and authentic traditions for the newly liberated nation-state (Ireland), Beckett’s answer protests the essentialist identities, that are based on nationalism and the memories of the heroic deeds of the

⁹² Sean, Kenedy, *Beckett and Ireland*, Cambridge University Press, 2009 p. 90

⁹³Patrick, Bixpy, *Samuel Beckett and the Post Colonial Novel*, Cambridge University Press, 2009, p. 34

Irishmen; and mocking both the celebration of the past and the homogenization of the present within an increasingly rigidified national community.

“The scene in fact, provides an image of a heterogeneous postcolonial society. When Neary deploys the statue of Cuchulain and tries to make himself in his place, meant to silence and to deploy totally the national mythology and therefore the national history of the land. Despite its apparent futility, Neary’s demonstration on the “holy ground” of the Irish Republican movement demands that no political ideologies, particularly those that would limit and enclose the postcolonial nation in archaic images of Irishness, can claim transcendent authority.

What is perhaps most striking for readers of Beckett, however, is simply the image of a man in history, an image that, when placed alongside de Valera’s rhetoric, elicits a number of pressing political concerns, while it belies the assumptions about the disengaged modernist writer: when Beckett enters into dialogue with his Prime Minister, he not only disturbs those gestures by which national communities claim cultural homogeneity and historical priority, but also contests the vision of a nation-state that appears to imitate the political hegemony of the British Empire as much as to uphold the revolutionary ideals of the 1916 rebellion. Simply put, Beckett’s novel invests deeply in the postcolonial circumstances from which it emerged. In so doing, the narrative challenges the very ideologies of personal and national development underpinning modernity by articulating a critical position that disrupts the integration of the individual into the coercive structures of the nation-state

III . 3. 2 Beckett’s Voice through Molloy

Molloy (1935) is the first novel of Samuel Beckett’s trilogy (*Molloy-Murphy-Molone Dies*). It is divided into two halves. And the story reveals two inner monologues that are divided between two main characters: Molloy and Moran. The first character is a vagrant named Molloy who is living in his mother’s room and speaks with everything left in it. Molloy is portrayed by Beckett as lost and unidentified to himself. He is always looking for his mother. Molloy describes a journey he took earlier before coming to find his mother. The journey was somehow long and he spent it on his bicycle from town to town, and

village to village. Molloy encounters many characters whom he views as bizarre among them; a policeman, an old man with a stick, a charity worker, and a woman whom he faces many troubles with when he kills her dog after running over it with a bike. After the accident, Molloy decided to abandon the bicycle and prefers walking. His walk was in no directions. He then, meets an old man “a charcoal burner” who lives in the forest and whom he murders with a blow to the head. After all these accounts, Molloy reveals a fraught relationship with his mother. He calls her Mag and she calls him Dan. Molloy ignores where he is and what is the name of his country. One day and when he was loitering around on his bicycle, Molloy was arrested by a policeman and he was not able to answer because he knows no names and geography.

However, the second character and eventually the first person narrator starts his part. He is called Jacques Moran, a man who is a kind of an agent and is given much work by his boss who is described in the novel by the “mysterious Youdi”. Moran is described as a methodical person. He tells the readers that Molloy is already in his head. Molloy and Moran share similarities. Like Molloy, Moran also prepares for a journey with his son on a bicycle and encounters many troubles in his way to Molloy’s country. Molloy is a character who is unable to speak, remember and narrate according to some living conditions of his environment. Moran who is portrayed in the novel as a principled man becomes more and more like Molloy, as if both characters share the same ideas and thoughts.

As an Irish talented writer, Samuel Beckett was expected to play his part in creating his nation through representing its Irishness. For Beckett, this representation of the motherland springs from nothingness. In other words, in Ireland of Beckett, there is nothing to express and even no desire to express. In Molloy, the theme of separation from the mother Ireland is elaborated in a narrative that is about sons and fathers and sons and mothers. A relation that can be read as typical of the Protestant Beckett and his relation to the old mother England and the father which is the Irish Free State (Ireland) who are eager to see and expect their son’s life.

Molloy’s relationship to his mother is highly ambiguous, and it is suggestive to Beckett’s attitude to his mother nation. He is in a total ignorance to his land. When he was arrested by a policeman, he could not be able neither to recall his name nor his mother’s.

Molloy is not certain if he shares the same name with his mother, and whether both of them constitute a legitimate family or not. Hence, Beckett's relation and communication with his mother country are ruptured. Next in the novel, Molloy finds troubles in remembering his native town's name:

I had been living so far from words so long, you understand, that it was enough for me to see my town, since we are talking of the town, to be unable, you understand. It's too difficult to say, for me. And even my sense of identity was wrapped in a nameless often hard to penetrate⁹⁴

Beckett articulates in the novel the loss of one's identity. Moran become Molloy and so lost his identity. This may raise the question what is Molloy's identity? Molloy, in fact used to be Moran. This point parallels that of Ireland itself. It means an estimate of Irish men and women who were in a culture that was not truly Irish since was not independent.

Typically, Samuel Beckett was a protestant and less candid about his politics than Joyce. But nationalist discourse is played in Molloy in an implicit way. He choses to portray the Irish male who is suffering from colonial construct. Beckett tries emphasized playing with the state of the "unaccomodated man" who prefers exiling himself from his surrounding, ignoring his nation's name and his insist to the attachment to one place. John P. Harrington, the author of the Irish Beckett disputes the earlier understanding of Beckett as a writer belonging and writing out of no specific geographical location or cultural history. And he points out in his book:

The dual narrator of Molloy adumbrates a dialectic place that is fundamental of modern Irish literature and to literary representations of colonialism and post colonialism. The model of exile, of aloofness to home, and of superiority to intellectual provincialism is, of course, that of Joyce and his

⁹⁴ Samuel, Beckett, Molloy (in *Three Novels by Samuel Beckett: Molloy, Murphy, Malone Dies*), Penguin Books, 1991, p. 41

works. The model of attachment to place, of establishment at home, and the use of imaginative provincialism is Yeats and his works.⁹⁵

Furthermore, Beckett shows distinct aspects of Irish identity. What can be gleaned from his *Molloy* over the notion of Irishness is his portrayal of an Irishman in a state of decay, looking for a reunification with a soul and an essence. This soul is seen as Ireland, the symbolic mother. Molloy and Moran are two characters which are in fact one and they represent the 'universal Beckett man'⁹⁶. Molloy as well as Moran try to refer to Ireland through letters (A-C) and reference like Irish food, Irish stew, Irish knife ...etc. Their repeated references to Ireland and Irish objects suggests that their relationship with their homeland is ambiguous like Beckett's. Each one of the two characters wants to conceal his country. And this concealment of the homeland is the result of a clear ambivalence towards Ireland.

Indeed Molloy's ambivalent view towards his nation is clearly shown in his complaints and point of views about the methods and systems of education of Ireland and that of England in the following quotation:

And if I had always behaved like a pig, the fault lies not with me but with my superiors, who corrected me only on points of detail instead of showing me the essence of the system, after the manner of the great English schools...For that would have allowed me, before parading in public certain habits such as the finger in the nose; the scratching of the balls, digital emunction and the peripatetic piss, to refer them to the first rules of a reasoned theory⁹⁷.

⁹⁵ John, P. Harington, *The Irish Beckett*, Routledge, 1991, P. 158

⁹⁶ A universal character whose differing incarnations have only about as much relevance as have the differing film incarnations of Charlie Chaplin's tramp.

⁹⁷ *Molloy*, p. 25

These complaints show that Molloy is determined to remain within his region as well as he has a desire to be in his homeland and simultaneously to be exiled from it. This ambivalence of the character's attitudes to Ireland is fundamental aspect to literary representations of colonialism and postcolonialism⁹⁸

Beckett made his characters strive to ignore their region where they live and their country as a whole. They strive to absent themselves from their homeland. And this way of denying one's nation leads to the question of the character's national identity. Beckett, thus, tried to answer the question: "what is my nation?" And through Molloy he wanted to offer an image of Ireland, a country that strove for independence and his discomfort feeling towards the way his country was ruled by the British imperial rules and systems. The following passage will demonstrate Beckett's discomfort with Ireland:

This vignette has been cited as proof that Samuel Beckett, from the very outset, found himself estranged from the emerging Ireland, but in fact his experience would have been typical of the great majority of Dubliners in Easter Week. They had not voted for (or against) the forces which staged the Rising, just as they would not have a chance to vote for (or against) the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921. Theirs was a history which seemed always to happen in their absence⁹⁹

The above passage also refers to Ireland's progress to freedom. Beckett as well as the people of Ireland found themselves subject to a political system that they did not belong to of their own free will; rather they were subjected to imperial power.

Particularly, the Ireland of Beckett's Molloy is one in which the Irishman plays the roles of the imperial power and the colonial victim (the colonizer vs. the colonized) In the novel, Beckett offers his readers an image of Molloy's fear of local police to make this articulation of the two roles obvious. Molloy finds himself weak and powerless in their hands and in a need of the necessary papers that prove his identity. This portrait of the policemen showing authority over the Irish people and the fear of political reprisals by police forces were frequently following Irish independence. Molloy declares:

⁹⁸ John, P. Harington, *the Irish Beckett*, Routledge, 1991, p. 158

⁹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 530

I hasten to answer blindly, fearing perhaps lest my silence fan their anger to fury. I am full of fear, I have gone in fear all my life, in fear of blows ... they have only to be gentle. I mean refrain from hitting me, and I seldom fail to give satisfaction, in the long run. Now the sergeant, content to threaten me with a cylindrical ruler, was little by little rewarded for his pains.¹⁰⁰

Similar to Molloy, Moran also faces another source of authority which is his boss Youdi. He obeys each of Youdi's orders out of fear. His instructions represent a super power that disrupts Moran's life. According to some critics, Moran's obedient to Youdi would appear to be better a starting point in examining the characters' understanding of their identities¹⁰¹. Moran offers a form of resistance to Youdi's authority. It starts to increase as he is confronted with the urge of preparing for his mission. He confesses : " I wondered , suddenly rebellious, what compelled me to accept this commission". Accordingly, Moran is a subject of domination. His position is equated with the position of the mimic man¹⁰² in colonial society. As the mimic man, Moran tries to emulate his superiors' principles to gain his acceptance. Even more, he accepts the fact that he is an outsider, an 'other' to his boss Youdi. Beckett attempts to say that his characters resist these authorities and their resistance of course shows the narrators' arrival at the understanding of their position as marginalized Irishmen in the Irish cultural landscape.

Step back to the former analysis, Beckett's text shows his struggles with national identity and his estrangement from his home land Ireland that is characterized in the confused identity of Moran and Molloy. Ireland operates in the text, as an absent site and a residual presence that generates its own dissolution the reason why Beckett maintained a distance from his country of birth.

¹⁰⁰ *Molloy*, p. 22

¹⁰¹ Edith, Kern, "Moran-Molloy: The Hero as Author." *Twentieth Century Interpretations of Molloy, Malone Dies, The Unnamable*, Prentice, Ed. J.D. O'Hara. Englewood Cliffs, N.J, 1970, p. 35-45

¹⁰² Mimic man is a colonial subject who attempts to gain admission into the colonizer's class through imitation of the colonizer. He is a contradictory figure who simultaneously reinforces colonial authority and disturbs it.

III . 4 Conclusion

Samuel Beckett's relationship to his homeland has always been an important question to inquire about. Years of criticism explained his exile to Paris as Beckett "is turning his back on Ireland". Indeed, the representation of his character attempting to escape from self awareness and from the necessity of leaving Ireland is a cure for his ill soul. Beckett's retreat from Ireland, his reluctance and denial to the Irish politics and the Irish movements of the 1930's originates out of his inability to identify with those commitments of the Irish land. For Beckett, Ireland deserves to be great but without relying on the mythical heroes of the past and especially those Irish patriots of the 1916 Easter Rising.

In fact, cosmopolitan is the kind of author and man Beckett aimed to be. Specifically, his inability to locate himself comfortably into Ireland propelled him into the role of cosmopolite. He threw off his Irish heritage in favour of universality. James Knowlson in his book suggests that Beckett preferred the role of cosmopolite which he carefully nurtured from his first arrival in Paris to near his death when he decided to be buried in France rather than Ireland (*Damned to Fame: The Life of Samuel Beckett*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1999, p. 618).

Murphy and *Molloy* are part of Samuel Beckett's model of a cosmopolite writer. Through them he gestures the anti- nationalist sentiment for his island home where he is still searching for an identity to assume. From these two works of fiction, one can point out the similarity between Beckett's struggles with national identity and those of Moran, Molloy and Murphy. In both his life and his work, Beckett offers an experienced model of expulsion and then searching for reintegration. It is Beckett's own experience of alienation and separation from his homeland, that makes his characters estranged too. Moreover, it is this experience that pushes them to incorporate moments of anti-nationalist sentiment towards Ireland and a refusal to live in correspondence to the constraints that Irish nationalism attempts to impose.

Chapter Four

Traces of Ireland and its History in William Trevor's Fiction

IV . 1 Introduction

Through its long history of legends, poetry and oral tradition, Ireland made a remarkable contribution to the historical and modern literature. From a small Island ; a rich literature emerged representing a mode of expression, an illumination of problems and a reinforcement of social, political and theoretical perspectives.

Ireland represents a major interest for many writers. National identity is an important issue that was tackled by Irish writers since the Revival. And the quest of national identity is highly associated with the quest of home and nation. Irish authors reflect on their experiences by writing books where the protagonist displays a great annoyance towards authority, Irish nationalism and religion as well.

With the wave of changes that invaded Ireland in the late twentieth century, the notion of Irish identity has undergone a process of redefinition. In a global Ireland where globalization reaches all its forms, Irish identity has been renegotiated between the two opposed ideals of the “traditional” and the ‘global’. These ideals have provoked and allowed a reconstruction of Irish identity. It is submitted that contemporary Ireland needs a new ideal, more reflective of the current Ireland, to guide it through such uncertain times. Therefore, in the new age of modernity and globalization, Irish authors try to transmit their own vision of identity and nationhood and explore Ireland with its values and principles in contemporary fiction.

William Trevor is one of those writers who fight through their prose in order to show to what extent the issue of home or nation is still tackling Irish people’s lives. William Trevor portrayed Ireland as a hindrance towards the Irish development. Trevor also shows the limitations imposed by poverty, nationalism Irish history have all militated against the freedom of spirit and expression. The characters of Trevor’s fiction are always looking for refuge because of the very culture of Ireland which stifles the seed of liberty.

The nation’s past functions like an imagined memory and an epic distance. William Trevor in his two works of fiction: *Two More Gallants* (1993) and *Felicia’s Journey* (1994) tries to play with this epic distance. The past s brought by the author in his contemporary sphere. Trevor’s characters are portrayed as closed minded figures who embody a living contact with their unfinished past that urges them to be inferior and subjugated to colonial people.

The past of Ireland is still rooted in its present. The existence of this past represents a roadblock in the creation of a pure Irish identity. For Trevor, Ireland's quest for national Identity and nationhood can be achieved only when it releases its past and functions as a liberate nation. In other words, Ireland can become a curse of itself when it views its nationhood and identity without an oppressive instance on the past, but in terms of reform and revision.

Trevor's fiction as critics consider touches the pulse of current preoccupations with identity, how to interpret history and how to square Ireland's past with Ireland's Future. His only axe to grind is against the perceived notion of Irishness of contemporary characters under the shadow of Irish past and history.

IV . 2 The Process of Redefining Irishness in Current Globalized Ireland

IV . 2. 1 A Redefinition of Irish Identity in contemporary Ireland :

Ireland's long history of colonialism has actually an enormous impact on Irish Identity, producing a sense of dislocation of culture, identity and language. Ireland's quest of national identity never seems to be completed. This due to its permanent redefinition of Irishness. Ireland's unfixed grasp of Irish national Identity is the result of the changing history, social values and territory. Thus, colonialism caused Ireland's radical dispossession.

Colonialism in Ireland had a great impact on people's consciousness. In the process of looking its true identity; a nation usually begins with the search for the origins and for something specific to this nation. Through its progress as a nation, Ireland evolved into a modern nation North and South. Traditionally minded politicians were substituted by new reformers and modernizers. The Irish free state of the 1920's gave birth to the Republic of Ireland. The new government lead the nation into a prosperous destiny. The membership of Ireland to the European Economic Community brought sundry changes that affect the social and the economic sides of the country. Moreover, the republic of Ireland introduced innovations that made the country in acquaintance with modernity. However, the Catholic values were still sustained. It was difficult for the traditional Irish Catholics to welcome modernity.

The twenty first century Ireland is living the Ireland imagined in Past centuries. Today, Ireland is on a free way, and emerges as one of the globalized societies in the world. It can now offer everything available in the world at large. In wrestling with its past and present and exploring its religion, economy, language and politics, Ireland as a global player, questions what it meant to be Irish.

The last decade brought new challenges and upheaval in the country as immigration which changed the cultural map of Ireland. Ireland is now a country of multicultural and multi-religious society. In addition, the economic success and the social changes of 1990's helped Ireland to gain a new sense of national identity.

Economic wealth has become an actual historical condition of Irishness in contemporary Ireland. International commerce has also become an authentic discourse of Irishness. Unlike the traditional vision of Irish identity that was based on Catholicism, mythical Gaelic origins and agrarianism, contemporary Irish identity is therefore, the product of socio-economic modernization, and a blend of the traditional Identity with more European, cosmopolitan and materialistic values and ideas. Gerard Delanty and Patrick O'Mahony in the introduction of *Reshinking Irish History: Nationalism, Identity and ideology* (2001) speak of how economic, social and political upheavals undergone by the republic of Ireland in 1990's presented remarkable changes in the perception of national identity. The economic prosperity and the attraction of migrants, the peace process in Northern Ireland and the church scandals all have forced the island for better or for worse to become contemporary and much in the same line with European modernity. In this context, the 21st century Irish nationalism which based on national values and culture is no more tenable. It in fact, enters an « Overt phase of crisis and contradiction »¹⁰³ which therefore, calls for a revision of its past in order to move forward into the future. O'Mahony argued that the Irish society has often “ felt afraid of finding problems with itself”».

Nationalism in Ireland never ceased to be the dominant ideology. It remains the prominent feature of Irish political and social landscape:

“For Ireland, nationalism is the dominant ideology. It binds diverse individuals into ‘ a people’ acts as a motive for economic, cultural and sporting achievement, and provides a source of genuine pride and sympathy. The nation has become the highest affiliation and obligation of the individual, and through it a significant part of personal identity is formed”¹⁰⁴

This period in Ireland is characterized not by a rejection of past identity, but rather it by critical revisitation of the past in the order to expose the other versions of identity and foster multifaced definitions of Irishness which will be representative of the complexities of

¹⁰³ O'Mahony, Patrick and Gerard Delanty : *Rethinking Irishness*, 1998. London Palgrave,p. 200

¹⁰⁴ Collins, Neil and Terry Cradden, *Irish Politics Today*, Manchester University Press, 2001, p. 150

contemporary society in Ireland. O' Mahony stated his rejection of Irish identity that has been dominated up until the 1990's when perceptions of the pressures of globalization:

“As a child you grew up with one very definite received idea of what Irishness was, or what the experience of being Irish was, and how one was supposed to think and feel and breathe. Then you are grown up, you find that there are all those other worlds around you. These hidden worlds fascinate me”¹⁰⁵

According to the critic, Richard Kearny, whose work centers on the traditional conceptions of Irish Identity, contemporary Ireland need a transition from traditional nationalism to a postnationalism. Ireland in the present century still has a solid tie with the historical past and the traditional national identity. In this context, the Austrian historian Frederick Heer argues :

“ the root of the problem of forming a homogeneous national identity lies in the past, reaching into times of pre-nation-states”¹⁰⁶.

Ireland, hence, should make a transition from this period of history in order to call for a new mode of self definition. What is necessary for Ireland is to seek for the reconstruction of its identity in the new global Ireland. It, as being newly repositioned within the larger European nations will redefine itself within that larger entity as opposed to its previous colonial bosses.

what we are talking about then is not the liquidation of nations but their supercession into a post-nationalist network of communities where national Identities may live on and where they belong in languages, sports , arts, customs,

¹⁰⁵ O'Mahony, Patrick and Gerard Delanty : *Rethinking Irish History: Nationalism, Identity and Ideology*, London Palgrave,1998, p. 124

¹⁰⁶ Brigit Ryshka, *Constructing and deconstructing National Identity*, Cambridge University Press, 2001, p. 143

memories and myths-while simultaneously fostering the expression minority and regional cultures within each nation¹⁰⁷.

For Kearney, the problem for Ireland is not redefining Irishness in a way that can accommodate diasporic populations but the mundane task is to extend equal citizenship and opportunities to the Irish minorities and regional cultures.

Moreover, over the past decade the historically impoverished nation of Ireland has emerged as one of the economic and even social booming miracles of Europe. Irish economy was left in a fragile condition after independence. It was until the economic boom of the Celtic Tiger in the 1990's that the country witnessed a shift in every fields which eventually resulted in Ireland experiencing economic wealth and globalisation in all its forms. Thus, in a very short period Ireland has undergone quick reconstruction and reform of Irish culture and identity. This process lets the Irish question about what will happen to the their traditional national identity and pushes to much lamenting that : “ we are losing our Irishness” , in particular “ our sense of community and solidarity as well as our Irish heritage”¹⁰⁸

Therefore, Irish Identity has been negotiated between the ideals of the “Traditional” and the “Global” these while ideals allowed a reconstruction of Irish identity, it is seen that the Irish society of today, particularly in the aftermath of this economic boom, is in a need of new ideals that are more reflective to the current Ireland. An ideal according to Durkheim's work on religion is an idea that is shaped by real conditions, “ a natural product of social life”¹⁰⁹. It is a concept that society needs in order to recreate itself and by making this society become self-aware and remain self-reflexive thereby moulding the society's identity.

Traditionally Irish cultural ideals have been linked to the strongly catholic agricultural man who is born locally and though he is often diasporic due to an impoverished Ireland. However, during the Celtic Tiger, the Irish government attempted to construct a new ideal which is that of a well educated, competent and technologically advanced Irishman who

¹⁰⁷ Richard Kearney, *Across the Frontiers: Ireland in the 1990's: Cultural Political , Economic*. Wolfhound Press, 1988, p. 17

¹⁰⁸ Crowley, Mad Laughlin, *.Under the Belly of the Tiger :Class, Race, Identity and Culture in the Global Ireland*, Irish Reported Publications, 1997, p. 52

¹⁰⁹ Durkheim, E. *The Elementary forms of the Religious Life*, Swain, J. W., London: George Allen and Unwin, 1915; p. 422

although resides in rural Ireland has a worldwide view that welcomes globalization with all its forms.

However, such opposite ideals to the mentality and the conservatism of the Irish have left many archaic troubles in an attempt to identify Irish national identity. The Irish a consequence of all the changes re-identify themselves as a cosmopolitan people who accommodating to modernity and globalisation. The Irishman in this period aims to the “paddy Irishman”(the strongly catholic agriculturally local man) and acquire a new cosmopolitan global Irish Identity.

Finally, identity is a social construction. It is reconstructing in accordance with the current physical, cultural circumstances of Ireland. The Irish nation witnessed an overwhelming transformation in an incredible short time. However, as the wind of the Celtic Tiger recedes, the Irish people find themselves struggling between the calm weather of “old Ireland” and the whirlpool of globalization and capitalism. Thus, it comes down to say that the Irish redefine their national identity through welcoming the aspects of globalization and the time; strive to preserve parts the old Irish identity.

IV . 2. 2 Ireland and globalization in current fiction.

New meanings of identity and a new vision to the Irish land have emerged in the context of the late twentieth and the beginning of the twenty first century. Within a new context of globalization, the disappearance of the church’s supreme authority and the disappearance of the British Empire, the traditional perception of identity becomes irrelevant. Moreover, in this period Ireland is viewed as one of the miracles of Europe in its social, economic and political fields. These upheavals pave the ground for a new identification of Ireland. The Irish, therefore, find themselves with a new set of questions about who they are and where they are going and how they will get there.

The booming globalization paved the way for Ireland and Irishness to acquire a fashionable edge. This epoch pushed Irish emigrants to retain an original sense of identity as they formulate a new vision to Ireland, their ‘idealised’ homeland.

The new ways in which Ireland and Identity are articulated today and will be articulated for the future, this Irish social and cultural critic Fintan O'Toole predicts, are determined by a combination of the past and the creative re-imagining contemporary Ireland. In other words, the Irish writer has to accept his historical and social reality and tries to accommodate himself to the current global environment of Ireland.

Therefore in the light of globalization, Irish identity and Ireland become fashionable. And writers of the current Ireland find new ways in transmitting their own history and their quest for identity. They develop new ways of selling their own and Ireland's history to an increasing international audience.

The issue of identity is not only the subject of social sciences but it is also a matter of literary theory and of literature in general. Contemporary Irish literature focuses less on colonialism than was the literature of Irish pre-independence. Literature of this age is post nationalist and post colonialist. It, in fact tries to feat the decade of modern Ireland with its social, political and cultural transitions of the age, yet, it has never marginalized history. The voice of the past is always analogous in today's Irish novel. Lady Morgan said about Irish fiction:

“we are living in era of transition. Changes moral and political are in progress. The frame of constitution, the frame of society itself, are sustaining. A shok, which occupys all minds, to overt or modify, under such conditions .There is no legitimate literature, as there is no legitimate drama .¹¹⁰

Each society has certain characteristics through which it defines itself in opposition to other societies. Every national identity involves views of the nation's relationship to the territory, language, culture and history of this nation. One way to portray these characteristics is in literature which the mirror that reflects the nation's sense of itself and represents the voice of its identity and nationhood. This is what contemporary Irish literature has embraced. Generally, Irish literature has traditionally been part of the literary system in which the search of identity and nationhood has been very prominent.

¹¹⁰ Toibin, colm. *The penguin booke of Irish fiction*. London : Pinguin books, 2001 P. 9.

From the early writings of the Revival, to the contemporary writers; the question of “what is to be Irish” becomes a constant feature in current Irish literature. The goal of much Irish fiction is to be involved in Irish history and reality, as Maria Edgeworth wrote :

“ It is impossible to draw Ireland as she now is in the book of fiction-realities are too strong, party passions too violent, to bear to see, or care to look at their faces in a looking glass. The people would only break the glass and curse the fool who held the mirror up to nature distorted nature in a fever”¹¹¹

In contemporary global modern nation, Irish writers are still occupied with Irish themes but at the same time, they assume a more Eurocentric perspective. They in fact, look to European and world literature to provide images and an outer look on those themes.

The Irish novel of contemporary literature has a sense of the continuity of the past. In the current novel, identity for the main protagonist is matter of fantasy arising from their sense of dispossession. Exploring nationhood and national identity is an aspect of contemporary novel. National identity is a construct based on one hand on differences and on the other hand it represents memories, on how can a nation demonstrate and represent itself; how it does tell her own story.

A nation eventually, is a product of a historical narrative that reflects the silenced voice of its group. In this context, contemporary writers explore the past and the present as they attempt to present a view to the future. Current literature even though it is in conformity with the modern global sphere, it highlights the past and its events in order to portray a nation looking for its Irishness. Contemporary writers bring something new in this. They not only look at the past but they also view that the nation has to move on an advance towards the future.

¹¹¹ Ibid, p. 8

IV . 3 How are Ireland and Irish Identity Portrayed in Contemporary Irish Fiction ?

IV . 3. 1 The Vestige of colonial legacy on Irishness in Two More Gallants

William Trevor's (b.1928) short stories concerning Ireland show a sharp awareness of how the past of this land reverberates through the lives of his characters. He has admitted that in order to portray Ireland and depict its tragic history, he needs to form an 'artistic distance'. Irish history for Trevor is constantly being lived, and in Ireland one is always reminded of how deep and strong this history can affect one's sense of Irishness in Ireland.

Two More Gallants is William Trevor's short story among his best known collected stories of the 1993 collection. Critics often consider this story as an adaptation of James Joyce's *Two Gallants*. In fact, Joyce was always present as an influence in William Trevor's works in the modest and punctilious voice of *Dubliners*. Trevor in this collection has borrowed some of Joyce's characters, topics and titles, as he refashioned his narrative techniques. One critic José Manuel Estév Saà, argued that William Trevor's short stories are an echo to James Joyce.

In terms of lived experience, William Trevor looks at Ireland from a physical and an emotional distance. Like Joyce, Trevor worries about Ireland's moral condition. He analyzes it dispassionately, with no overt intention to preach. Paralysis, identity, weakness, loneliness and lack of opportunities are some of his favourite themes. He uses realistic and naturalistic external detail as a tool to illuminate psychological and ethical scenario and reveal human situations, in which characters move towards a revelation or epiphany which is itself social, moral and spiritual.

Trevor's story of *Two More Gallant* reveals how the Irish people carrying their historical weight of colonization are responsible for their weakness to overcome their feeling of inferiority. The Irishman in his society that is stunted by the effect of colonial occupation cannot construct an identical Irish identity. Trevor attempts to show to what extent Ireland's colonial experience has resulted in the weakness of its national identity. Moreover, the writer demonstrates that the Irishman in a postcolonial nation lack the

confidence to his nation. And this absence of trust is according to him a sharp anti-intellectualism. Trevor's influence of his predecessor James Joyce leads him to depict the paralysis of his Two main protagonists Fitzpatrick and Heffernan in a country that cannot overcome its troubled past and history; which in turn represented a hindrance in the country's progress and in the search of an authentic modern Irish Identity. William Trevor argues:

In Ireland you can escape neither politics nor history, for when you travel through the country today the long conflict its landscape has known does not readily belong in faraway past as Hastings or Stamford Bridge does for the English¹¹²

Two More Gallants explores the complexities of Irish identity. And the author tries to unveil the gap between contemporary Dubliners and their nation whose cultural, moral and political significance represents the difficulty to construct a homogeneous Irish identity. This difficulty is because of the burden of the oppressed colonial past that is still in contemporary Dublin part of the society's construction. In the story the narrator is always in acquaintance with Fitzpatrick and Heffernan.

The narrator is setting with Fitzpatrick in a College Park watching a cricket game which is an ironic aspect in the story. Both of them are immobile. The cricket is therefore, a colonial import, and it is meant to refer to the colonial ideals that Fitzpatrick cannot escape. Cricket indeed functions as a "Leitmotif signifies how vestiges of colonialism still remains part of the fabric Dublin society to this day"¹¹³

Moreover, Trevor portrays Fitzpatrick as a lazy man. This laziness and the fact that he is inert when the Cricket game is being played show the image of oppression. Fitzpatrick is too lazy to change matters, and even to reject tensions of colonialism. In fact, "his eyes reflected so profound a degree of laziness that people occasionally professed surprise to find them open"¹¹⁴. The laziness of this character sustains a rift between the Irish identity, nationhood and colonialism. It is the rift that illuminates how powerless people can be

¹¹² Gregory, A. Schimer, *William Trevor: A Study of his Fiction*, Routledge, 1990, p. 180

¹¹³ *ibid*

¹¹⁴ William, Trevor, *the Collected Stories*, Penguin Books, 1993, p. 1025

when their nationhood is in a conflict with colonialism. Fitzpatrick observing the cricket game at the end appears to court his laziness. And this Trevor signifies is only when the character transcends the boundaries of moral repercussion that any change can be able to occur. And this applied historically to Ireland. It means, it is only when people stop welcoming the colonial establishment and the colonial values that any revolution can occur.

Like his predecessor's narrative, Trevor's story is about two men in a street of Dublin whose occupations are vague. Fitzpatrick enjoys his friends stories and each one of them, is acquainted with a narrator. Fitzpatrick is the listener of the stories and Heffernan is the teller. Woman is always present in their stories. Heffernan tells the story of a maid who is in relation with his professor Mr Flacks who is complicit out of miserliness. It is not love that drives her to professor Flacks but it is for financial reasons.

Furthermore, Heffernan is depicted also as being lazy. And he is always in opposition to Mr Flacks for his desire to the maid. He tries to be a perpetual student at university by taking funds from his uncle in Kilkenny. Heffernan anger with professor Flacks springs from a remark he made to him: "*I see you are still with us*"¹¹⁵. As if the professor degraded Heffernan's ability to stay in class and carry on his studies; and this is in fact due to the portrayal of Heffernan as an impotent lazy guy. Heffernan therefore, has a crucial grudge against professor Flacks. But, at the end of the story Heffernan recognizes that he did not know professor Flacks well and he misunderstood him. And when Heffernan made a rediscovery to his professor, a mutual respect was created for each other.

William Trevor is keen to the gallantry of Heffernan. He is keen to its perfunctory exchange. Heffernan is proud and carries a sense of revenge that grows from the superiority of colonialism. The superiority of the establishment that Professor Flacks wears bothers him. Like in James Joyce's story *Two Gallants* Professor Flacks represents a colonial figure through the representation of university. He uses his intellectual status as a tool to fight the anti-intellectualism of Heffernan. Heffernan is imprisoned in his Irish small mind. The professor through his degree of knowledge and intellectualism is like the busker of Joyce's story playing on his students. This busker therefore is not playing with

¹¹⁵ Ibid, p. 1025

his harp but playing upon a passive Ireland whose men's lack of self-esteem manifests in an astringent anti-intellectualism.

The story is thus an intra textual dialogue. Fitzpatrick is too lazy. Trevor seems to say that he accepts everything given to him. He is a paralyzed character whose identity is not homogeneous but complex. Trevor's characters may be remnants of colonial subjugation that they form a national and an individual identity.

Trevor also attempts to portray 'woman' as a means of exploitation. The "maid" in *Two More Gallants* is used for prostitution. And this exploitation results from a diverted aggression against the prevailing cultural and political status quo¹¹⁶. In one of his lectures in James Joyce's Society, Professor Flacks introduced Joyce's short story *Two Gallants* to his audience. When he finishes the story, a woman near Fitzpatrick said:

it was extraordinarily moving that the ill-used servant girl was an offstage character, should bear no grudge so many years after¹¹⁷

However, the grudge of this woman according to Trevor was borne by her all her life. It is in this society where people precisely this woman 'the slavey' become victim and are ill-treated and marginalized. It is the deception of this environment that the ill fated Irish are humiliated. Trevor tries to gesture how contemporary Ireland still serves as an updated commentary on the legacy of Ireland colonial experience.

As a symbol of superiority and colonial pride, professor Flacks, as he assumes the class maid would not have read the story. As an illiterate and a powerless woman, she would hardly know about literature and about this story in particular. On the historical and the social level, Professor Flacks is blaming an Irish citizen because of her ignorance and her social class level as well. The maid is poor because of the way things are in Ireland. Trevor wants to say that the past is repeating itself. When symbolizing the 'slavey' of James Joyce's *Two Gallants*, into the 'maid' in *Two More Gallants*, Trevor wants to say that Dublin of the 1916 is like Dublin of the 1990's. It means that of course, the nation has changed economically and almost socially, but at the level of history, it is all the same

¹¹⁶ Howard, Ben, *A Voice of Restraint: the Short Fiction of William Trevor*, the Washington and the Lee University Review, 2001, 51:4, 164-86

¹¹⁷ *Two More Gallants*, 1031

The past is still the past, and to get rid of the habitual Irish values of the society is a hard target. In another fashion, the past of the Dubliners is still following their present and when the past is rooted in the present, it will be despised and confining. When Fitzpatrick sits and watches the cricket game, and when Heffernan accepts the oppressions of his professor; and when the maid accepts to be an exploited prostitute, the past refuses to be the past. It still represents a burden in Ireland even in the era of a focused modernity and globalization and which therefore pushed Ireland to be at war with itself; trying to look for its identity in an archaic atmosphere.

All in all, Trevor's depiction of contemporary Dublin and its citizens shows the present image of Ireland's harsh colonial experience. The Irish never forget the past. They are divided between their history and their contemporary life. Through *Two More Gallants*, the reader can see that the Irish present is something that has already occurred. And with the presence of the historical past in Ireland, makes it difficult for the Irish to assemble a pure Irish national identity. Therefore, William Trevor like James Joyce depicts how far the distance is between the Irish and their homeland. This alienation indicates not only how much Ireland's colonial past continues to promote a sense of cultural submissiveness for some Irishmen, but also how a constricted nationalist ethos contributes to a general sense of "apathy and defeatism".

IV . 3. 2 William Trevor and the Voice of the Past in *Felicia's Journey* (1994)

Different critics make a remark upon William Trevor's 'peculiar' view of Ireland. It seems that Trevor's Ireland, in novels or short stories are set in contemporary times, owes more to the backward social and cultural environment of the 1930's and 1940's than to the new age liberated spirit of the 1990's and the new century.

Ireland became fixated in the imagination of William Trevor. This is due to the realities and the experiences that he knew before exiling himself to England in the late 1950's. According to Fitzgerald Hoyt, Trevor's Ireland is:

"The rural and small town Ireland, a bleak place where people endure life rather than live it; a place of loneliness, frustration and undramatic suffering. Timeless, except in its details, its moral

climate remains constant weather its people live in the 1940's or 1990's" (1999. P139).

William Trevor is one of the magnificent contemporary Irish writers and playwright. And usually recognized as one of elder statesmen of the Irish literary world. Over the course of his literary career, he has written several shorts stories and novels for which he is best known. In both his stories and novels, Trevor manages to shed light on the dark corner of the Irish society. *Felicia's Journey* (1994) is one of Trevor's novels that depicts the world of the homeless.

The story is about Felicia, a seventeen Irish girl from a strongly conservative republican society. After having lost her job as the local meat canning factory, she finds herself forced to stay at home and look after her two brothers, grandmother and her widowed father. Felicia becomes intimate with an Irish boy named Johny who succeeds to seduce the young naive and impulsive Felicia. The Irish boy leaves the country to England where he ostensibly works leaving Felicia pregnant and with no forwarding address. When the family discovers her secret, her father suspects Johny is actually joining the British Army and thus, a traitor to his own. Because of this scandal, and her father's conservative mentality, Felicia is tossed out of the house leaving her family and rural village and goes off to England searching for her lover, having nothing about him just he works in a lawnmower factory in the Midlands.

Felicia's journey starts when she crosses the Irish Sea and arrives at the English Midlands in the Industrial city of Birmingham, this place where Felicia believes that Johny is working. This area lets Felicia encounter Mr Hilditch, an outwardly decent man who comes to Felicia's rescue. The benevolent Mr Hilditch offers her help, food and shelter. But the reader slowly discovers that Mr Hilditch is not a good man, rather he is a monster and has a dark side. He actually wants to add Felicia to his collection of girls in his "Memory Lane", in his back garden.

Trevor tries to introduce Mr Hilditch through taking the reader into the recess of his mind allowing him/her to see what Felicia initially fails to observe, the cunning that is masked by his geniality. Trevor explores she darker side of the human psyche. And in the

mind of Hilditch, it is dark. The writer in taking his readers to the minds of his characters tries to show that these characters can achieve a connection with each other.

The end of the story is unhappy for Felicia. Her journey results in heartache for those around her. Her father becomes heart sick, her lover Johnny is lying on the ground after being beaten by Felicia's brothers. Mr Hilditch, becomes insane. And Felicia at the end returns to the streets where she becomes alone and homeless but liberated from the betrayal of Johnny, the over control of her father and most of all from Mr Hilditch.

Trevor's *Felicia's Journey* is a novel that gives voice to a deep disquiet about the prevailing atmosphere of contemporary society. It belongs to the dominant standard of Irish fiction in the 1990's. Through reading, at first glance, it may seem that it is a novel about a family and a social betrayal. However, it is a profound novel within which subjects of individual and collective identities, as well as the view of catholic conservative Ireland that stifled its people's liberty can be analyzed.

The question of Irish identity in this novel is linked with the past. In the case of the Irish, national identity can be re-defined due to historical circumstances. When a nation attempts to redefine itself, it looks to the past and its history. It searches for all the unique stereotypical elements through which a nation can express its statehood and affirm its national identity.

William Trevor is always seen as a contemporary writer and at the same time a traditionalist. His obvious and abiding influence is that of James Joyce's works. In terms of lived experience both writers are Irish and look at Ireland with a critical point of view and from an emotional distance. Both of them worry about Ireland and its moral condition. Like Joyce, Trevor also writes of "human situations, in which characters move towards a revelation of a character's soul.

Trevor in his novel vehicles the aspect of the Irish past and history. He is always fascinated by the past and its events. He gives voice to the Irish history in his fiction because for him, the historical environment affects the behaviour of the person. It is with this past that Ireland can know its future. In her recent study on Trevor's fiction, Mary Fitzgerald-Hoyt once argues:

“His fiction touches the pulse of current preoccupations with identity, how to Interpret history, how to square Ireland’s past within Ireland’s future”¹¹⁸

For Fitzgerald Hoyt, Trevor’s increasing concern with the past and with Irish identity manifested in his subversion of nationalist stereotypes of women and his examination of the impact of Ireland’s postcolonial history.

In a small Munster town at the beginning of the 1990’s Felicia’s life leads her to a diminished personal opportunities. Her dream in her small conservative Irish village crushed by social environment based on blind acceptance of a patriarchal moral catholic orthodoxy. In the case of *Felicia’s Journey*, acceptance and adherence to the heroes of the Easter Rising of 1916, and also of the subsequent national revolution represents a source of oppression such loyalty to catholic nationalism and to Eamon de Valera’s dream of Ireland is represented in the novel in Felicia’s father when he worships his own grand-mother, whose husband had died of a month for Ireland’s freedom, leaving her pregnant:

Honouring the bloodshed there had been, the old woman outlived the daughter that was born to her, as well as the husband that daughter had married, and the wife of their only son. And when she outlived her own rational thought, Felicia’s father honoured the bloodshed on his own: regularly in the evenings he sat with his scrapbooks of those revolutionary times, three heavy volumes of wallpaper pattern books that Multilly of the hardware had let him have when their contents were out of date ... The wallpaper scrapbooks, Felicia’s father believed, were a monument to the nation and a brave woman’s due, a record of her sacrifice’s worth¹¹⁹

This idea of the father seems fanatical in the Ireland of the 1990’s Felicia’s father and his grandmother stand for a heroic and a mythic past that burdens Felicia and Ireland

¹¹⁸ Fitzgerald, Hoyt, Mary, *William Trevor : Re-imagining Ireland*, Dublin, the Liffey Press Gibbon, 1996, p. 205

¹¹⁹ William, Trevor, *Felicia’s Journey*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1994, p. 25-26

that she will have to shed in order to progress. The image of the great grandmother and of the father functions effectively as agents of surveillance that sends Felicia into guilt.

Furthermore, Felicia's absence of good opportunities in Irish land and the economic depression that are portrayed in the novel are before the Celtic Tiger in Ireland. In Ireland, the late 1980's and the very beginning of the 90's were marked by economic depression, unemployment and an increased number of emigration. Luke Gibbon said :

The chronic unemployment, the Granard tragedy, the Kerry babies controversy, the demoralization in the aftermath of the abortion and divorce referenda, the growth of a new underclass, the reappearance of full-scale emigration, the new censorship mentality and, not least, the moving statues, constituted a return of the repressed for those intent on bringing Ireland into the modern world. If a Rip Van Winkle fell asleep in the 1950s and woke up in 1988, he could be forgiven for thinking that nothing had changed in between¹²⁰

Therefore, Trevor tries to depict the reality of Ireland in the 1990's. Felicia finds herself at a home that is governed by her autonomous conservative father. She cannot achieve the aims she sets for herself. She feels herself tied with the opposed family traditions. Felicia wants to err her soul in looking for her lover. And it is out of Ireland that she can accomplish her goal, where she finds her freedom. This freedom also means that she has to escape from a society that is full of limitations.

Trevor in his narrative wants to shed light on the miserable Ireland that pushed its people to escape or to die as well. It is a society where simultaneously, an underclass poverty, prostitution and drugs become visible. In his Dickenson description of the Irish political and economic situation of the Ireland of the 1990's, Trevor wants to say that even at this time of modernity; Ireland still represents a depressed environment to its people. For this, Trevor portrays Felicia's Irish town as follows :

The moment is still vivid when she reaches the outskirts of the town that that love has brought her to. Dark-skinned shopkeepers are closing their small premises ... The houses that separate these

¹²⁰Gibbons, Luke, *Transformations in Irish Culture*. Cork: Cork UP; 1996, p. 83

solitary stores from one another are drab; discoloured concrete is dominant, the metal of skimpy windowframes rusting through its covering of paint. The prevalence of litter continues, blown in from the road or spilt out of dustbins, accumulating on a small expanse in front of each of the shops ¹²¹

Furthermore, Trevor attempts to show the relationship with the family. He demonstrates the way the fathers became or he is allowed to be tyrant. When he places family life in the centre of the narrative, the writer tries to criticise the damaging effects of the catholic discourses on families and on the lives of women. Felicia's tyrannical father is one of the factors that drives her daughter to remorse and guilt and which sends her away to escape.

As a setting, the image of the rural Ireland is portrayed as an opposition with the urban. Life in this Ireland is seen as an imprisonment on a symbolic level, people wants to escape from a society governed by rules and strict principles towards and openness and explore further to London. Trevor portrays Felicia's family as analogous of the Republic of Ireland. This is, in fact a method that enables him to see the notion of family that Eamon de Valera based his vision on the new country, to expose it as a site of oppression, conflict and division. It permits him to show the secret psychologies that the Republic and its ideas has brought to the country. Therefore Felicia emerged from a historical context in which her relationship to it is unmediated. It means that the story reveals an image of oral tradition of the Irish . Felicia comes from a place where the father still retells his stories from history and repeats them verbally. Her grandmother also is always speaking Irish and always quoting de Valera's speeches, and this is an Irish in fact an Irish tradition. Trevor writes:

All her life, for as long as Felicia could remember, she had been shown...newspaper clipping, photographs, and copies of documents that had been tidily glued into place. At the heart of the statement they made, the ancestors of the whole ciollction. Her father had many times repeated to her- was the combined obituary of the Three local patriots ... Next in importance ...a handwritten copy of Patrick

¹²¹ *Felicia's Journey*, p. 18

proclamation of provisional government...columns of newsprint told of the Easter Rising... Mass cards...letters...an article about the old penal laws... Patrick Pearse's cottage in Connemara was on postcard; on another the tricolours fluttered from a flagstaff. The Soldiers Song in its entirety was there.¹²²

In another fashion, the novel highlights William Trevor's evocation of British- Irish power relationship. The character of Mr Hilditch who creates for himself an identity based on the stories of the British imperial colonization of Ireland. These stories shaped his life and desires since he was a boy in the 1950's just as the stories of the Irish revolutionary heroism shaped those of Felicia's father. And it is due to these tales that Mr Hilditch forms an imperial power over Felicia, and the other girls. In her analysis of the novel, Mary Fitzgerald describes this point in the following passage:

At once monstrous and pathetic, Hilditch has constructed his sense of self around England's imperial past. His vast home is located at 3 Duke of Wellington Road- named for the Irish born yet Irish- scorning military defender of British colonial interest. The house itself...once to a tea merchant, and its furnishing include "ivory trinket", 'second hand Indian carpets', elaborately framed portraits of strangers,' and 'twenty mezzotints of south African military scenes'¹²³

Additionally, Trevor deepens his novel through pointing out how much Felicia has been a victim of the Irish nationalist myths about woman. Felicia has to face the reality of being imprisoned at home. When the country was in a depressed situation, the factories started to shut down. And when the factory where Felicia works closed up, her only choice is to become a domestic woman. She finds herself a servant for her oppressed father, brothers, and her bedridden great grandmother. Although her father is so passionate about Ireland's struggle for independence, he is an oppressed man when it comes to his

¹²² *Felicia's Journey*, p. 26

¹²³ Fitzgerald, Hoyt, *Felicia's Two journeys : From Dcolonization to Recolonization*, International Association for the Study of Irish literature, Dublin, 2001

daughter's liberation. Thus, in Ireland Felicia is under the oppression of her father and the stern morality of her brothers. But her state in England is not better than that of Ireland. This is because as Fitzgerald sees, she "is in effect colonized by Hilditch" as a territory. Hilditch describes his feeling in colonial terms as: "... he awakes with the eccentric notion that the Irish girl has invaded him"¹²⁴

At the end of the story, when Felicia prepares to escape, she participates in the collapse of Hilditch's colonial identity. Felicia finds herself at Notting Hill, London, under the statue of "Charles James Niper", a British General and a conqueror of India of the 19th century. He is the kind of man Hilditch longed to be. At the end, she is at peace, but becomes homeless and penniless. She does not want to return to Ireland: why go home? There is still a harsh and needy father, there, whom she remembers as "standing still as a statue for the soldier's Song"

What can be said is that Trevor tries to explore the Irish search of identity in a post-imperial Britain. This is to say that Ireland still represents a narrow environment for the re-birth of Irish identity. The love of the land becomes hard for Felicia. Even when free of colonial interference, Ireland still has to struggle with her past history. Ireland therefore, can not handle this past. Through Mr Hilditch, the Irish past and the British successive oppression never left the memory of the Irish people. Hence, the Irish need to cope with their situation, for the nation's freedom of memory and thoughts is important in order to be able to place itself in the world and assert its national identity. At the end of the story, Felicia enjoys her life in the community of the homeless. She is then an emblematic of the migrant figure, embodying her capacity to throw off her inherited postcolonial identity and wishing to create a new hybrid self.

¹²⁴ *Felicia's Journey*, p. 179

IV . 4 Conclusion

The new understanding of the term nation has a visible form in the context of late twentieth century and the beginning of the 21st century. Within a new context of globalization, the appearance of multicentre nations, the disappearance of the British Empire, the crisis of the Church's authority have; the traditional view of identity and Irish nation transformed into a new sphere.

As a result, the new ways in which Irish Identity will be articulated today and in the future is determined by a combination of the past and the creative imagination of contemporary Irish writers in Ireland and in the Irish Diaspora. In other words, the writer has to accept his historical reality and accommodate himself to the prevalent situation.

Contemporary Irish fiction has a remarkable contribution in discussion the issue of identity. Current interpretation of the term varies in order to accommodate to the age of globalization and focused modernity. William Trevor takes his part and attempted to discuss this identity from his private angle. As a post modern writer, Trevor looks to the land of his birth as an atmosphere of repression and limitation.

He often portrays his characters as oppressed people in an Ireland that although it reaches the highest levels of advancement, it remain backward in the mentality it embrace and the values it absorbed from its past history. In his two literary work that are discussed earlier, William Trevor, shows that in order Ireland establish a pure national identity, it has to overthrow and forget about the tragic past that occurs in every aspect of his characters' lives.

General Conclusion

Ireland in its literary tradition is significantly related to the Irish question of national identity. Irish fiction in this part played a pivotal role in envisaging this question. The relationship between literature and national identity is particularly strong in Ireland. Irish writing has been traditionally a part of an Irish literary system in which the search of identity has been prominent.

From the early writers of the literary Revival to the great authors of exiles to the contemporary, the quest for Ireland and Irishness has been a constant feature. James Joyce who cannot be described as the advocator voice of Irish identity wrote through *The Dead* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* his definitive sentiments towards his native country. He effectively sounded loud and clear that he wanted to leave the ideological, cultural and religious pressures of society in order to express himself in his own private world. His presence in Ireland and his daily acquaintance with the Irish unwanted structures of the Irish society forced him to assemble an identity that was fixed and limited within a pre-given framework. He wanted to let his soul transcend not only beyond the actual experience of the physical world of an ideal view of life but also beyond the fixity of the traditional perception of identity. In his conclusion of *The Portrait* Stephen proclaims: “welcome, O life! I go to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience and to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated consciousness of my race” (*Portrait*, p. 292). It appears that Joyce is presenting his major argument for the development of Irish identity. It is that the Irish were in a need to create a new national identity that escapes the nets of the Irish society and the trappings of the past; and instead look to the future of their nation. Importantly, Joyce maintains that it is only when Ireland releases its historical past that it can be welcomed with the great nations.

In a similar vein, Joyce’s partner Samuel Beckett who is considered as one of the last modernists had always assembled an ambivalent view toward his native country. Ireland was for Beckett as a target to ignore and to rebel against. The mentality of the Irish and the Irish Free State in 1930’s could not fit his talented character. Beckett in fact sought for the universal in all its forms. Through his fiction, he shows to the readers that the conditions under which the ‘small minded catholic country’ was living could never give him the grade

he deserved. His satire on Ireland, its political system and the ideals this system had brought about the traditionalist Ireland (de Valera) meant that he could not accept for himself a national identity that is predetermined and inherited from the past. Beckett's cosmopolitan person represented a harsh opposition to the traditional notion of Irish identity and to the systems that brought this notion into being. Samuel Beckett is what Richard Kearney argues in *Philosophical aesthetics and Samuel Beckett* that he is absolutely modern 'to the extent that he compels literature to reflect upon itself, and to question the conditions of its own possibility'

To some varying degrees, the Irish national identity that was characteristically ignored and rejected by James Joyce and Samuel Beckett for a long time, has been undermined into a true modern and globalized Ireland. With the significant shift in the Irish society and the advancement of economy and technology in a globalized Ireland, the conception of Irish identity tries to be redefined in correspondence to the nature of Ireland in current times. William Trevor tries to signal the complexity of Irish identity through the representation of the past's experiences. It means that the Irish are still tied with the events of that past that remains as an obstacle to conceive new forms of identity. In contemporary fiction, the past history never lets the Irish nation create an authentic sense of itself. The past in the words of Joyce, is still be a "nightmare" .

In sum, what can be said about the current subject is that the Irish quest for national identity is like the quest for the **Holy Grail**. It is a dream that the Irish tried very hard to find and achieve but, they never will because of the complexity of the Irish mentality and the presence of the past and its memories which represents an obstacle in the creation of a productive national identity.

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