Literature against Paralysis in Joyce and His Counterparts

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The Other Dubliners

Edited by

Márcia Lemos

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

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To Mia and Gus
Always

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INTRODUCTION

MÁRCIA LEMOS

In 2009 Dublin submitted its application to UNESCO's Creative Cities Network (UCCN),[1] established five years before, in 2004, with the aim of fostering connections with and between cities that elect creativity as the core of their development plans to be implemented both locally and in their international relations. UCCN covers seven creative fields, but Dublin's application—one hundred and twenty pages long—aspired to the "Literature" designation as "it is without doubt that Ireland's capital has literature in its blood."[2]

UNESCO City of Literature since 2010, Dublin easily met the criteria for the distinction not only for the very favourable conditions provided to readers and writers—"its vibrant book and publishing trade; its thriving contemporary literary scene; its libraries and its cultural, arts and social scene"[3]—, but above all for its rich heritage best epitomised by James Joyce[4] who was able to forge a literary Dublin which can no longer be separated from the "real" one: "Literature is in the fabric of Dublin, in its river—Joyce's Anna Livia, in its conversation and its very cobblestones."[5]

Indeed, despite his, at times, blatant criticism, Joyce revealed true devotion towards his birth city as he wrote of nothing but his "Dear Dirty Dublin"[6] his entire life. In doing so, he necessarily wrote about Dubliners too, but his words were not always kind to his fellow countrymen. Indeed, in his debut collection of short stories revealingly titled *Dubliners* (1914),

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[1] "Creative Cities Network," UNESCO, accessed April 19, 2022, https://en.unesco.org/creative-cities/content/about-us.

[2] "Dublin UNESCO City of Literature," Dublin City of Literature, accessed April 19, 2022, http://www.dublincityofliterature.ie/about/dublin-unesco-city-of-literature/.

[3] "Dublin UNESCO City of Literature: Submission by the City of Dublin, Ireland," October 2009, accessed April 19, 2022, http://www.dublincityofliterature.net/wp-content/uploads/Dublin-UNESCO-Bid.pdf, 10.

[4] James Joyce was born in Dublin, in 1882, and died in Zurich, in 1941.

[5] *Idem*.

[6] James Joyce, *Ulysses* (London: Penguin Classics, 2000 [1922]), 183.

Joyce painted a very bleak portrait of Dublin's inhabitants trapped in a world of paralysis, fetched by the oppressive powers of religion and colonisation, generating an endless cycle of violence, either explicit or latent.[7]

In *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), Stephen Dedalus, Joyce's alter ego, expresses his wish to break free from the overwhelming forces that restrained Dubliners and "forge in the smithy of [his] soul the uncreated conscience of [his] race."[8] Dedalus's plan first found its materialisation in *Ulysses* (1922), whose 100th anniversary is currently (2022) being celebrated by readers and scholars around the world. In the novel, Dublin rivals the main characters (Stephen Dedalus, once again, and the famous couple, Molly and Leopold Bloom), and it becomes one (if not the) protagonist, which may actually justify the epithet "exhibitionististicicity."[9] As Joyce himself avowed, his ambitious design in *Ulysses* included the literary crystallisation of the city's every detail for posterity:

> It should be recalled that at the time he told Frank Budgen that he desired "to give a picture of Dublin so complete that if the city one day suddenly disappeared from the earth it could be reconstructed out of [his] book," much of the city centre had recently been destroyed during the 1916 Easter Rising.[10]

Thus, *Ulysses* became a memorable literary site of memory, as Pierre Nora would put it,[11] built by a voluntarily Dublin exile for Joyce left Ireland at a young age to return only a very limited number of times:

> once to attend his mother's funeral […]; once in order to serve as manager of the first motion picture theatre in Ireland […]; and once to immerse himself for a final time in the physical and moral landscape that would become *Ulysses*. After January 1910, he remained on the Continent, conspicuously removed from his homeland, in Trieste, Zurich and Paris: the most cosmopolitan of writers. We know, of course, that he was at the same time the most insular of writers, writing of nothing but Ireland, nothing but

[7] James Joyce, *Dubliners* (London: Penguin Popular Classics, 1996 [1914]).
[8] James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (London: Penguin Classics, 1996 [1916]), 288.
[9] Joyce, *Ulysses*, 629.
[10] David Butler and Richard Zenith, *James Joyce: The Mirror and The Mask | Fernando Pessoa: A Máscara e o Espelho*, trans. Richard Zenith and Susana Sena (Lisboa: Instituto Camões, 2004), 11.
[11] Pierre Nora, ed., *Les lieux de mémoire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1997).

> Dublin in fact, writing home constantly for details of Dublin life, Dublin history, Dublin geography that he could turn into fiction.[12]

Portuguese modernist writer Fernando Pessoa has a curious line, written by the pen of Álvaro de Campos, one of his many pseudonyms, which states that one could be very happy in Australia if only one did not go there.[13] Ironically, that seems to be the case with Joyce. He was very happy in Dublin just as long as he did not go there. He built his own Dublin through words, but to imbue it with life he needed the real Dublin to feed his imagination, and, in the end, his texts have become living organisms themselves, especially *Finnegans Wake*, which, using its own words, could be described as an "artful disorder"[14] and "the chomicalest thing."[15]

Finnegans Wake certainly proved T. S. Eliot wrong when he claimed that after *Ulysses* there was nothing left for Joyce to write.[16] In *The Western Canon*, Harold Bloom observes a sense of continuity between Joyce's two last novels:

> *Finnegans Wake*, all critics agree, begins where *Ulysses* ends: Poldy goes to sleep, Molly broods magnificently, and then a larger Everyman dreams the book of the night.[17]

Whether fully awake or deeply asleep, Joyce's characters move themselves around Dublin, its history, its geography, its toponomy, and many individual concomitant real and fictional stories. While *Ulysses* still respects some of the traditional categories of the novel, presenting itself as a narrative that has a discernible beginning, followed by its development and an end; *Finnegans Wake* welcomes a radical concurrency of temporal and spatial plans that does not enable their unambiguous inclusion in any traditional label or category. The text is actually left on hold, as if it refused to end, becoming, instead, an eternal return to the beginning:

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[12] Morton P. Levitt, *James Joyce and Modernism: Beyond Dublin* (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2000), 45.

[13] I mean the closing line of a poem titled "Oxfordshire," dated June 4, 1931. See, for example, https://allpoetry.com/poem/14330359-OXFORDSHIRE-by-Fernando-Pessoa#orig_14330359,%20.otitle_14330359, for both the original poem and an English translation.

[14] James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake* (London: Penguin Classics, 2000 [1939]), 126.

[15] Joyce, *Finnegans Wake*, 334.

[16] Eliot *apud* Eric Bulson, *The Cambridge Introduction to James Joyce* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 20.

[17] Harold Bloom, *The Western Canon: the books and the schools of the ages* (New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1994), 422.

> A way a lone a last a loved a long the[18]
>
> riverrun, past Eve and Adam's, from swerve of shore to bend of bay, bring us by a commodius vicus of recirculation back to Howth Castle and Environs.[19]

The beginning and end of these closing and opening sentences only make sense when read together, underlining the circularity and "recirculation" of the text and its timeless nature since finishing it implies initiating a new reading. Furthermore, History, Stephen Dedalus's nightmare,[20] as described in *Ulysses*, appears "spatialised" in *Finnegans Wake*, transposed into, and recycled by, the city of Dublin that "alldconfusalem."[21] It is not surprising, therefore, that the identity of the various protagonists of *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* is inextricably intertwined with the identity of Dublin, giving rise to numerous and entertaining nicknames: "the new Bloomusalem,"[22] "durlbin," "Megalopolis," "Ibdullin," "Publin," or "Annapolis," among many others.[23]

Joyce left Ireland but Ireland never left his writings and thus Joyce's genius transformed provincial Dublin into one of the major cities of international modernism. Joyce's legacy is so relevant that many may be tempted to agree with Paul Muldoon's observation that:

> One could be forgiven for thinking that all of Irish, and indeed, almost all of world literature had been produced merely as […] a prelude or preliminary piece, to the work of the greatest of all Irish writers, James Joyce (1882-1941).[24]

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[18] Joyce, *Finnegans Wake*, 628. Joyce explained his choice of "the" as *Finnegans Wake*'s closing word as follows: "In *Ulysses*, to depict the babbling of a woman going to sleep, I had sought to end with the least forceful word I could possibly find. I had found the word 'Yes,' which is barely pronounced, which denotes acquiescence, self-abandonment, relaxation, the end of all resistance. In *Work in Progress*, I've tried to do better if I could, this time, I've found the word which is most slippery, the least accented, the weakest word in English, a word which is not even a word, which is scarcely sounded between the teeth, a breath, a nothing, the article 'the'." Joyce *apud* Richard Ellmann, *James Joyce* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982 [1959]), 712.

[19] Joyce, *Finnegans Wake*, 3.

[20] Joyce, *Ulysses*, 42.

[21] Joyce, *Finnegans Wake*, 138.

[22] Joyce, *Ulysses*, 606.

[23] Joyce, *Finnegans Wake*, 19, 128, 309, 315, 318.

[24] Paul Muldoon, *To Ireland, I: The Clarendon Lectures in English Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 50.

However, in "Questioning Our Self-Congratulations," novelist and dramatist Joseph O'Connor's claimed, instead, that more than simply celebrating Joyce's genius, "Ireland has had its revenge on James Joyce,"[25] by turning him and his texts (not always flattering in their portrait of Dubliners)[26] into important economic assets and saleable commodities:

> Culture is big business now. As I sit at this desk, a politician has just been on the morning news insisting that "Irish literature is one of our best exports," as though Irish writers were local cheeses or Aran sweaters.[27]

Joyce's legacy is inescapable, but Dublin is indeed the home of or the inspiration for many other literary masters, including four Nobel Prizes in Literature: William Butler Yeats (1923), George Bernard Shaw (1925), Samuel Beckett (1969), and Seamus Heaney (1995). In this collection, some of these other Dubliners are, therefore, remembered in an attempt to analyse how Irish literature before, during, and after Joyce's time, disrupts both paralysis and entropy, making sense of our human "chaosmos."[28] These talented Dublin-related writers are responsible for bringing about a new sense of literary urgency:

> Dubliners' appetite for stories, written or performed, is immense. They look to the literary world to learn and to find within it imaginative engagements with the issues of the day, as well as eloquent forms of expression with which to shape their own responses.[29]

This appetite for stories is integral to the whole of humanity, I would say, and that is why Literature is as important for understanding today's world (and its challenges) as it ever was.

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[25] Joseph O'Connor, "Questioning Our Self-Congratulations," *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 87, no. 347 (1998): 245, http://www.jstor.org/stable/30091915.
[26] In his introduction to the Penguin's edition of *Finnegans Wake*, Seamus Deane recalls an episode in which Joyce's ambivalent feelings towards Dublin and its citizens transpire: "To Jacques Mercanton [Joyce] described Ireland as 'a wretched country, dirty and dreary, where they eat cabbages, potatoes, and bacon all year round, where the women spend their days in church and the men in pubs.' Then when his wife, Nora, protested, he smiled and said, 'Dublin is the seventh city of Christendom, and the second city of the Empire. It is also third in Europe for the number and quality of its brothels. But for me it will always be the first city of the world'." Joyce, *Finnegans Wake*, xxvii.
[27] O'Connor, "Questioning," 245.
[28] Joyce, *Finnegans Wake*, 118.
[29] "Dublin UNESCO City of Literature: Submission," 40.

This collection is divided into three parts: the first devoted to short fiction, the second to long-form fiction, and the last one to poetry. In the opening essay of Part I, Márcio Santos thoroughly investigates the style and structure of George Moore's *The Untilled Field*, a collection of short stories initially published in 1903, which anticipates Joyce's *Dubliners* (1914) not in form but in its contents. Indeed, despite Joyce's negative reception of Moore's texts, both authors agree on their diagnosis of Ireland as a declining place and Dublin as the very centre of paralysis. Santos's analysis focuses not only on the original collection, but also on its subsequent versions, namely the 1914 edition which coincides with the publication of Joyce's own collection of stories.

With Andriana Hamivka's essay, the discussion moves precisely into the realm of Joyce's *Dubliners* and, particularly, "A Painful Case," whose protagonist, Mr Duffy, is an outcast, self-exiled from all human community and communion. Hamivka's reading of the story questions the limits of Mr Duffy's decision making, or, if we were to use a medical analogy, his decisional capacity. In other words, as with the vast majority of the characters in *Dubliners* (arguably with the exception of Gabriel Conroy, protagonist of the closing story, "The Dead"), the doubt remains if Mr Duffy's solitude is wanted or imposed upon (by the dysfunctionality of the surrounding environment and its forces) and internalised by the individual as his own wish.

Concluding this section, Mark J. R. Wakefield proposes a comparative analysis of another short story from *Dubliners*, "Two Gallants," and John McGahern's "Like All Other Men." McGahern's short story is part of a collection titled *High Ground* (1985), published seven decades after Joyce's *Dubliners*, but which reveals, as Wakefield interestingly shows, similar concerns towards the city of Dublin and, above all, the challenges of living in the Irish capital. The essay also seeks to explore the sense of space and time in both texts, thus contributing to the foregoing debate on how both writers render common experiences in the city of Dublin.

The second part of the volume turns mostly to long-form fiction and it is launched by Isabella Cortada Roberto's Deleuzian reading of Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*. Roberto offers an appealing analogy to understand the demanding language of Joyce's last novel by asking the readers to imagine a child learning his or her first words in a full house whose inhabitants all speak different languages. When asked to report everything in English, that child's experience would certainly seem a new dialect. Roberto's main aim is, thus, analysing the experimental nature of the *Wake*'s language through the theoretical tools proposed by Deleuze and Guattari.

Finnegans Wake is also considered in Márcia Lemos's essay, which investigates the literary relationship of James Joyce and Samuel Beckett, in search of ruptures and, especially, continuities. The two Irish writers represent two different generations and two outstanding literary projects that are often described as conflicting but are, in fact, quite similar in many respects. While Joyce favours an art of "erring" (in the double sense of "failing" and "wandering"), particularly illustrated by the main characters of *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, Beckett builds a comprehensive art of failure that includes prose, drama, poetry, and even film.

A comparative analysis of Joyce and Flann O'Brien (one of the most recognisable pseudonyms of Brian O'Nolan) is the main aim of Mick Greer's essay, which begins by examining Joyce's strong influence on O'Brien's creative work. What started as an, at times, paralysing admiration, ended up by being converted into sheer hostility if not entirely towards Joyce himself, certainly towards the so-called "Joyce industry" that followed the writer's death. Greer's text investigates how O'Brien's characters (on page, screen, and stage), and O'Brien himself, tried to struggle against numerous types of paralysis not least the anxiety of dealing with James Joyce as precursor.

Joana Caetano's essay concludes the second part of the volume by removing the readers from Joyce's sphere of influence while retaining them in Joyce's "Dear Dirty Dublin."[30] Indeed, Caetano's text focuses on Emma Donoghue's *The Pull of the Stars* (2020), which presents a visceral but moving depiction of Dublin in 1918 fighting against two plagues: the war and the Influenza pandemic. The parallels with the COVID-19 pandemic that we are still experiencing are inevitable and inevitably disturbing. Caetano's reading of the story is productively supported by the theoretical tools of feminist ethics and ethics of care in illuminating the decisive action of the novel's three main female protagonists.

Part III of the collection brings our attention to poetry with Mar Garre García proposing an updated reading of Samuel Beckett's early poetry which juxtaposes provincial Dublin with cosmopolitan Europe in a perfect blend of lyricism. Her main goal is to examine a selection of poems in *Echo's Bones and Other Precipitates* (1935) to demonstrate how Beckett's poetry addressed his peculiar relationship with Dublin, by "conglomewriting"[31] (to borrow a felicitous expression devised by Paul Muldoon), different sites, cultures, and artistic visions, without uncovering a preference for a specific national, cultural, or literary paradigm.

[30] Joyce, *Ulysses*, 183.
[31] Muldoon, *To Ireland, I*, 56.

From Beckett's Dublin, we move to Trevor Joyce's Dublin, which according to David Clark, owes more to Baudelaire than to that of his namesake, James Joyce. Trevor Joyce's city evokes T. S. Eliot's wasteland but without the human presence, being built through sites, sounds, and smells. Clark's essay analyses Trevor Joyce's early Dublin poems within the context of the poet's career, and more specifically as a response to those who, in the 1960s and the 1970s, favoured a reactionary cultural dynamic that meant looking inwards and promoting revivalism and Irish traditions. Such a dynamic arguably hindered the development of a more experimental and cosmopolitan way of creation boosted, namely, by the modernist impulse that had been provided by James Joyce and Samuel Beckett among other prominent Irish writers.

Mimicking Joyce's last novels, Part III of this collection ends with a female voice. In her essay, Viviane Fontoura da Silva addresses Eavan Boland's connection to the city of Dublin, and, particularly, her fascination with the Liffey, the watercourse that divides Dublin in two halves, and the very same river that is personified as Anna Livia Plurabelle in Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*. Silva discusses how Boland's poetry dwells on national identity as well as the importance of home, and homecoming, in creating a sense of belonging or, quite the contrary, a feeling of displacement.

The volume is brought into a conclusion by Rui Carvalho Homem and his Afterword section which highlights the democratic nature of Joyce's writings and the importance of his legacy for generations of other writers (particularly, but not exclusively, Irish)—even if chronology, nationality, gender, or any other facts may, at first, prevent us from connecting them.

The essays in this collection span more than a hundred years of Irish literature: Moore's *The Untilled Field* was first published in 1903 and Donoghue's *The Pull of the Stars* in 2020. In between Joyce happened and his influence still lasts to inspire, with or without (Bloomian) anxiety,[32] new generations of writers in Ireland and elsewhere. Thus, through Joyce and his writerly counterparts, Dublin ceased to be the centre of paralysis to become a literary hub whose "rich literary inheritance affects the present populace, their lives, speech, sense of self and their evident pride in their city and its heritage."[33]

[32] Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973).
[33] "Dublin UNESCO City of Literature: Submission," 31.

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PART I

OF DUBLIN AND DUBLINERS: THE ROOTS OF PARALYSIS

CHAPTER ONE

"BUT A WRITER'S ÆSTHETICISM IS HIS ALL": THE STYLE AND STRUCTURE OF GEORGE MOORE'S *THE UNTILLED FIELD*

MÁRCIO SANTOS
UNIVERSIDADE DO PORTO | CETAPS

George Moore's *The Untilled Field* is a beguiling work—or set of works, as we shall see. It emerged at a time of significant change in his career: "tired of England"[1] at the turn of the century, he returned to Dublin and "went through a period of artistic renewal as he became involved in the Gaelic League."[2] He did not speak Irish,[3] but "he had devised a master plan to bring himself to the notice of the Leaguers: the preparation of a collection of short stories for translation into Irish,"[4] with the aim of spurring a new generation of writers to produce literature in that language. In some ways, this peculiar project proved rather unsuccessful: despite his goal initially being "the production of 'nine, ten, or a dozen' stories to be translated into Irish,"[5] "only three" translations were granted "periodical publication in the

[1] Robert Welch, "Moore's Way Back: *The Untilled Field* and *The Lake*," in *The Way Back: George Moore's* The Untilled Field & The Lake ([Dublin]: Wolfhound Press, 1982), 29.
[2] Heather Ingman, *A History of the Irish Short Story* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 86.
[3] Despite being "enthusiastic about the Irish Language, at least in the abstract," Moore "made little headway in actually learning to read, let alone to write, the language." Siobhan Chapman, *The Pragmatics of Revision: George Moore's Acts of Rewriting* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 163-164.
[4] Declan Kiberd, *The Irish Writer and the World* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005), 97.
[5] Jane Roberts, "George Moore: A Wild Goose's Portrait of His Country," *Irish University Review*, vol. 22, no. 2 (Autumn-Winter, 1992): 308, Edinburgh University Press, http://www.jstor.org/stable/25484511.

New Ireland Review, a Jesuit journal,"[6] and, although in 1902 twice as many saw the light of day in book form, under the title *An T-úr-Ghórt*, "fewer than one hundred copies of the Irish collection were sold."[7] Moore, albeit disappointed, was not deterred: the very year *An T-úr-Ghórt* came out, he wrote additional stories centred on the Irish countryside and added them to the original or revised English versions of the initial collection to form a new one, *The Untilled Field*, published in 1903. His Irish venture, then, proved far from futile; it marked, in fact, "the most vital of all his life's 're-creations'."[8] Moore may have been frustrated in his desire of reviving the Irish language, but he reinvigorated his own aesthetics and created what has been called "the first modern collection of Irish short fiction."[9]

The accuracy of that claim depends, of course, on how we define modern short fiction. What is beyond dispute, however, is that, unlike many preceding collections of stories set in Ireland, Moore's was not a series of picturesque vignettes, character sketches or folk tales—genres that, despite their appropriate length, are usually not considered, rightly or wrongly, as belonging to the tradition of "modern" short stories proper—, nor was it a potpourri of miscellaneous stories brought together for the sake of mere convenience. He was intent on creating a collection in which the stories formed a unified whole, serving as a collective portrait of rural Ireland, and even proposed to Thomas Fisher Unwin, the publisher of the inaugural edition of *The Untilled Field*, that the volume bear the subtitle "A Novel in Thirteen Chapters."[10] This is not surprising: the financial advantage of collating short stories, giving them a new lease on life after their initial periodical run, had long been apparent to writers keen on raising their

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[6] Fabienne Garcier, "George Moore's *The Untilled Field*: The Irish Short Story at a Crossroads," in *George Moore*: *Artistic Visions and Literary Worlds*, ed. Mary Pierse (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2006), 42, 40.

[7] Pádraigín Riggs, "*An T-úr-Ghórt* and *The Untilled Field*," in *George Moore: Artistic Visions and Literary Worlds*, ed. Mary Pierse (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2006), 130.

[8] Graham Owens, "A Study of George Moore's Revisions of His Novels and Short Stories" (PhD diss., University of Leeds, 1966), 297.

[9] Richard Rankin Russel, "Escaping the Examined Life in George Moore's 'Home Sickness'," *Journal of the Short Story in English*, no. 45 (Autumn, 2005): 1 (from online edition), accessed June 9, 2022, http://journals.openedition.org/jsse/439. Additionally, Garcier claims that "he was the first Irish writer to use the signifier 'short story' in his correspondence, and in *Salve*, and to write his texts according to the rules and requirements of the genre in terms of length." Garcier, "George Moore's *The Untilled Field*," 41.

[10] Quoted in Debbie Brouckmans, "The Short Story Cycle in Ireland: From Jane Barlow to Donal Ryan" (PhD diss., Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, 2015), 54.

revenue, and they also became more and more aware that it conferred them new artistic possibilities: publishing stories together could encourage readers to tease out the connections between them, allow for interesting intertextual games and create a composite effect that the individual pieces could not achieve on their own. For creating—or feigning—a sense of unity, at their disposal was a wide array of elements, both textual and paratextual: "framing" stories, returning characters (and narrators), a shared setting, thematic, narrative and stylistic similarities between the collated stories, suggestive titles, authorial prefaces pointing toward a common artistic impulse behind the texts, among myriad others. All of these but the framing story are present in *The Untilled Field*.

From the get-go, then, we encounter a dead giveaway of Moore's desire for cohesion: the title, "a transparent metaphor for Ireland."[11] Beyond merely highlighting that the stories share the same geographical setting and that most of them take place in the countryside, it encapsulates a notion that the stories espouse: the construal of Ireland as a culturally moribund and increasingly depopulated nation. In addition, several of the stories are interrelated. A few characters play a part or are mentioned in more than one story, and sometimes the reader learns more about the aftermath of one in another: for example, the sorry outcome of the roadworks for which Father MacTurnan serves as an advisor in "A Letter to Rome," although already predictable there, is confirmed in "A Play-House in the Waste," where we learn that the thoroughfare built under governmental auspices leads nowhere. Moreover, several themes recur, including the suffocating impact of the Catholic clergy on the Irish people, the economic stagnation of the country and the consequent need for mass emigration. Certain narrative situations, too, are alike: Father Maguire in "Some Parishioners," Father Madden in "Julia Cahill's Curse" and an unnamed priest in "Home Sickness" interfere with courtships and marriages in their villages; the general outline of this last story and "The Wild Goose" are roughly identical, insofar as the protagonist of each returns to Ireland from America after a long while away, is charmed by some aspects of the island and especially by an Irish woman, but eventually realises that life there is too stifling and leaves again.

Despite these unifying reverberations—and although the proposed subtitle, "A Novel in Thirteen Chapters," suggests a rigid disposition of the individual pieces—, the selection and arrangement of the stories was not set in stone and, indeed, changed very quickly, as the table below shows.

[11] Garcier, "George Moore's *The Untilled Field*," 42.

T. Fisher Unwin (1903); J. B. Lippincott Company (1903)[12]	**Tauchnitz (1903); Heinemann (1914 & 1926)**	**Heinemann (1931)**
In the Clay	The Exile	The Exile
Some Parishioners	Home Sickness	Home Sickness
The Exile	Some Parishioners	Some Parishioners
Home Sickness	Patchwork	Patchwork
A Letter to Rome	The Wedding Feast[13]	The Wedding Feast
Julia Cahill's Curse	The Window	The Window
A Play-house in the Waste	A Letter to Rome	A Letter to Rome
The Wedding Gown	A Play-House in the Waste	A Play-House in the Waste
The Clerk's Quest	Julia Cahill's Curse	Julia Cahill's Curse
Alms-Giving	The Wedding Gown	The Wedding Gown
So On He Fares	The Clerk's Quest	The Clerk's Quest
The Wild Goose	Almsgiving	Almsgiving
The Way Back	So On He Fares	So On He Fares
	The Wild Goose	The Wild Goose
		Fugitives

Table 1. Stories from the six different versions of *The Untilled Field*

The six editions mentioned are the "original" version of *The Untilled Field* and the five subsequent and different versions revised by Moore over the course of three decades. Even if we disregard translations, the publishing history remains complex. 1903 alone bore witness to no fewer than three versions of *The Untilled Field* over the span of as many months: the Unwin edition, published in London in April; the Tauchnitz edition, published in Leipzig in May; and the Lippincott edition, published in Philadelphia in June. Although the Continental edition came out before the American, the latter does not follow the former in eliding the opening and closing pieces. Jane Roberts ventures that the Philadelphia edition was "very likely set up from proof pages of the London edition,"[14] but the editions do not fully match: the opening of "In the Clay," for example, is different, and some passages present in the Unwin version of "The Way Back" are not in the Lippincott version and vice-versa.[15] The edition published by Tauchnitz and those published by Heinemann in 1914 and 1926 order the stories identically, but most of the stories themselves have been reworked, sometimes quite extensively. The 1931 Heinemann version follows the

[12] In the American version, three of the stories' titles differ ever so slightly: "A Playhouse in the Waste" (non-hyphenated), "The Wedding-Gown" (hyphenated) and "'Alms-Giving'" (between double quotation marks, giving the title a curiously ironical undertone; it is not certain whether the alteration is Moore's or the publisher's).

[13] In the Tauchnitz edition, "The Wedding Feast" is titled "The Marriage Feast."

[14] Roberts, "George Moore," 305, n.1.

[15] There is, however, another 1903 London edition—published by George Bell & Sons—that follows the Unwin edition: in fact, the layout of the text is exactly the same in both editions, to the point that the former seems a facsimile of the latter.

1926 version, except for the addition of another story at the end of the book.

The ink of the first edition, then, was hardly dry when Moore began tweaking the number and the disposition of the stories, betraying his lack of a fixed plan for the macrostructure of the collection. He went so far as removing the opening and the closing story—"In the Clay" and "The Way Back," respectively. They are part of the same narrative continuum (hence one of the meanings of the playful title "The Way Back") and serve, in the Unwin edition, as "bookends"—an ingenious alternative to the more usual framing story. Moore explained their removal in the preface to the Tauchnitz edition, addressing John Eglinton:

> They seemed to be less deep-rooted in the fundamental instincts of life than some of the others; and I have introduced many other little changes which will make the book more worthy of your acceptance.[16]

Among those little changes, one can find not only the small textual revisions implied by Moore's phrase, which are, in any case, *de rigueur* with him, but also a large-scale structural modification, the division of "Some Parishioners"—which, in its original form, is divided into five sections and runs for nearly 100 pages—into four discrete, if interdependent, stories: "Some Parishioners," corresponding to the first two sections of the original story, and "Patchwork," "The Wedding Feast" and "The Window," each corresponding to one of the remaining three sections. This neat tweak brought the material closer in length to the other pieces, bolstering Moore's claim to having composed a "modern" short-story collection. He was aware of contemporary trends and knew that, even if there is no "official" word limit set, a short story, to be called that, must be *short*: "My stories are from 3,000 to 4,000 words."[17] Curiously, none of the stories falls within that interval (at least as they appear in the Lippincott edition), but the point stands.

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[16] George Moore, *The Untilled Field* (Leipzig: Tauchnitz, 1903c), 6. All quotes from the six editions of the *The Untilled Field* analysed in this text will henceforth be identified by the initials *TUF*, in addition to the year of publication and page number or numbers.

[17] Garcier, "George Moore's *The Untilled Field*," 41.

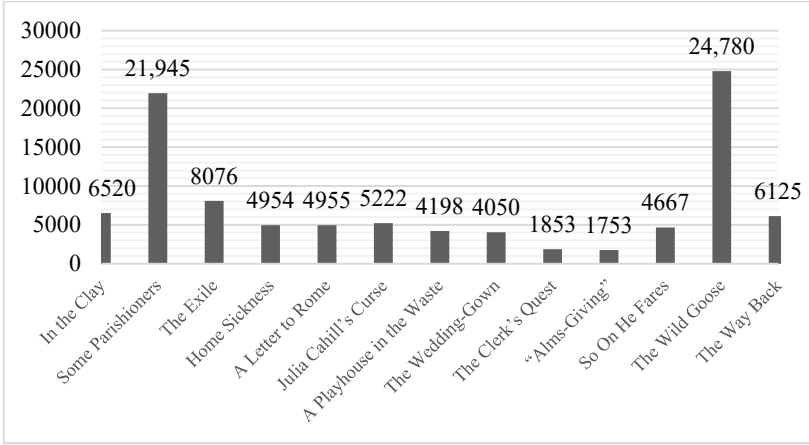

Table 2. Number of words of the stories in the Lippincott edition

Even lengthier than the original "Some Parishioners," however, is "The Wild Goose," which Moore did not divide into separate stories, although he did remark upon the resulting discrepancy in length:

> This story seemed to me so representative of Irish life that I decided to include it in the collection, though in length it did not correspond with the others.[18]

This novella is, in a sense, the culmination of the collection, hammering home the impossibility of marrying a Celtic, pagan Ireland with a pious, Catholic one. Weaving together threads from the preceding stories, it plays a role akin to that of the last story in Joyce's *Dubliners*, "The Dead" (which is, *apropos*, lengthy enough to be classed as, if not a novella, at least a novelette). With the removal of "The Way Back," it becomes the last piece of the collection, which appropriately underlines this role. Nevertheless, Moore once more displaced it from this position in the edition published by Heinemann in 1931: here, the honour goes to "Fugitives," the last addition to the collection. This story is both new and old, since it was born out of the combination of "In the Clay" and "The Way Back": the latter is a continuation of the former, as well as of "The Wild Goose," given that Ned Carmady reappears mid-way through it. This double continuation is craftily conceived, as is the idea of setting the last story in London, but the piece,

[18] *TUF* (1903c), 6.

too lengthy to be perceived as a sort of coda to "The Wild Goose," proves anticlimactic, which may have been part of Moore's intent. The problem is compounded with the lengthier "Fugitives."

Yet, the disposition of the stories is not what ultimately makes one regard *The Untilled Field* as, at times, undeserving of the subtitle Moore proposed for it. After all, most of us consider *Dubliners* a significantly cohesive short-story cycle, although Joyce also toyed with the order of the stories prior to publication and the famous division of the collection according to different life stages does not fully hold water. Moore's collection is problematic because the peculiarities of certain individual stories are more immediately apparent than those of Joyce's. There are notorious undulations in tone, in style and even in genre in *The Untilled Field*: despite most of the stories being "written in a corrosively realistic style"[19] and with a "persistent naturalist approach to character and society,"[20] others have a fantastical bent. "Julia Cahill's Curse" and "A Play-House in the Waste," with their ominous, if comical, register and their ghostly apparitions and mysterious happenings (although attributable to superstition), lean heavily into the gothic. More egregiously, "The Wedding Gown," drawing from folklore, can be classified as a modern fairy tale, even if it also sips from the fountain of naturalism.[21] Furthermore, "The Clerk's Quest" and "Almsgiving" have been called "philosophical tales, inspired by Schopenhauer,"[22] and they are indeed quite unlike the remaining stories. A quick glance at their length confirms that they are by far the shortest of the entire collection. Furthermore, the narrator of "The Clerk's Quest" adopts a blunt, straight-to-the-point comical register that contrasts with the "incremental" satire of the remaining stories. He caricaturises Dempsey, the protagonist, as an

> obscure, clandestine, taciturn little man occupying in life only the space necessary to bend over a desk, and whose conical head leaned to one side as if in token of his humility.[23]

Of his interests, we are told:

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[19] Kiberd, *The Irish Writer*, 97.
[20] Garcier, "George Moore's *The Untilled Field*," 44.
[21] As Garcier explains, this story "shares many features with the traditional Irish tale: the Big House setting, the cottage by the lake, and landlord-tenant relationships, but the fantastic motif of the *doppelgänger* which it develops is grounded in naturalist theories of heredity." Garcier, "George Moore's *The Untilled Field*," 43.
[22] Garcier, "George Moore's *The Untilled Field*," 43.
[23] *TUF* (1903a), 261-262.

> He was interested only in his desk. There it was by the dim window, there were his pens, there was his penwiper, there was the ruler, there was the blotting-pad.[24]

If Dempsey's bizarre quest at least takes him out of the city to wander "the many straggling villages that hang like children round the skirts of Dublin,"[25] this rural setting vaguely tying the story to the rest of the collection, not even that can be said of "Almsgiving," which unfolds in nondescript city streets, where the autodiegetic narrator often encounters a blind beggar. Uncertain whether he should keep giving alms to the mendicant, the narrator ruminates repeatedly on the clash between instinct and reason, the insistent focus of the ponderous narration:

> […] this was *reason* talking to me, and it told me that the most charitable act I could do would be to help him over the parapet. But behind *reason* there is *instinct*, and in obedience to an *impulse*, which I could not weigh or appreciate, I went to the blind man and put money into his hand.[26]

> So do we judge the world if we rely on our *reason*, but *instinct* clings like a child and begs like a child, and my *instinct* begged me to succour this poor man […]. I had obeyed my *instinct* all the summer, and now *reason* had intervened, *reason* was in rebellion.[27]

> […] *reason* chattered about the compensation of celestial choirs, but *instinct* told me that the blind man standing in the stone passage knew of no such miraculous consolations.[28]

> A soft south wind was blowing, and an *instinct* as soft and as gentle filled my heart, and I went towards some trees. […] And then I ceased to *think*, for *thinking* is a folly when a soft south wind is blowing and an *instinct* as soft and as gentle fills the heart.[29]

There is little to nothing in this story that seems to justify its inclusion in the collection: the moral conflict is rather unlike those of other stories; the vague, unnamed urban setting, which could stand as well for an English as for an Irish city, departs from the collection's emphasis on the countryside; and the narration, with its formal, quasi-fustian register, often deviates from

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[24] *TUF* (1903a), 261.
[25] *TUF* (1903a), 267.
[26] *TUF* (1903a), 272-273, emphasis added.
[27] *TUF* (1903a), 274, emphasis added.
[28] *TUF* (1903a), 275, emphasis added.
[29] *TUF* (1903a), 277, emphasis added.

the pattern set by the rest of the collection.

Once more, textual history helps us understand these incongruities: "The Wedding Gown," "The Clerk's Quest" and "Almsgiving," which "form a distinctive group" and which were the only ones published in the *New Ireland Review*, are dissimilar because they did not begin their lives as stories meant for the collection, but "as single pieces in London-based journals."[30] Two different versions of "Almsgiving" had been published in 1893 in *The Sketch* and *The Speaker* as "Charity"; "The Clerk's Quest" in 1890 in *St James Gazette* as "Mr Dumpty's Ideal"; and "The Wedding Gown" in 1887 in *Lady's Pictorial* as "Grandmother's Wedding Gown." Moore did not seem particularly concerned that they stuck out like a sore thumb, since these were the stories he least modified after the Unwin edition: "The Clerk's Quest" was the object of merely minor revisions, introduced in 1914, and "The Wedding Gown" and "Almsgiving" (other than dropping the hyphen in the title) are the only two stories that suffered no changes in any of the five revisions of *The Untilled Field*. One understands, then, why Garcier calls the collection "a collage of different sub-genres," the result of "odd convergences, multiple sources and influences, and of various traces left by Moore's previous literary allegiances and experiments."[31] Still, one should also recognise that the collection, excepting the deviant trio, is coherent.

This relative coherence, however, is certainly not synonymous with a lack of stylistic and narrational variety. One would assume, for example, that "In the Clay" and "The Way Out" are formally similar. After all, they complete each other and share the same main characters—Rodney, who participates in both; Lucy, who participates in the first and is constantly mentioned in the second; and Harding, who participates in the second and is frequently mentioned in the first. Yet, they are *radically* dissimilar. On the one hand, "In the Clay" is, putting aside two conversations between Rodney and Lucy in the second half of the story, mostly introspective and the narrator delves often and at length into the former's thoughts, alternating adroitly between direct, indirect and free indirect discourse to present them. On the other hand, "The Way Back" focuses on a long conversation between Rodney, Harding and Carmady, rendered almost exclusively in direct discourse, and the narrator eschews both penetrating the characters' minds and providing descriptive passages. In fact, only 244 words out of the total 6125 in the Lippincott version of the story are *not* in direct discourse. 96.02% of the narration unfolds in direct speech—by far the highest tally in

[30] Roberts, "George Moore," 309.
[31] Garcier, "George Moore's *The Untilled Field*," 42.