Roger Casement and National Identities:

Representation, Reception, Reputation 1904-2006

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Preliminaries

But they, they'll die to dust

While 'twas yours to die to fire,

Roger Casement

Padraic Colum, 1963.[1]

The question of locating Roger Casement, both his life and works, introduces a need to contextualise his representation and reputation in terms of the Irish nation-state, but also concerns the location of Casement the body — the physicality of his representation, reputation and reception. Such a view incorporates a sense of his hybrid personal identity, his execution, and most significantly, the manner of his memorialisation through the physicality of repatriation, burial and the theatre and ceremonies of state. A perpetual sense of uncertainty of location hovers around Casement, especially since his execution in 1916, an uncertainty which is symptomatic in many ways of the problems arising from any application of postcolonial studies to the Irish situation. In the introduction to *Anomalous States*: *Irish Writing and the Post-*

[1] From the poem 'Roger Casement' by Padraic Colum (1881–1972). Colum, a leading figure in the Celtic Revival alongside Yeats and Lady Gregory, was a poet, novelist, dramatist and biographer, alongside being a collector of folklore. This version of his poem appears in a folder of collected poems about Roger Casement held at the National Library of Ireland, Dublin fol. 13, MSS. 082 (2/viii), but was also published in Colum's *Irish Elegies* in 1963 (Michigan: University of Michigan Press), p. 5.

Colonial Movement, David Lloyd lays out some of the symbolic power of his methodology when he writes:

> In writing this book, I have not tried to erase the traces of this multiple location or to integrate too neatly the quite varied communities to which they were addressed [referring to the positioning of his text within postcolonial theoretical works]. Rather, I have preferred to let that uncertainty of location stand as an allegory of a more fundamental dislocation quite familiar in a culture which is geographically of Western Europe though marginal to it and historically of the de-colonizing world, increasingly assimilated to that Europe, while in part still subject to a dissimulated colonialism [...] With peculiar intensity, Irish culture plays out the anomalous states of a population whose most typical experience may be that of occupying multiple locations, literally and figuratively.[2]

Roger Casement, too, exists as an example of this experience of occupying multiple locations, both literally and figuratively. Throughout the thesis, the recurring theme and discussion of hybrid identity, as discussed in relation to Homi K. Bhabha in the conclusion, is illustrative of this question of location.

The grave of Roger Casement lies at the entrance to Glasnevin cemetery on the outskirts of Dublin, a flat slab between O'Connell's column and a republican memorial site dedicated to ten volunteers, nine of whom 'sleep here in ground forever hallowed to Irish men and women forever'.[3] A short distance to the left lies the large memorial mound denoting the resting

[2] David Lloyd, *Anomalous States: Irish Writing and the Post-Colonial Moment* (Dublin: The Lilliput Press, 1993), p. 3.
[3] Inscription on commemoration stone, Glasnevin cemetery, Dublin.

place of Parnell,[4] while a similar distance to the left, a mass of floral tributes decorate the grave of Michael Collins.[5] Many of Ireland's famous dead lie here in graves heavy with Celtic symbols and iconography — crosses, shamrocks, harps, towers and other obvious key signifiers of Irish cultural memory adorn many of the plots clustered together with their fellow famous deceased. Amidst this impressive demonstration of cultural and religious memorialisation, Casement's grave sits a little uneasily in both its location and its decoration. It seems a little incongruous that a very significant repatriation, a state funeral and massive media coverage would lead to such a non-descript plot, dwarfed by its neighbours and somewhat adrift from the inclusion of other clusters of graves. And yet this would seem fitting in many ways in Casement's journey and position in both life and death — the ever-present nearly-but-not-quite nature of his involvement and acceptance into many canons of national and international memory colours his location and reputation right up to the present day.

There is always this element of discord with the Casement story, his grave being no exception. The reality of Casement's grave being inscribed with two names (Irish and English version) can be seen to be representative of a much wider problem with reconciliation of identity in his public (national and international) reception both posthumously and during his lifetime. It is a

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[4] Charles Stewart Parnell (1846–1891) founder and leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party (1882–1918), was an Irish Protestant landowner, nationalist political leader, land reform agitator, Home Rule MP in the parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.
[5] Michael Collins (1890–1922) was an Irish revolutionary leader who was a prominent member of the Irish delegation during the Anglo-Irish Treaty negotiations (1921) as well as being Minister for Finance for the Dáil in 1919, and Director of Intelligence for the Irish Republican Army.

continuous and physical reminder of the ever-present sense of the hybrid in Casement's representation. Furthermore, and particularly relevant to this study, is the implication of the conscious construction of identity implicated in Casement being named in Irish. Although it is not unusual in the republican and nationalist tradition to use the Irish version of an English name, it is particularly significant in the representation of Casement's national definition and affiliation. 'Ruairí Mac Eismainn' is followed by 'Roger Casement' in parenthesis, denoting that Casement cannot just have one, unified name in the Irish canon, as it will not be recognised by all. This is highly symbolic of the issues surrounding Casement's location in not only Irish, but also European, history, as in many ways aspects of representing Casement will constantly need parenthetical asides and footnotes. Such a need for additional information, or for interpretation of evidence is brought about directly by discrepancies in Casement's reception and reputation in a national and transnational sense. These polarities and complexities of locating Casement within one tradition or another are here literally written in stone.

The duality involved in naming Casement on his grave goes farther than just adding to the body of evidence surrounding the polarities inherent in Casement's representation by himself and others but also, as viewed from a different angle this duality can be indicative of the contrivance and construction of identity. Roger Casement, hanged and buried in London, becomes, through manipulation of his representation (by himself during his lifetime, and by others following his death) Ruairí Mac Easmainn, buried

alongside Ireland's great and good in Dublin. From British Consul to Irish martyr, via a range of manipulations and alignments, dislocations and relocations, Casement's example illustrates the role of received traditions and active memorialising in the creation of a national figure, and as this thesis will argue, a transnational figure which underscores and sometimes breaks the binary between the coloniser and colonised, between the national and the international, and between the self and the Other.

Sir Roger Casement (1864–1916) is therefore a figure of contemporary significance in both Irish and world history. His life and death have attracted the attention of biographers, playwrights and politicians alike, a direct result of the complexities and polarities of a political and historical figure who has come to represent in many ways the tensions inherent in the concepts of loyalty, nationality, and humanitarianism.

Born in 1864 in Sandycove, Dublin, Casement was raised in the Anglican faith and schooled at Ballymena Academy in Antrim, Northern Ireland. Between 1881 and 1883, he held a clerkship position in a Liverpool shipping company, a career which eventually led him to a post in Britain's consular service under the authority of the Foreign Office. It was in this role that Casement was to revisit the Congo Free State, on the orders of the British government, to carry out the task of compiling evidence of any humanitarian abuses being carried out there under the regime of King Leopold II of Belgium. This evidence would take the form of the now-famous Congo Report of 1904, a report that scandalized European governments and humanitarian

campaigners, and led to Casement's own co-founding of the Congo Reform Association with Edmund Dene Morel. In 1911, Casement was knighted by the British government for similar work in the Putumayo whilst stationed there as Consul-General. He retired from service in 1913, and less than a year later, was on a mission to the United States to recruit support and raise funds on behalf of the Irish Volunteers. This interest in and involvement with Irish nationalist politics had existed alongside Casement's consular duties in working for the British Foreign Office, but now in his retirement his active and public involvement escalated, leading to the much publicized 1916 trial and execution by the British government for treason. From the United States, Casement travelled to Germany via neutral Norway in a bid to recruit Irish prisoners of war (and to secure arms from Germany) for the uprising being planned by prominent nationalists in Ireland in 1916. This mission to Germany was largely unsuccessful,[6] made even less so by Casement's arrest on his return to Ireland in April 1916.[7] He was transported to London to face interrogation at Scotland Yard, and imprisoned firstly in the Tower of London, then in Brixton prison. Casement was charged with treason, and during his

[6] Casement failed to secure the number of recruits from prisoners from the British army being held as prisoners of war that he had hoped, and was also disappointed in the arms haul he returned to Ireland with. Although Casement's voyage to Germany is discussed in context in a chapter here, an overview of the historical detail can be accessed most succinctly in Reinhard R. Doerries, *Prelude to the Easter Rising: Sir Roger Casement in Imperial Germany* (London: Frank Cass, 2000).

[7] Casement's landing in Kerry was intercepted by the British forces — the reduced amount of weapons Casement had managed to secure were never landed in Ireland as their container vessel, the *Libau* was intercepted, despite having being disguised as a Norwegian vessel, the *Aud Norge*. The arms ship under Captain Karl Spindler was eventually apprehended by *HMS Bluebell* on the late afternoon of Good Friday. About to be escorted into Queenstown on the morning of Saturday 22 April, after surrendering, the *Aud* was scuttled by pre-set explosive charges. Casement had followed in a submarine, the U-19. On 21 April 1916, three days before the Easter Rising began, Casement was put ashore at Banna Strand in Tralee Bay, Kerry, and was arrested on charges of treason, sabotage and espionage against the Crown.

high-profile trial, the prosecution produced what are now notoriously referred to as the 'Black Diaries'. These were alleged to be the private journals of the defendant, which detail graphically his homosexual activities throughout his consular service, and were responsible for losing Casement much support from public and esteemed figures during his campaign against the charge of high treason.[8] Casement was found guilty of the charges, degraded from his knighthood, and hanged at Pentonville prison on 3 August 1916.

From the moment of his death, and certainly also before it, controversy has raged on the subject of Roger Casement. Much of this controversy was a consequence of the Black Diaries scandal, which ricocheted through not only the public figures linked to Casement's noted humanitarian achievements, but also through the Irish nationalists. The issue was — and indeed, still is — highly divisive. There were loud and plentiful accusations of forgery, largely from Irish nationalists, accusations that have yet to abate to the present day.[9] Casement was buried in Pentonville prison yard until the release of his remains into the hands of the Irish government in 1965, almost fifty years after his

[8] In the National Library of Ireland, case notes are held from Casement's 1916 trial, detailing support from prominent British and Irish figures, and also including reports of and reactions to the controversy of the release of the Black Diaries. It is widely accepted, by academics and biographers alike, that the release of Casement's personal diaries from this period played a significant role in his loss of popularity at a crucial time during his trial.

[9] There is ongoing suspicion, especially amongst Irish nationalists and republicans, that the diaries are part of a forgery conspiracy on behalf of the British government to blacken the name of Casement and to mislead the public, even in the present day. An article which appeared in the republican newspaper *An Phoblacht* in May 2002 discusses the recent airing of the RTE documentary 'The Ghost of Roger Casement', which used evidence from the Royal Irish Academy's 2000 Casement Symposium on the forensic testing of the Black Diaries. Such forensics did little to appease the claims of forgery from the republican side, as questions are now being asked from this newspaper regarding the nationality and agency of the scientist responsible for the testing, and regarding the intentions and interests of the government which commissioned the tests.

execution. The exhumation of his remains was followed by a lavish state funeral in Dublin, before their reburial in Glasnevin cemetery, Dublin.

The Black Diaries form an integral part of the Casement 'story' — in fact, they are often the first point of reference on this subject. However, this thesis will not examine the Black Diaries controversy as it is debated at length and in detail elsewhere, and although they have an important association with Casement as a historical figure in terms of reputation, they do not offer any new insight into the conscious construction of Casement's own identity in the areas on which this work focuses.[10] Whilst recognising their importance in the overall Casement 'story', this thesis will only deal with the diaries as a useful starting point to isolate and identify some of the major themes of this work in their embryonic stages, as they are a clear and concrete example of a duality in the representation of Casement (by the prosecution and by the defence, and in either his own or the forger's representation of the man in his public and private roles), in his reception (by his supporters and accusers as these diaries came to light, and since then), and of course, in his reputation, which involves a fiercely contested ongoing struggle to either prove or disprove the authenticity of these diaries. That duality is a component principle of Casement's history which this thesis aims to explore outside the restrictive boundaries of a long-standing debate on the authenticity of the diaries used by the prosecution.

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[10] This angle is covered in various works, but most notably in biographies of Casement, such as Roger Sawyer, *Casement: The Flawed Hero* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984); Dennis Gwynn, *The Life and Death of Roger Casement* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1930); Benjamin Lawrence Reid, *The Lives of Roger Casement* (London: Yale University Press, 1976).

Of course, as more and more scholars, biographers and writers evaluate and re-evaluate the diaries and the surrounding scandal, there remains a question mark over whether the truth will ever be unveiled, or indeed whether the truth is actually of benefit to those who campaign for it. The diaries are a leading example of the reality that truth and fact can be manipulated and revised in their presentation, especially with regard to such a multi-layered persona as Casement. This thesis focuses not so much on what the truths of Roger Casement are, but instead on how competing aspects are presented and received in an ongoing quest to locate Casement within a memorial tradition.

1.2 The problem with biography

Casement has many biographers, amongst them Dennis Gwynn, Brian Inglis, René MacColl, B. L. Reid and Roger Sawyer,[11] whose works span five decades. With the exception of Gwynn, whose work as an early biography takes the form more of hagiography, Casement's biographers tend to deal chiefly with what could be termed the 'flashpoints' of his life: his religious heritage, his consular service in the Congo, his trial and execution, and the Black Diaries controversy.

That there are so many biographers of this subject is perhaps not surprising. The Casement story has all the components of a high drama: a

[11] Dennis Gwynn, *The Life and Death of Roger Casement* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1930); Brian Inglis, Roger Casement (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1973); René Mac Coll, Roger Casement (London: Landsborough, 1960); Benjamin Lawrence Reid, *The Lives of Roger Casement* (London: Yale University Press, 1976); Roger Sawyer, *Casement: The Flawed Hero* (London: Routledge & Keagan Paul, 1984).

childhood of conflict, colonial adventuring in the jungle, secret war-time missions, uprising, treason and the twist in the tale, the unravelling of theories of double lives, double agency and conspiracy. Most biographers have attempted to explain or reconcile Casement's nationalism in view of his upbringing, his consular activities and Unionist roots, as a route into the outcome of his life and his public choices before his execution (such as his late conversion to Catholicism, and the political content of his 1916 Speech from the Dock). This necessity of attempting reconciliation is a frequent point for psychological discussion of the biographee's principles and belief systems, again indicating fertile ground for an exploration of the effects of duality and polarity on the individual and on the collective. Each biography gives great prominence to the trial and execution of Casement, which is commonly used as the point of culmination and clarification of all the pluralities and contentions of Casement's life up until this point. Whilst this thesis also leans heavily on the trial and execution of Casement in order to lay bare some of the mutations of his personal representation and posthumous reception, the methodology and ultimate objective differ quite significantly from that of biography. The main dilemmas facing a work which attempts to 'decode' — or perhaps 'reconcile' would be a more appropriate term — Casement seem to centre firstly on his alleged covert homosexuality, and therefore an assumed duplicity of character, and secondly around his active role in Irish nationalism following his previously public post as British consul. Again, both issues tend to be highlighted and negotiated most intensively in a biography's treatment of

Casement's trial and execution which seem to provide a natural arena in which the biographer can draw conclusions regarding contradictory aspects of the subject's life. For biography, this point is the *dénouement* of the intrigue of Casement's life. For this thesis, it is another important optic through which to examine Casement's impact, whilst living and in death, not only in Irish history, but in a wider and more transnational aspect, incorporating wider themes of identity formation and posthumous myth-making, and their importance to any emerging nation-state or region.

It is for these reasons that this thesis wishes to mark a clear departure from biography. Far from aligning itself with a biographical study, this work views biography as a resource, but without giving it as prominent a role in the discourse of Casement's representation as is given to works of poetry and personal correspondence by Casement, as well as works about him. Distancing this work from the methodology of biography allows for a greater freedom of chronological structure and also in the use of resources. Using texts such as David Rudkin's *Cries from Casement as his Bones are Brought to Dublin*[12] encourages an embracing of the 'openness', freedom of interpretation and flexibility inherent in drama, and other similar artistic genres in relation to Casement. The inclusion of such a play makes a point about the constant re-imagining and re-interpretation of Casement since the drama text is not a final and definitive version of representation, as it is recreated anew each time the play is directed and even every time it is performed. There is here present,

[12] David Rudkin, *Cries from Casement as his Bones are Brought from Dublin* (London: British Broadcasting Company, 1974).

then, an argument for the reorganisation of Casement resources in order to remove biography from the top of the hierarchy should it find itself there, and to give real credence to other constituents and by-products of Casement's actual and posthumous life as a very useful, and extremely fertile, method of analysis of the society which produces them. The biographies of Casement are then to be viewed here as scholarly texts, which are useful for the illustration of prominent versions of representation of Casement and his reception and reputation, derived from the emphasis and opinion of the individual biographer.

1.3 Towards Casement Studies

A process of the re-evaluation of Casement's value to postcolonial or transnational studies (encompassing theories of the construction of individual national identity) has, in a few ways, already begun.[13] This seems to support a suggestion that it may be more useful now to view Casement less as a historically interesting biographical subject and more as a fluid and ever-evolving marker and symbol of developments in Ireland, and more generally, in relation to the reconciliation of historical realities with present-day modern concerns and progressions. It is productive to reassess Casement in this light, as viewing Casement through his context, in a biographical sense, is subject to

[13] A significant example of this is the publication of the papers given at the Royal Irish Academy's 2000 symposium, held in Dublin, entitled 'Roger Casement in Irish and World History'. Such papers examine, in an interdisciplinary forum, Casement's career in Whitehall, his work in the Congo and in South America, as well as his diaries, trial and execution.

limitations, but to invert this and to study the contexts (colonial power, negotiation of identity, projects of memory and the reconciliation of binary oppositions) through a prominent historical figure such as Casement is the role of what can be termed Casement Studies. Casement Studies can cast its nets wider than a biographical approach to understanding as it can step outside the national boundaries of being solely Irish in subject matter. Casement studies can come to include the issues of post- and postcolonialism[14] as relevant to European studies and African studies, memorialising and national memory as applicable across national boundaries, the role of the arts in the creation of such national memory, revisionist history, and genetic criticism. It also would address the concept of hybrid identities in relation to these issues. Indeed, the nets of Casement Studies could be cast much further in different studies, with clear routes into related modern day disciplines such as gender studies. Although this thesis recognises the relevance of Casement to such wider disciplines as gender studies, and indeed vice-versa, it does not aim to chart his development through them, but more to show how selecting a few socio-cultural optics through which to understand the subject can highlight areas of overlapping interest through the themes of reception, representation and reputation.

[14] The inclusion or omission of the hyphen in the term post-/postcolonial is meant to denote an acknowledgement of the debate concerning the definition of both these terms in this field of research and discourse. For example, according to Mishra and Hodge, omitting the hyphen indicates a move from a neutral position, politically speaking, towards a more oppositional position (see Mishra and Hodge, 'What is post-/colonialism?' p. 407), whereas for others more generally, the inclusion of the hyphen indicates a certain post-independence timeframe, and the process of decolonisation. This thesis argues that Casement studies is relevant in both studies of the implications of studying colonialism as a whole, as well as post-independence and the process of national self-identification.

1.4 The Structure of the Thesis

One of the foundational aims of this thesis is to illustrate how Casement has come to inhabit other areas away from, albeit inextricably linked to, biography and historical accounts of his life. The variety of arenas of academic and cultural interest which he has now come to inhabit are mirrored symbolically by the actual locations and stations occupied during his life and work. Such locations comprise the physical — the Congo Free State, London, Ireland, the now Northern Ireland, the USA and Germany, for example — and the social, his membership of the British Consular Service, of the Congo Reform Association, of the Gaelic League and so forth, as well as his location in social groups and with certain figures involved in his various interests, such as Edmund Dene Morel (1873–1924) and Alice Stopford-Green (1847–1929). The initial chapters of this thesis explore his positioning with regards to a combination of these stations in his life, chiefly through personal correspondence. By examining the interpersonal dynamic of Casement with Edmund Dene Morel at the conception of the Congo Reform Association (1904) and throughout its endeavours and successes, an invaluable insight into the nature of Casement, his opinions on the British Foreign Office, and the emergence of his private, and then public positioning with regard to the Irish situation. Effectively, this approach lays to rest the more linear studies and representations of Casement which may compartmentalise his humanitarian

work in the Congo Free State and then Belgian Congo and his patriotic involvement in Irish nationalism, and sheds light on the overlapping and interlinked relationships — not just with people, but with beliefs and politics — which inform each other in Casement's hybrid development and transition between public and privates views and actions. His attitudes and evolutions in this way can be traced through his correspondence with Morel during this extremely noteworthy period in his life, and from the viewpoint of this thesis, this correspondence serves well as an introduction to the multi-faceted reality of Casement's history, and of his academic significance by introducing an example of a figure who frequently breaks the binary between two traditional aspects by virtue of his subaltern status. The issue of the Casement's subaltern status as a representative of the British colonial system in consular service in a Belgian colony is explored using Gil Gott's work on Casement and Morel.[15] A suggestion of the subaltern in relation to Casement studies also goes further to suggest a representation of Ireland's colonial status, reflected by the difference in focus between Casement and Morel. The early introduction of this notion of status and its effect on Casement's work (and his value as a representative of a larger cultural or national sense of identity) leads also to the importance of the role of audience, and of retaining audience, throughout the methodology of this thesis. Casement's perception of audience during his work for the Congo Reform Association are therefore contrasted with some of his works and perceptions regarding his Irish nationalist involvement, which illustrates

[15] Gil Gott, 'Imperial Humanitarianism: History of an Arrested Dialectic' in Berta Esperanza Hernańdez-Truyol (ed.), *Moral Imperialism: A Critical Anthology* (New York: New York University Press, 2002)

throughout how national audience (or a perception of it) informs ideas of status and identity for Casement, both personally, and in his stance as a representative figure in this study.

Often it seems that Casement is treated, given the volume of biographical publications about his life, as something of a 'unique' character. If such reference is intended to establish his history as non-representative of his time, or to imply that Casement's 'unique' story goes farther than 'unusual' in describing his location and stations in his contemporary society, then it is another direct objective of this thesis to counter this claim, reducing as it does Casement's significance to a mere oddity or footnote. This is another way in which this thesis differs from biography, which tends to focus on Casement to the exclusion of wider contexts, such as his location in relation to cultural and national developments. Instead, by including a chapter dedicated to the contemporary evolution of Casement's society and cultural arena, and also to examining his relationships within this society, this thesis argues that Casement, although perhaps displaying a unique combination of certain aspects of self-location, is not outside his social context, but in many ways representative of it. If Casement is to be viewed as an anomaly, then he must now be viewed as a member of an anomalous group — but a group whose efforts and intentions were far-reaching, metaphorically and geographically. When examining Casement in his contemporary society, this thesis debates and evaluates their hybrid identities and the problematics of identity formation using postcolonial discourse in the Irish context, identifying with Terry

Eagleton's notion of 'Performative Contradiction'.[16] This offers the opportunity to assess Casement's formation of identity alongside the recent and evolving discourse relating to postcoloniality and identity formation in Irish academia.

Using Casement's correspondence with Alice Stopford-Green not only illustrates how he views himself in relation to other activists, both cultural and political, but also gives insight once again into his personality and to the thought processes which lead towards his final years and his trial and execution. This approach differs from biography as correspondence material is included and analysed in the thesis, not to track historical developments, but to show the existence of a 'presentation of self' by Casement, giving insight into his own desires for representation and hopes for the reception of his life and works, as well as exposing where Casement located his hybrid self, physically and metaphorically. The social factors influencing such thought processes are also traced, and reinforce again how Casement cannot be viewed entirely as a stand-alone figure, but must be considered in the context provided by this chapter, and more importantly, the significance this has for postcolonial studies within and beyond the Irish context.

The main issue which has led to Casement being labelled as unique or controversial is rooted in the ever-recurrent problem of location. As the opening chapters demonstrate, Casement straddles various literal and metaphorical borders of location (borders of nation and nation-state, of

[16] Terry Eagleton, 'Changing the Question', Claire Connolly (ed.), *Theorizing Ireland* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 80.

political affiliation, and of competing colonisation) and therefore fits uneasily into any one received notion of the polarities which he represents. This duality — although frequently involving more than two elements (for example, as a British Consul reporting on abuses of Belgian colonisation, or as an Irish nationalist receiving a British medal of recognition) thus complicating the matter further — and the difficulty in reconciling its aspects is representative of a wider cultural, social and political reality in postcolonial and transnational discourse. The development and exploration of this theme reinforces the interdisciplinary aspect of this thesis, as the emerging evidence of negotiation of identity within at least two national cultures reaches far beyond the parameters of merely Irish Studies and becomes more relevant to studies of colonisation, memorialisation, and of nation. Using Casement's own sources — that is, his own writing and poetry, and his own self-representation, especially in the form of his Speech from the Dock (1916) — this chapter examines how a public figure such as Casement can align himself to certain codes and practices held by a society in the process of self-determination in order to manipulate his reception and representation in the future. The process of alignment relies heavily on established tradition and its repetition, and this chapter not only offers examples of this, but goes further by underscoring how such repetition affords opportunity for manipulation and remoulding of a person, a history or a collective perception. Chosen as an example of this is the story of the Manchester Martyrs, which is an illustration within Irish history of the evolution of myth-making with regard to the establishment of a received

notion of national identity. This example is closely evaluated less as an example of historical revisionism than as an indicator of the methodology of memorialisation and reinterpretation, pertinent to Casement's own posthumous public evaluation. At this point, proof again can be found of Casement's representative value in the study of identity and its contributing cultural and historical components in a wider context than just the Irish setting.

Close readings of Casement's speech and poetry also reintroduces the aforementioned idea of audience, as well as Casement's perception of audience as indicative of his sense of status at a given time. This develops into an illustration of how martyrdom, as a recurrent theme of Irish nationalist memory, breaks the binary by inverting power. This is shown through Casement's change of status from condemned man to nationalist hero, entirely through the medium of martyrdom, and its association with audience address and audience perception.

A dominant theme underpinning most of this section of study is that of memorialisation and its role in negotiation of identity. Casement is an interesting representative of how memorial projects can inform a national identity, as he can be seen to exist within both the sphere of acknowledging the tradition of memorialisation and its importance and within the sphere of being a project of memory himself. As Casement was aware of both the time and means of his death, he again straddles the boundary of the living and the posthumous by being familiar with memorial tradition, aligning himself with it, and then being part of the memorial tradition after his death. How very

significant memorialisation is in a cultural study of emerging nations becomes apparent through an evaluation of the Casement story. The significance of this is then developed as the thesis moves on to study the notions of reception and reputation in relation to representations of Casement after his death. Posthumously, Casement triggers as much controversy, manipulation and identity negotiation as he experienced during his lifetime.

In dealing with the theme of memorialisation, this thesis uses Pierre Nora's theory of *lieu de mémoire*, but within a methodology which translates Nora's theory as meaning that Casement himself can become a site of memory.[17] This site of memory can then be manipulated in order to locate a certain movement or cause — for example Casement's image being used in conjunction with other issues he may not have espoused during his lifetime — within an already familiar tradition. This reinterpretation of Nora's theory offers a new way of assessing Casement and memorialising culture in Ireland and elsewhere.

The main aim of the final chapter is to display how the relocation of Casement posthumously illustrates clearly his importance beyond the realm of Irish Studies or studies of Empire, furthering the objective of research such as that presented by the Royal Irish Academy in their 2000 symposium to establish Casement on the world stage as a representation of the multi-faceted reality of postcolonial and transnational studies. The range of resources used in this chapter are deliberately diverse and in some cases previously unused in a

[17] Pierre Nora (ed.), Les Lieux de mémoire I : la République (Paris : Gallimard, 1984).

study of this kind in an attempt to show how far-reaching the Casement story or myths have become, and also to illustrate how representations of Casement have mutated or been manipulated for individual purposes in the decades since his death. The material selected for study also intentionally spans different genres — poetry, plays, speeches and broadcasts — in order to show how Casement's reception and reputation are being posthumously performed by others. Lucy McDiarmid's work on Casement is used to highlight Casement's 'unstabilizability', and the consequences of this in creating opportunities for such material as is used in this chapter to be written.[18] The continual possibilities of re-interpreting Casement due to his relocation throughout his life and in his posthumous history can be manipulated to render Casement representative of many emerging areas of national concern throughout the decades after his death, and the fact that he is being reinterpreted still (as is shown by the inclusion of the recent texts in this chapter) means that he can be viewed as valuable as representative of the many repressed micro-narratives of national identity.

As this thesis must necessarily deal with resources and material that stem from such wide and interdisciplinary sources such as Irish nationalism, the British Empire and debates on Ireland's status as a colony, it is vital to reinforce that the exploration of Casement within this work is very much as one of the roles of reception, representation and reputation in throwing light on the traditions associated with the establishing and interpretation of these

[18] Lucy McDiarmid, 'The Afterlife of Roger Casement', Mary Daly (ed.), *Roger Casement in Irish and World History* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2005), pp. 178-89

issues, such as memorialisation and re-interpretation. Fintan O'Toole follows on from his previous publication *Black Hole, Green Card*,[19] in which he put forward an argument that the Ireland which had been imagined by nationalists no longer exists in a more Europeanised, evolved Ireland of the 1990s, with *The Ex-Isle of Erin*, which discusses a consequent post-nationalist vision. This work explores the representations and receptions that are taking the place of the old vision in the mid-1990s, which provides a means of introducing some of the focal points of this thesis. Suggesting that Ireland has in many ways been a global society before the term was ever used, he claims that:

> It has buried memories, forgotten histories, that offer it some useful precedents for engaging with, rather than being swamped by, the new realities. By remembering and re-imaging them, it can, perhaps, learn how to surf the global waves without drowning in a flood of blandness and amnesia.[20]

So the constant re-imagining of Casement, by himself throughout his life, and by other entities posthumously, can point towards the importance of remembering and re-engaging with historical figures and buried memories as an indicator of the evolution of representation in Ireland and throughout empires from 1904 to the present day.

Of course, such discussion of re-imagining Casement's life, especially posthumously, inevitably suggests a relation to historical revisionism, or

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[19] Fintan O'Toole, *Black Hole, Green Card* (Dublin: New Island Books: 1994).
[20] O'Toole, *The Ex-Isle of Erin*, p. 22.

indeed to themes of counterfactual history developed by R. F. Foster and Niall Ferguson, amongst others. Revisionism and counterfactual history, although separate concepts, are related in their ability to open up the contingency and potential of a past event. Such 'potential' refers to the idea that a certain or significant event held many possibilities, not just the one realised possibility which actually occurred. Therefore counterfactual history deals in these possibilities, as opposed to the more limited scope of revisionist history, as it allows for the discussion of alternative possible timelines and their implications.[21] Whereas this thesis does explore the reinterpretation and constant re-imagining of Casement, it does not enter fully into the arena of counterfactual or virtual history as it does not attempt to extrapolate a timeline which provides alternate 'virtual' historical events, nor does it offer different outcomes for those events which were significant in Casement's life as the main focus of the study. Rather, it underlines the recurrent revisiting of a virtual posthumous Casement by others as an extension of his own constant imaginings across borders to indicate a constant presence of recycled myths and traditions, and the importance of that in creating a national identity. This idea of the 'virtual' is examined against Patrick Hanafin's notion of 'Virtual

[21] Both Roy Foster and Niall Ferguson discuss and develop the notion of counterfactual and virtual history as forms of revisionist history. See Roy F. Foster, 'Changed Utterly'? Transformation and continuity in late twentieth-century Ireland' in *Historical Research*, 80: 209 (Spring 2007), pp. 419-441; Niall Ferguson, *Virtual History: Alternatives and Counterfactuals* (New York: Basic Books, 2000) Further references on the revisionism debate can be found in Ciaran Brady (ed.), *Interpreting Irish History: The Debate on Historical Revisionism* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1994) and D. George Boyce and Alan O'Day (eds), *The Making of Modern Irish History: Revisionism and the Revisionist Controversy* (London: Routledge, 1996) the link between counterfatucal and revisionist history is made explicit by Diarmid Ferriture;s preface to *What If? The Might-Have-Beens of Modern Ireland* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 2006).

Citizenship', which highlights the role of remembered events and historical figures in influencing the political constitution and culture of a nation in general, and Ireland in particular.[22]The use of this notion is an important methodological aspect of the thesis, as it builds upon the theme of martyrdom and introduces the power of the virtual in memorialisation and the formation of national identity. Hanafin argues for an appreciation of the prominent place given to figures of historical significance in the constant construction of a collective identity, as their memory is called upon to represent core values of an ideology which underpins such construction. Casement's role as martyr and subsequent 'virtual citizen', and the implications and effects of this, are developed throughout the last two chapters in relation to representation and reception.

In dealing with this topic, it is impossible to side-step the research of postcolonial studies, and therefore in introducing this thesis, the approaches to this discipline need to be discussed. When applied to Ireland, postcolonial studies has produced controversial results, whose controversy mostly stems from Ireland's (and Northern Ireland's) location in terms of Britain and the past British Empire. Joe Cleary, in his chapter 'Postcolonial Ireland', distils the controversy into two different schools of thought: those critics who see the application of postcolonial studies as a 'retrograde development', and those who see it as an avenue through which to 'draw on and contribute to' a

[22] Hanafin, Patrick, 'Valorising the Virtual Citizen: The Sacrificial Grounds of a Potcolonial Citizenship in Ireland' in *Law, Social Justice and Global Development Journal*, 1 (2003).

wider body of international criticism and theory, which in turn advances 'new ways of thinking about the evolution of modern Irish culture'.[23]

Postcolonial criticism as applied to Irish studies began in the 1980s, notably so when Edward Said, Fredric Jameson and Terry Eagleton produced pamphlets for the Field Day group which analysed Ireland within the framework of colonialism and its associated disciplines. Around the same time, what Joe Cleary has called the 'seminal' *Writing Ireland: Colonialism, Nationalism and Culture*[24] was published, a work which grew directly from Said's *Orientalism*.[25] After the production of a special issue of *The Oxford Literary Review* on colonialism in 1991 which included two papers on Ireland (by Luke Gibbons and Clair Wills),[26] the 1990s witnessed many of Ireland's prominent critics such as Seamus Deane (1991), and Declan Kiberd (1997) using postcolonial theory as a means of evaluating and assessing Irish culture and literature.

A dominant section of postcolonial studies within the Irish context is concerned with the impact of immigration, but also with the debates surrounding Ireland's status as a colony within the British Empire. This problem of location within or against Britain is the issue engaged with in this thesis as a means of displaying how this can become symbolic of the location and relocation of individuals and their histories in a national and transnational

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[23] Joe Cleary, 'Postcolonial Ireland', Kevin Kenny (ed.), *Ireland and the British Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 251–89 (p. 251).
[24] David Cairns and Shaun Richards, *Writing Ireland: Colonialism, Nationalism and Culture* (Manchester University Press, 1988).
[25] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Routledge, 1978).
[26] Luke Gibbons, 'Against Time, Racial Discourse and Irish History' in *The Oxford Literary Review* (1991), 13: 1-2, 95-117; Clair Wills, 'Language Politics, Narrative, Political Violence' in *The Oxford Literary Review* (1991), 13: 1-2, 26-27.

sense in their attempts of self-definition. The contributions to *Ireland and the British Empire* in 2004,[27] part of the companion series to *The Oxford History of the British Empire*[28], all concentrate on Ireland's colonial status with regard to England. The existence of such recent debate across so many contributing disciplines makes it evident that it would be unreasonable to expect a work such as this to conclude this deliberation; nonetheless it must be situated within its parameters. Kevin Kenny's own contribution to *Ireland and the British Empire* informs the stance taken by this thesis as regards Ireland's formal colonial status, or the value of such a definition to its subject matter, which is that 'modern Irish history unfolded in the rise, unprecedented expansion, and eventual decline of the Empire; and, just as Irish history does not make sense without its imperial entanglement, British imperial history assumes its full dimensions only if Ireland is included'.[29]

Such a stance is not intended to seem non-committal, but instead to show that although there are deliberate complications in viewing Ireland as a colony (and therefore, within the remit of postcolonial studies), the role of colonialism is significant in Casement's view of his own representation and reception, and in the context of negotiation of identity, a central theme in the work. Relevant to this thesis, however, is Kenny's definition on viewing Ireland's status:

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[27] Kevin Kenny (ed.), *Ireland and the British Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).
[28] Peter Marshall et al (eds.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1998).
[29] Kenny's own footnotes in his introduction describe how there was much discussion or whether, or indeed how to include Ireland in the *Oxford History of the British Empire*, which seems illustrative of the problems of Ireland's status within a postcolonial framework, p. 1.

> Assertions that Ireland's place in the Empire was unique or anomalous merely re-iterate the shopworn theme of exceptionalism. Such claims are no more or less true of Ireland than of any other part of the Empire. Each of Britain's many possessions was distinctive, none was anomalous.[30]

My use of this definition of status is only with a view to the similar treatment here of Casement (and his history) as a figure who is not anomalous, or 'unique', but instead distinctive, and at some stages of his life and works, entirely representative of his context.

It is not possible to reduce Ireland's position within the British Empire to one, simple and accepted location. There are many reasons why this should be the case, reasons which form the foundations to the arguments of critics who refuse postcolonialism as a term applicable to Irish studies. The most prominent and problematic of these is the implication that Ireland's 'historical trajectory'[31] is more in line with that of India than with those of independent European states that were the result of nationalist movements such as Hungary, Italy or Poland. The difficulties here arise with the view that Ireland is therefore situated in the Third World, which is directly at odds with its recent economic growth and its own location within the European Union. The second objection, which is highly controversial, is that if the Republic of Ireland, its history, culture and literature is postcolonial, then the dilemma of location of Northern Ireland becomes quite contentious, as by definition those

[30] Kenny, *Ireland and the British Empire* p. 3.
[31] Dennis Dworkin, *Class Struggles: History: Concepts, Theories and Practice* (Cambridge: Pearson Education, 2007), p. 209.

six counties must remain 'colonial'. The implications of this for Northern Irish identity, for relations between Britain and Ireland, and for the existence of a British Empire are widespread and complex. For these reasons Lloyd denoted Ireland as 'anomalous', both of these reservations 'presupposed a constricted understanding of what the idea of a postcolonial Ireland signified', as they either 'assumed a narrow political focus' or held to a 'constricting modernization metanarrarative'.[32] So Ireland is permitted by Lloyd a sort of dual identity itself, or at least a double location as both a decolonised nation and a small European country.

This multiple location of Ireland is noted by Terry Eagleton, whose problems with postcolonial analysis as applied to Irish studies are well documented. Eagleton draws attention to the fact that Ireland's status and positioning was always difficult to present in a singular, defined and unified manner, describing it as, even before its partial independence, as 'that impossibly oxymoronic animal, a metropolitan colony' which was 'at one part of the imperial nation and peripheral to it'.[33] Critics of postcolonial studies in Irish studies have fertile ground for producing complications with its application to a nation, or nations, which are so difficult to definitively position. Beyond the limitations of such theory, however, are those critics who believe that in some manner postcolonial studies has given a wider scope, a world stage of comparative studies, on which to examine the development of Irish culture and literature, as this would offer a theoretical practice 'expansive

[32] Dworkin, p. 201
[33] Terry Eagleton, 'Postcolonialism: The Case of Ireland', David Bennett (ed.) *Multicultural States: Rethinking Difference and Identity* (London: Routledge, 1998) pp. 125–35 (p. 127).

enough to include not only the literatures of India, Africa, and the Caribbean but also Canada, Australia, and even in the United States'.[34]

Postcolonial studies, therefore, can be used to confine the Irish experience to that of any country under colonial rule, but as is seen, this approach runs into difficulties early on. It can also be used, however, to perhaps better effect, to locate Irish history and culture within a wider framework, as alluded to by Gibbons, of the experiences of other nations, which allows for a different, more comparative analysis of cultural development. As concerns the location of this thesis in relation to such problematics of critical theory, it is situated between David Lloyd's earlier work *Anomalous States* (1993) (and therefore earlier in the history of the postcolonial school) and Kevin Kenny's definition or Ireland's positioning as 'distinctive'.[35] Whilst Kenny argues that Ireland is distinctive rather than anomalous, Lloyd uses the very term 'anomalous' in his title, and reinforces the anomalous situation of Ireland in its constant multiple locations with regard to geographical, cultural and political domains, and what effect this has on the nation's culture.

So while taking onboard Kenny's 2004 argument that viewing Ireland's experience within the British Empire as distinctive, rather than anomalous or unique, holds value in locating the Irish experience in cultural history, this thesis still recognises a place for Lloyd's 1993 belief that the there

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[34] Luke Gibbons, *Transformations in Irish Culture* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1996), p. 174.
[35] Kevin Kenny, *Ireland and British Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 3.

are certain anomalous states of experience for Irish culture in postcolonial studies.

Such a recognition of the anomaly of the Irish population (during the timeframe of this thesis) in occupying multiple locations in both senses is extremely relevant to any study of Casement, as his literal and figurative occupation of multiple locations is the initial contributing factor to his exploration in this work, and the factor which offers insight into the formation of nation as a means of attempting to assimilate its past and its self-definition into a vision of its future.

1.5 Casement and the Transnational

This tension or constant renegotiation in postcolonial studies as related to Ireland and its history and nation springs from, as has been discussed, the ongoing problem of location. Possible definitions of Ireland as a former British colony, as a partial British colony, as European, as aligned to the United States or to India, locate Irish identity continually across borders, whether they are national, political, or even at times, linguistic. This sense of multiple locations brings to mind the definition of transnationalism as given by Steven Vertovec, as referring to the 'multiple ties and interactions linking people or institutions across the borders of nation states',[36] which would suggest then this thesis must concern itself with a notion of the transnational in relation to any

[36] This is claimed by Vertovec in his preface 'Transnationalism', preceding the introduction to Jackson, Crang and Dwyer (eds.), *Transnational Spaces* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 1.

discussion of Casement's reception and representation, especially posthumously, to underpin the argument the Casement inhabits multiple locations, often simultaneously.

Such a global location of Ireland, and of figures (such as Casement) who are continually being defined against Ireland, gives a sense of development from the stalemate of postcolonial studies into a more modern view of Ireland's place across borders, given its existence as 'oxymoron' (as referred to by Eagleton). This view looks at Ireland as 'multidimensional and multi-layered', and with social and cultural developments which are 'as tied to international and global arenas as they are to the national'.[37] Examples of this in relation to Ireland are also formulated by the tensions of postcolonial definitions of its status, as if Ireland is a small European country, it is then playing its roles of culture and identity on a European stage. The European location of Ireland is a very significant, but also very symbolic, example of how the binary of England and Ireland, or Britain and Ireland, is no longer the key debate in defining Irish national identity. In fact, as is stated by Wilson and Donnan, the processes of Europeanization in the Irish context are 'evidence of Ireland's new status as a transnational space' where the structures and actions of society, and of its politics, are 'linked in new, more and stronger ways to peoples, nations, and states elsewhere'.[38]

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[37] Thomas M. Wilson and Hastings Donnan, 'Transnational and Global Ireland', in *The Anthropology of Ireland: Identity, Voice and Invention* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2006), p. 137.

[38] Wilson and Donnan, p. 138.

Casement, and his representation (during his life and posthumously), can become indicative of a figure who, whilst multi-dimensional and multi-layered himself, fills the spaces of transnationality in an emerging nation. A work of particular note when introducing Casement as a transnational figure is 'The Spaces of Transnationality',[39] which gives prominence to the 'significance of space in the constitution of various forms of transnationality'. Naturally, the text deals with space within the nation-state, as well as the creation of transnational space by movement of people and ideas, by commercial enterprise, by mediascapes and so forth, but it is also concerned with the recognition that transnational space is 'complex, multidimensional and multiply inhabited' and that therefore moving away from a defined use of easily identifiable transnational communities in order to focus on spaces of transnationality 'opens up ways of exploring this multiplicity of transnational experiences and relations'.[40]

Such critical theory is important to this study of Casement's reception and reputation not solely, therefore, due to its importance with regard to understanding of citizenship and nationhood beyond the nation-state, but because of the relevance of this idea of 'space' and location in furthering this understanding. Jackson, Crang and Dwyer also point out that spatial focus is of importance in transnational studies as transnationality is 'a geographical term, centrally concerned with *reconfigurations in relations with place, landscape*

[39] Wilson and Donnan, p. 138.
[40] Wilson and Donnan, p. 138.

and space'.[41] This study of Casement is at its core concerned with the reconfiguration of Casement, both during his lifetime and since his death, with relation to place, and also space. The physical places he occupies in his lifetime — of note particularly to this thesis: the Congo, Ireland, Germany and England (and possibly other locations not covered by this work, such as the United States and the Putmayo) — and the corresponding reconfiguration of his national ideas and sense of self and negotiation of identity are apparent, as too are the symbolic spaces: the dock, the different burial places (Pentonville Prison, Glasnevin Cemetry, and his alleged preferred burial destination of Murlough Bay), his positioning within cultural movements, such as the Gaelic League or the Congo Reform Association. Combined with more metaphorical spaces such as theatre and poetry, the interpretation of Casement's continual reconfiguration in relation to such spaces is a central objective of this thesis, along with an appreciation of the transformative nature of surpassing the strict boundaries of the nation-state in order to achieve a deeper understanding of memorialisation and formation of identity.

[41] Wilson and Donnan, p. 138.

2.0 Political Activism by Proxy: Casement and the Congo Reform Association

In 1903, Roger Casement was commissioned, amidst growing public pressure on the British and other European governments, to travel to King Leopold II of Belgium's colony, the Congo Free State. His objective was to compile a report investigating accusations that the colonial administration of the Congo Free State was in violation of two of the fundamental premises of the Berlin Act 1885,[42] which were allowing for free trade, and protecting and providing for the indigenous people of the country. The British Foreign Office was finally compelled to act, and so sent Casement to the Congo in June 1903 to gather evidence of any alleged abuses. Casement had, at this stage, twenty years of various African experience with the Foreign Office, including the Congo. However, when he returned on this trip, he was struck by the depopulation since his last visit in 1884, by the brutalities of the rubber extraction regime, and by the stories and evidence of physical abuses, including mutilation, with which he was met. He returned to London in December 1903 to a flurry of interest from the British Press and to considerable anxiety from the Congo authorities, and produced his report almost immediately, within a matter of days.

[42] The Berlin Act was the treaty established after the Berlin Conference, which had involved European powers coming together to discuss the management and control of colonies in Africa in 1885.

The report, written in 1903 but published in 1904, served as damning evidence against Leopold and his regime in the Congo basin. This was Casement's public stance as British Consul on the atrocities of a colony under misrule. His private agitation was in many ways even more involved, as he took his place as what Gil Gott describes as a conspirator 'in one of the first and most remarkable human rights victories of the twentieth century'.[43] This human rights victory was the annexation of the Congo Free State to the Belgian state, ending Leopold's forced labour regime, within four years of campaigning. As such, the Congo Reform Association has been labelled the 'first major human rights organization', and is set out as a precursor to organizations such as Amnesty International and those whose task it is to 'mobilize world public opinion against gross violations of human rights around the globe',[44] which, given the far-reaching effects of the campaign, seems justified.

The Congo Reform Association, established by both Casement and by Edmund Dene Morel, and its legacy are attracting considerable attention in academic studies not just of African history, but also of European history, including recent discussions of British Empire.[45] Therefore Casement's

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[43] Gil Gott in 'Imperial Humanitarianism: History of an Arrested Dialectic' in Berta Esperanza Hernańdez-Truyol (ed.), *Moral Imperialism: A Critical Anthology* (New York: New York University Press, 2002), p. 32.

[44] Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja, *The Congo from Leopold to Kabila* (London: Zed Books 2002), p. 24.

[45] Some recent scholarship includes Pierre Salmon, Isidore Ndaywel è Nziem, Théophile Obenga, *Histoire Générale du Congo: De l'héritage ancien à la République Démocratique*, (Paris: De Boeck Université, 1998); Adam Hothschild, *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror and Heroism in Colonial Africa* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1998); William Roger Louis, *Ends of British Imperialism: The Scramble for Empire, Suez and*

involvement in the organisation can be seen to be of significance to European and world history, and is chosen to be the focus of this chapter as a way of firstly, establishing Casement as a historical figure of current academic interest beyond Irish Studies, and secondly, as a means to illustrate the early indications of Casement's negotiation of identity, and his awareness of the importance of representation of self.

The relationship between Edmund Dene Morel and Casement offers insight into how Casement and Morel's interpersonal dynamic, and their mutuality in private and public representations of themselves, the association, and its objectives resulted in such a wide-scale and lasting impact on European and African colonial history. For this thesis, this episode offers a case study which combines in one situation, a self-representation of Casement and a view of how an intimate collaborator saw him. This insight is provided through the analysis of correspondence and self-reflexive passages following the full life cycle of the organisation, through to the movement's disbandment in 1912. Therefore Morel is significant as a privileged collaborator in the early period of Casement's life and career (in relation to the time frame of this study), from the production of his Congo report in 1903, its publication in 1904, and throughout the campaigning of the Congo Reform Association.

The methodology of this chapter, and the focus it gives to Morel as well as to his relationship to Casement is therefore designed to show the process of Casement's own negotiation of his identity as he straddles both the private and

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Decolonization: Collected Essays (London: I.B.Tauris 2006); Kevin C. Dunn, *Imagining the Congo: The International Relations of Identity* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003).

the public in two organisations: representative of the governmental ruling position of power within the Foreign Office (so not only representative of British power in Britain itself, but in other locations and in relation to other nations), and representative of the voice of the citizens of a nation in agitating for change within his role in the Congo Reform Association. The prominence given to Morel in this chapter is the direct result of the value of contrasting Morel's role in the campaign with that of Casement. If the contrast is established between the British Consulate and the Congo Reform Association in terms of a contrast between public and private involvement in an organisation, then this is a comparison which can be taken further within the Congo Reform Association between Casement and Morel. Morel is the public face of the campaign, whereas Casement is rarely publicly affiliated to it. However, Casement's influence is distinct throughout, both in motivating Morel to keep in motion the momentum and pressure of the movement, and in advising and reprimanding Morel's tactical moves. Morel's background and mode of operation are different, too, to Casement's, as is shown by the following exploration of his work. This introduces another aspect of the representation and reception of Casement in conjunction with the Congo Reform Association and with Morel – Casement, through necessity to a great degree, must allow himself and his views to be represented through Morel as the organisation's public figurehead. What emerges therefore in a close reading of Morel and his direction, and then through a close reading of their relationship, is Casement's manipulation or negotiation of the representation of his own views and his own personality in a position

where his own public voice must be muted, where he must rely solely on his private voice and influence.

2.1 Edmund Dene Morel

Do you remember the coffee room in the Slieve Donard Hotel, at Newcastle, Co. Down, Ireland in January 1904? How we planned and plotted – and I said that if the Congo question was to be made a living one, it must be taken out of the hands of the F.O. [Foreign Office] effort and made a people's question? – and how I said to you "Thou art the man"! Well, you have proved yourself indeed this man.[46]

It is not difficult to find justification for this confident celebration of Edmund Dene Morel as written to him in a letter from Roger Casement. Morel's successful campaign against misrule in the Congo through the formation (in 1904) and directorship of the Congo Reform Association can be seen as the jewel in the crown of a lifetime devoted to political, social and economic crusades. A prolific and tireless letter writer and campaigner, Morel's drive for the success of his campaigns resulted in an incredible volume of newspaper articles, editorials, pamphlets, speeches and rallying events. Morel was a journalist and a socialist politician, who was involved in politics in ways similar to his involvement in the Congo Reform Association, throughout his life, leading pacifist movements during the First World War, and becoming the

[46] Casement to Morel 23 March 1908 fol. 8/23 London School of Economics archives.

secretary for the Union of Democratic Control, breaking with the Liberal Party after the war to join the Independent Labour Party.

Born Georges Edmond Pierre Achille Morel de Ville in Paris in 1883, Morel was the son of a French father and English mother. Over the course of his life, he gradually modified his name, largely due to a growing distance between his mother and himself and the de Ville family in Paris after his father's death in 1887. He was educated in Eastbourne, and so, due not only to his parents' nationalities, but also to having been schooled in England, Morel spoke both French and English, a skill which proved extremely useful when he moved to Liverpool in 1891 and, having been forced to leave school for financial reasons at the age of fifteen, was employed as a shipping clerk in Elder Dempster & Co. As a French speaker, he was soon recognised to be an asset to the company on business trips, especially to Brussels. This ability to speak French, and consequently to be able to read documents in their original language, was to prove extremely useful in deciphering and interpreting the 'evidence' of slavery under the Leopoldian regime in the Congo Free State. In his *History of the Congo Reform Movement*,[47] Morel recalls three scenes which provided him with material which would lead to his investigations: firstly, standing on a quay in Antwerp watching men who would not be given the post of officers in their own country being sent to the Congo, secondly,

[47] Morel compiled his manuscript version of *History of the Congo Reform Movement* and it is from this original document, found in the London School of Economics archives, which the page numbers listed refer to. However, a more easily accessible publication of Morel's final version appears, with notes, in Roger Louis and Jean Stengers, *E. D. Morel's History of the Congo Reform Movement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968). The original manuscript is found in fol. 10, MSS. 1.

being present at a meeting in the Royal Palace in Brussels with other Elder Dempster & Co. agents and the Secretary of State for the Congo Free State during which a colleague lambasted the company for disclosing cargo contents (which was made up of ball cartridges and rifles) of steamers to the Congo to the Brussels press, and thirdly, hearing on such trips stories relating to Dutch traders being shut out of trading by the Congo Free State's policy in Upper Congo, and along with these stories rumours of humanitarian abuses. As Morel himself then muses: 'Over the Congo itself there hung a dense fog of mystery'.[48]

Various factors contributed to Morel's ability to investigate and conclude that slavery was being enforced in the Congo. Rumours and suspicions alone were not sufficient. Of these factors, Morel's method of supplementing his wage probably afforded him the most significant one. Morel earned extra money through journalism, and in this way gained knowledge of Western African affairs, especially in relation to British policy. His growing interest and concern for this area meant that when the Congo situation came to light, he had a context and a frame of reference for the system and its policies, a fact which he clearly states in the conclusion of the fourth chapter of *History of the Congo Reform Movement*:

When my attention became seriously directed to the administration in the Congo, I was able to bring to bear upon it a mind in no small measure trained (though, of course, with many limitations) in the fundamental character of tropical African problems, and broadly speaking

[48] Morel, *History of the Congo Reform Movement* p. 65.

familiar with its economics and literature. The advantages, combined with a knowledge of French, were enormous. They enabled me to get at the root of the Congo system of government, organised down to the minutest rivet at Brussels. And ultimately to share in the work of exposing and destroying it...[49]

When confronted by uneasy doubts regarding the indicators he had witnessed, and the enormity of what they could possibly point to, Morel displays what can now be seen as characteristic attention to detail. Not satisfied with relying on his own deductions which were the result of the three examples previously mentioned, he researched the cargoes of Elder Dempster steamers for the previous two years, finding them to have contained largely guns and cartridges, and nothing to suggest trade. He also backed this up with other evidence, such as budgetary fraud and estimates from the cargo paperwork. It took this to convince himself of the atrocities that must be happening under King Leopold's rule of his colony, and he applied this same attention to detail in the ensuing campaign, in order to convince the rest of the world.

Morel had little intention of keeping his findings suppressed, and in a series of articles, published anonymously in the *Speaker*,[50] he began to outline his case against the misrule of the Congo, whilst continuing to amass any evidence he could find to strengthen his case. This was not as easy as might first be assumed, as there was very little public evidence of any abuses: Leopold was celebrating his colony and its produce, and firm evidence to rival

[49] Morel, p. 42.

[50] For example, 'The Congo Scandal: The *Domaine Privé*, and how it was created', 28 July 1900; 'The Alleged Development and Prosperity of the State', 1 September 1900; 'Responsibility and Remedy', 1 December 1900.

accepted public opinion at that time was difficult to secure. Morel continued regardless, using the policies and the system of administration in place in the Congo as the focus of his campaign:

> [...] one central fact of capital importance stood out to my mind [...] in bold relief. Public Opinion had not grasped that the occurrences reported from the Congo were the inevitable results of a fixed policy[...]This central fact was not, and could not be grasped because the material was lacking. That material I alone possess.[51]

Morel's letters in the newspapers continued, sparking hot debate in the form of responding letters, editorials and articles, agreeing with Morel or accusing him of rumour-mongering and fabrication. Morel also had to leave his post at Elder Dempster & Co after an increasingly difficult relationship with his employers once his name began to be associated with what followed the production of what Morel himself called 'very fierce articles'.[52] Those 'very fierce articles' (his initial series in *The Speaker* entitled 'The Congo Scandal') had only been the beginning. In 1901, Morel began to map out a campaign, a movement, which would systematically attack policy in the Congo. In the following few years he campaigned vigorously through many resources, including his own paper, the *West African Mail.* In 1903, Britain commissioned an investigative report from a consul on the Congo, in response to mounting awareness and pressure. This report, and its writer, was to have great significance for Morel and his movement.

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[51] Morel, p. 76.
[52] Morel, p. 61.

2.2 Morel's Motivations

That Edmund Dene Morel did great things in his life is indisputable. The level of commitment to his cause, signalled by how much work he produced for it, is staggering. That much is clear. What is less clear is why he had such a level of commitment to his campaigns, and most especially to his Congo Reform Association. Morel sacrificed years of his life for the Association, to struggling for the rights of the Congolese people, to honouring commitments to others involved in the movement. In an attempt to establish what drove the Congo Reform Association, a drive which in turn gave it its longevity and ultimately its achievements, it becomes necessary to analyse Morel's life, or perhaps more accurately, his ambitions.

Catherine Ann Cline, in her study of Morel entitled *E.D. Morel 1873-1924: The Strategies of Protest,*[53] paints a very plausible, and not always agreeable, picture of the unstoppable humanitarian crusader, which throws much light on why Morel dedicated so much of his time and energies to his causes. As one of the most thorough explorations of Morel, Cline provides a background to the life and works of Morel, which is used in this chapter in conjunction with Morel's own papers and correspondence as a means of giving a fuller picture of the context of Morel's work with Casement.

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[53] Catherine Cline, *E. D. Morel 1873-1924: The Strategies of Protest* (Belfast: Blackstaff, 1980).

The first impression one gains when confronted with the sheer volume of Morel's correspondence, articles and pamphlets is of a dedicated, earnest man, not given to flights of fancy or hysteria. However, in some ways it is difficult to accept that any man would sacrifice so much for purely altruistic reasons of humanitarianism. Also at odds with each other are the two sides to Morel's personality that must have existed in order for him to conduct the campaign as he did: the earnest diligence, the mention of doubts and the need for reassurance come up against an obstinate will and a massive self confidence which must have been present to allow for him to be the authoritarian voice lobbying the officials and rousing the crowds. Added to this the fact that Morel began to talk of writing his *History of the Congo Reform Movement* in 1908, before its dissolution, and the vision of Morel as a humble campaigner, driven by humanitarianism alone, seems not only slightly two-dimensional, but also quite naïve.

Cline's portrait of Morel becomes extremely realistic and credible when viewed alongside such questions or anomalies. She describes an ambitious, somewhat vain man with a massive capacity for humanitarian concern, and an ability to persevere with something akin to tunnel vision in order to achieve his goal. Given what Morel achieved, and how he went about it, this is a portrait which is therefore easy to accept, so likely does it seem. Cline tries to decipher how Morel's formative years may have had an impact upon his drive and will; a question that she points out Morel had put to himself on at least one occasion:

Morel, the least self-analytical of men, himself directed attention towards his background as the explanation of his humanitarian concerns when he wondered, in a letter, whether his reform activity 'is more than an unconscious following of hereditary and constitutional instincts? If one had not this in one's blood...would one have done it?[54]

By 'hereditary' instinct, Morel here is referring to his Quaker ancestry, something of which he was proud, although not a believer in religious movements himself.[55] Clearly he himself then questioned what it was that drove him, and this would suggest in one way that he did not believe that his own personal ambitions were the primary force behind his public campaigning. Despite that, no matter how infrequently it may have occurred to Morel that he was driven by selfish goals as well, it is still unrealistic to assume that his own interpretation of why he felt compelled to achieve so much is actually the correct one. Cline also takes this view, bringing to attention what she calls a 'rare moment of self-criticism' in a letter to a friend, in which Morel admits that he is not 'the high moral kind that can rise above egoism'.[56] So alongside the humanitarian mission of the Congo Reform Association, ego also played its part in either the creation, the continuation, or both, in Morel's high-profile work. That said, it would be impossible to think that any insincerity or selfishness that would come from a work solely based

[54] On page four, Cline quotes from a letter to Alice Stopford-Green 10 May 1909. See letter to Alice Stopford-Green, 10 May 1909, in Cline, *Morel: The Strategies of Protest*, p. 4.
[55] See speech given by Morel, which was printed in the *Dundee Advertiser* on 15 November 1922, in which he refers to the 'Quaker forebears who fought in the case of human liberty'.
[56] Cline's reference to 'a rare moment of self-criticism' can be found on page seven; Morel admits that he is not 'the high moral kind that can rise above egoism' in a letter from him to Alice Stopford-Green, dated 1 June 1913, National Library of Ireland, Stopford-Green papers.

on ego and acclaim could go unnoticed in work so constant and far-reaching as Morel's. This becomes a reassurance that Morel was truly concerned with the moral integrity of the Congo Free State and its officials, whilst gaining from his exploits satisfaction in areas perhaps less noble than an altruistic concern for humanitarian issues:

> Such dedication did not, however, exclude personal ambition. Unlike his father [...] Morel was a man eager for success. He aspired not to wealth but to achievement, and to public recognition of that achievement.[57]

It seems strange that such a hunger for success, and such a hunger for that presumably equally important, if not more so, public recognition of success could sit easily with someone as diligent and as dedicated to exposing to the world the greed and obsession of a king, his state, and their officials, albeit on a totally different scale. For this reason, one draws conclusions similar to those of Cline when interpreting how Morel managed to reconcile these elements in himself:

> He attempted to reduce the tension between his unacknowledged ambition and his ideal of selfless service by identifying the movement with himself. Thus when a friend gently criticised his preoccupation with his own reputation, Morel had a facile rationalization to

[57] Cline, p. 6.

justify his self concern. 'However unimportant I am', he explained '...I am inseparable in Continental eyes from the cause'.[58]

Of course Morel had political ambition also, but self-advancement never seemed to be the most significant force behind his campaigns, as Morel sacrificed too much, and endured too much (financially, and in terms of the time devoted to the cause), for this to be accepted as the case. Self-advancement politically could have been achieved, presumably, in easier, less controversial, and more financially lucrative ways.

What Morel may well not have sacrificed was his apparent need for praise. This need for praise must have had a massive influence over how the Congo Reform Association operated, in terms of who was involved in the movement, how publicity was created, and so forth. Certainly there is much evidence (particularly within his relationship with Roger Casement) to suggest this is true. The effects such relationships — and their role in the self-representation of Morel — could have had in the direction taken by the association will be discussed later; here the issue is Morel's vanity, which shows itself to be very influential when it comes to editing. In Morel's *History of the Congo Reform Movement*, he claims that 'to probe this scandal to its very dregs and to take action, though what action I hardly knew, had by that time become to me not merely a manifest duty, but a dominating passion'.[59]

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[58] Cline refers to a letter from Cadbury to Morel 30 October 1905 and then another in reply from Morel to Cadbury [n.d.] January 1905, p. 6.

[59] Morel, p. 65.

What he does not tell, presumably entirely due to vanity, is that this was not always the case. In fact, Morel published an article defending the Congo Free State in 1897, and further more, actually implied suspicion regarding what elements must be at work in order for someone to accuse the Congo Free State of any abuses.[60] More shocking still is Morel's summary of the Congolese people as 'the most degraded, the most ignorant, the most repulsive'.[61] Morel makes no reference to this in his *History of the Congo Reform Movement*, instead presenting an idyllic chapter of a country and a people with almost Utopian potential, which gives an extremely evocative bird's-eye view of the Congo, commenting for example that 'the Ban gala people will evoke our interests for their handsome manly muscular and square shouldered appearance, their intelligent looks and their musical instincts'.[62]

Ignorance, then enlightenment, would form an acceptable excuse to many for this turn-around, but Morel gives the impression — and it is a misrepresentation in nearly all literature relating to him — that he alone quietly worked out what was happening in the Congo, and was instantly, even passionately, appalled by it. That this wasn't the case is only relevant in how totally absent this reality is in any of Morel's writings. His need for well-founded praise and recognition seems to have created in him a careful editor, which in itself must have played a role in the choices made throughout the Congo campaign.

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[60] *Pall Mall Gazette*, 19 July 1897.
[61] *Pall Mall Gazette*, 19 July 1897.
[62] Morel, p. 29.

The last aspect of Morel's possible motivation to mention is an accolade that is ever associated with Morel and his work: his attention to detail. Instead of seeing attention to detail solely as a method of campaign creation, however, it may be possible to see it as a motivation for Morel's obsession with the Congo reform movement. Obsession is the correct word for Morel's involvement with his cause: the sacrifice and efforts undertaken in order to secure success have been mentioned so frequently they seem to support this. So coupling obsession with attention to detail could produce another, no doubt less significant, drive in Morel's eyes relating to his preoccupation with systems. It is quite notable how many times Morel refers to 'systems' in his writings — in fact, more often than not, these are the sections which, for a writer who can be quite staid, display the most bursts of passion:

> The process of familiarising public opinion with the notion that the changes gathering about the Congo Free State might not be unconnected with the prevalence of a system of colonial economic development, profoundly vicious in itself and inimical to legitimate commercial activity, had begun. Thenceforth the appeal to reason endorsed and supported the appeal to human compassion on behalf of the robbed and enslaved peoples of the Congo.[63]

It seemed to be the very logic, the very efficiency and policy of misrule in the Congo, which gripped Morel. If we accept that humanitarianism was the over-riding reasoning behind Morel's formation of the Association, it can still be suggested that it was a tendency within so obsessive a man towards creating

[63] Morel, p. 113.

order, a love of the practical, efficient and a sense of the proper running of things, these 'systems', which motivated the extent to which he worked, and therefore, the extent to which he succeeded. This view would seem to be reinforced by Cline's claim that Morel was only convinced of the Congo atrocities when he had made concrete his suspicions with the facts and figures he researched, stating that it was not the stories of mutilated natives which persuaded him, but 'the examination of evidence, the statistics of the Congo trade, which he was particularly well equipped to interpret'.[64]

Here this chapter departs slightly from Cline's interpretation of Morel, as although the facts and figures of Congo misrule were what proved beyond doubt the forced labour regime, and therefore compelled him to act, the records of his meeting with Casement show him to have been much moved by Casement's humanitarian reports. These reports and their meeting changed Morel's campaign from journalistic agitation and a personal cause into a fully established Reform Association. This in itself proves how mutually influential Casement and Morel were to each other's private and public presentation of self. Establishing one true, accepted motivation for Morel's work, even if that were ever possible, is of little consequence. However, in terms of how these small, but significant, additional motives (Morel's drive for order in trade and colonial rule, his personal traits of vanity, and his prolific writing) may have shaped his approach to his work, and therefore its eventual outcome, remains extremely interesting, especially with relation to Roger Casement.

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[64] Cline, p. 29.

2.3 Casement and Morel

2.3.1 The role of Casement and Morel in the Congo Reform Association

It was while working on his Congo Report, published by the British government, that the then British Consul Roger Casement first met with E. D. Morel.[65] Letters had been passed between them, aware as they were of each other's work, and their first meeting in December 1903 is well documented by both, but is retold perhaps with the most passion by Morel in *History of the Congo Reform Movement*:

> In Ward's [Herbert Ward, a mutual acquaintance] empty house in Chester Square...Casement and I met for the first time...It was one of those rare incidents in life which leave behind them an imperishable impression...From the moment our hands gripped and our eyes met, mutual trust and confidence were bred and the feeling of isolation slipped from me like a mantel. Here was a man, indeed.[66]

Casement had recently returned from the Congo, from a thorough investigation into claims of abuses, and therefore possessed the type of hard, unwavering evidence of which Morel was in need. Casement, in his strong and passionate belief that there could be no doubt that the Congo Free State was the scene of

[65] Casement worked for the British Consulate between 1892 and 1911.
[66] Morel, p. 208–9.

atrocities on a large scale, found in Morel a man already devoted to the cause, who had no trouble believing all that his report would unveil. Between them, with their knowledge on the eve of Casement's report, they found themselves in the dramatic position of standing on a precipice as far as the creation of the Congo Reform Association was concerned. The tension and excitement are conjured up again by Morel:

> It was long past midnight when we parted. The sheets of his voluminous report lay scattered upon the table, chairs and floor. And it was with the debris of that Report around me...that Report which, finally and for all time, was to tear aside the veil from the most gigantic fraud and wickedness which our generation has known, that I slept in my clothes upon the sofa; while its author sought the bed above...[67]

Considerable action seemed now not only inevitable, but also entirely possible with the meeting of Casement and Morel. This account of Casement by Morel shows how flattery informs Casement's self-representation. Here and elsewhere in their correspondence, Casement and Morel show themselves to be representing themselves against each other with such flattery and support, reassuring each other of their role in Congolese history, but also their reception by public opinion in Britain and throughout Europe. Any anxieties they have regarding their public image are dealt with by the other in their correspondence. They are defining their images, but also the goals of the

[67] Morel, pg. 209.

campaign, against the other. Morel is the public voice of the campaign, and Casement is the private agitator.

Although of course Morel had already been campaigning for a few years, and with growing support and recognition, he seemed to lack confidence in areas outside of policy and systems — the more rallying, emotive side of campaigning. This lack of confidence has been defined as 'nagging doubts' by Seamus O'Síochain in *The Eyes of Another Race*:

> Despite his vigorous campaigning Morel admitted to having been beset by the occasional nagging doubt. Now the doubts were set aside. He and Casement discovered that their analysis coincided on all points. They needed each other.[68]

Casement and Morel did not solely need each other for any reassurance of paranoia, or as mutual spurs into action. In fact, they needed each other in a transnational sense. They needed each other as a means of crossing borders, and of accessing different audiences. Morel, it has been shown, had been campaigning for reform in the Congo for a few years before Casement's Congo report, and was therefore an experienced analyst of administration and trade between colonies and their European counterparts, as well as a journalist who reported on such facts. However, he had never actually been to the Congo, and so through Casement, he had a portal to a geographical location far beyond the reach of most of the people to whom he was directing his campaign. Casement's physical location in Africa gave credence to his stories

[68] Michael O'Sullivan and Seamus O'Síochain, *The Eyes of Another Race: Roger Casement's Congo Report and 1903 Diary* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2004), p. 18.

and opinions on Leopold's misrule. Casement needed Morel in order to cross diplomatic borders of a kind. As he was still working for the British Foreign Office, Casement could not easily publicly associate himself alongside the Congo Reform Association, and so used Morel to speak publicly whilst he privately fed the campaign with support, money and information. Through this mixture of private and public, and the access to differing locations, both physical and metaphorical, Casement and Morel made the Congo Reform Association a formidable force.

And so the Congo Reform Association began to take shape. Although it is often documented that Casement and Morel between them founded the Association, such a view is misleading for a number of reasons. Firstly, Morel had already been planning his campaign, and working energetically on it for years. Casement only began his investigations on abuses when he was sent back to the Congo (where he had previously occupied a consular post) to compile a report. Morel was therefore lobbying the British government, whereas Casement was working for them. Due to this — an issue that cropped up gain and again throughout the campaign — Casement held himself at some distance from the Association. There is no doubt that without Casement, the Association would not have begun with such a strong aim in mind, but it seems to be more that he supported Morel, urging him to do what he himself could not, as is evident in an early letter between the two, in which Casement says he has been thinking over his suggestion of 'the formation of a Congo Reform Committee', claiming that the more he thinks

of it, 'the more vitally necessary does the creation of such a body appear to be'.[69]

Casement is not offering to establish such a committee himself, but is insistent that Morel should, with his support. The letter reiterates the point a few times:

> The one clear way to me seems then to found now and at once a Congo Reform Committee — or call it by any name you will so long as it is born [...] but there, I could write all day and I should only end with the same suggestion — get a Congo Reform started — make its home Liverpool — and you will end, I believe, by making all England its membership.[70]

Morel did so: on 23 March 1904, the creation of the Congo Reform Association was announced at the Philharmonic Hall in Liverpool, and in the first annual report of the Congo Reform Association in 1905, homage is paid to Liverpool's role and support in the formative months, alongside great celebration of Morel:

> It was resolved to form a local auxiliary, recognising that Mr Morel deserved the strongest local backing so that the public in this country and abroad should be made aware that he, and not Sir Alfred Jones, the Consul in this city for the Congo Free State, represents the true opinion and feeling of the British people with regard to Congo problems.[71]

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[69] Casement to Morel [n.d.], fol. 8, MSS. 16, LSE.
[70] Casement to Morel, 25 January 1904, fol. 8. MSS. 16, LSE.
[71] Casement to Morel, [n.d.], fol. 4, MSS. 41, LSE.

The achievements of other auxiliaries and their members are highlighted and praised; the tone of the whole report is one of satisfaction and excitement. Morel must have been thrilled with his achievement, and yet Casement was not mentioned anywhere. This was quite characteristic — Morel worked ceaselessly on co-ordinating events, speeches, pamphlets and articles: a massive pressure campaign that aimed itself at government and public opinion. Casement, on the other hand, appears rarely in the archival material on the Association, although his role in supporting Morel remained crucial, as is evident in the volume of letters and correspondence held in the Morel archives at the London School of Economics.

Casement's distance at that stage was due to his Congo Report, as referred to in a letter dated 9 March 1904:

> I may come to the meeting on 23rd May [sic] but I think it wiser to keep away. A personal controversy is brewing over me and my report [...] I think it is my duty to hold myself aloof as much as I can.[72]

This is an example of Casement's very self-conscious positioning regarding the association. Such aloofness, probably wise in the circumstances for the successful receipt of an unbiased and entirely factual report by the general public, did not mean, however, that Casement did not have a strong influence over the direction of the movement. The same letter shows in three very significant ways what can be seen as Casement's role in the Congo Reform

[72] Casement to Morel, 9 March 1904, fol. 8. MSS. 16, LSE.

Association. In informing Morel that he is 'trying to get two more peers – English ones for Congo Reform Association- an Earl and a Viscount' because, Casement reminds him, 'names always count'.[73]

Casement shows how he used his connections and his position from within the British administrative system to provide the outspoken support he was unable to give due to his own position. It also demonstrates wisdom, as well as cynicism, about how associations like this one are successful: '...names always count'. Secondly, Casement tells Morel that he will give him his news about of campaign plan later, saying 'I know exactly what they are going to say about the mutilation business – I knew it in Dec [sic] last – but I will write to give you my answer'.[74]

This illustrates that although Casement must be seen to take a 'back seat' in proceedings, passing all leadership and acknowledgement over to Morel, he still remained throughout very much in control of what action would be taken, pre-empting the action of the opposition and offering straightforward advice (if not total direction) on what to do next. In a way, there is an element of puppeteering with Casement and Morel. Although Morel shows himself to a competent agent in the campaign, Casement's subtle manipulations guide his hand on many occasions. This even extends to reprimands and criticisms of Morel, for example in a later letter dated 31 July 1909 in which he informs

[73] Casement to Morel, 9 March 1904, fol. 8, MSS 16, LSE.
[74] Casement to Morel, 9 March 1904, fol. 8, MSS. 16, LSE.

Morel that 'My first impression was and I fear is that you have not done wisely in that attack on the Foreign Office'.[75]

Casement, in his advice and criticism, often shows himself to be very intuitive, and very restrained despite his often passionate and exclamatory prose. In a way, this restraint would seem to even out any obsessive, deeply focused drive Morel might find himself being spurred on by. Casement's distance perhaps, both geographical and from the organisation, allowed him a more all encompassing view on Britain, the Congo, Belgium, and all those responsible in administrative rule. This at times equipped him with foresight and a subsequent ability to advise Morel on which course of events to initiate.

The final, and in many ways, the most important, role Casement played in the Congo Reform Association is shown as he signs off in his 1904 letter:

> Don't doubt – all will go well – truth and justice and honour and mercy and kindness prompt us [...] those who are against us have power [...] as their agents. The end is with mercy and kindness. Never doubt.[76]

Casement seemed to sense Morel's need for reassurance, and he offered it readily. Morel, in the midst of statistics and figures, systems and policies, and the sheer volume of work still to be done must surely have feared at some point losing sight of the end. Casement supplied the nobility, the honour and the absolute sense of doing what was right and good to Morel's researching

[75] Casement to Morel, 31 July 1909, fol. 8, MSS. 23, LSE.
[76] Casement to Morel, 31 July 1909, fol. 8, MSS. 23, LSE.

and organising throughout. When Morel, in *History of the Congo Reform Movement*, discusses his approach to the campaign and talks of practicalities of evidence in the early days, saying:

> Considerations such as these [practicalities of evidence] were, nevertheless, of sufficient weight to convince me of the impracticality of attempting either to reform or to destroy the Congo Free State by invoking humanitarian sentiment alone.[77]

There is wisdom in his words. But there is also the feeling that Morel is more comfortable and certainly more confident in this logistic, practical aspect of reform that he is where highbrow humanitarian discourse is concerned. He is capable of both, but the regularity with which Casement assures him of the end in sight, the emancipation of an oppressed people, and the virtues present which spur them on does indicate that this was Morel's most problematic area. Morel's interest in trade and its policy led him to begin frequently misunderstood, giving as it did ammunition to those who wanted to label Morel as anti-British or anti-French, or as acting for the ends of competitive colonialism. Morel's attacks were designed, throughout the course of the movement, to appeal to four principles: firstly, sympathy on a global scale, secondly British honour, thirdly British imperial responsibility in African countries, and lastly international commercial rights. These commercial rights were closely linked to native economic and personal liberties, so any accusation that Morel was working for commercial gain of one country or

[77] Morel, *History of the Congo Reform Movement*, p. 83.

another is not justifiable. However it would be easy to appreciate how any opposition to the movement could, without much difficulty, convince the general public, unfamiliar with trading rights and policies, that Morel had another agenda. So by balancing this out with a humanitarian approach also, encouraged and reassured by Casement, Morel was ensuring comprehension and reform on all levels.

The two figures working together — Casement in his portrayed aloofness, his contacts, his advice born of familiarity with administration and foreign travel, his controversial report, and in his role as confidant and supporter of Morel, and Morel with his obsessive attention to detail, his firm belief that it was the policy which needed to be altered and adhered to in order for mere humanitarian lip service on behalf of the government to be avoided, and his indefatigable output — these two figures came together and between them created a multi-pronged attack on misrule in the Congo Free State, with great success.

2.3.2 Tiger and Bulldog: The intimacy between Morel and Casement

If one of the reasons for the great success of the Congo Reform Association is the meeting of minds between Casement and Morel, then it becomes apparent that their relationship must have been one that provided mutual support and mutual understanding over a long period of time. It would stand to reason that

this relationship was built on a mutual admiration for each other. This would indeed seem to be the case, but the sheer intensity of their correspondence and their writings about each other seemed to suggest that their relationship could may well have been based on much more than a professional admiration for their work in hand, moving towards an unusual interpersonal dynamic suggestive of a degree of mutual idolisation.

Going back to their first meeting as detailed by Morel, that admiration is clear to see from the very beginning:

> For hours he talked on, with now and again a pause, as the poignancy of recollection gripped him, when he would break off the narrative and murmur beneath his breath, "Poor people; poor, poor people". At intervals he would rise, and with swift silent steps, pace the room; then resume his crouching attitude by the fire, his splendid profile thrown into bold relief by the flames.[78]

This description, written years later though it was, brings to mind a description of a romantic hero in a literary text, everything about it suggesting masculinity as it does: the 'swift' steps, the 'crouching' attitude, and the 'bold' relief into which his 'splendid' profile was thrown by the burning flames. Indeed, Morel could have supplemented his income further by writing seductive melodrama, it would seem, based on this tense and fiery description of Casement. As it stands, this goes beyond professional admiration on Morel's behalf, and moves into the realms of impressed awe. In Morel's eyes, here was a man, indeed.

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[78] Morel, p. 209.

If the previous analysis of Morel is accepted, then his need for praise and recognition from his circle of friends was constant. Presented with a figure that clearly struck such awe in him as Casement did, one would wonder what Morel would do in order to be praised by him. If flattery, and reassurance through flattery, were how Morel was able to continue his work, then he was fortunate that Casement was a man quite demonstrative by nature, who, from the very first, praised and reassured him in every letter and meeting, for example, when congratulating Morel with the words 'I do so heartily and sincerely congratulate you on your works. Who could have predicted it all? [...] I said to you 'Thou art the man!'.[79]

This must have been praise indeed for Morel, and it was perhaps this praise that allowed him to confide in Casement, and to accept his forthright advice and direction. Needing public and private recognition as he did, it is sometimes strange to imagine how a man so driven as Morel, and so ambitious, would take advice from Casement. This facilitated the awe he felt for him, this dramatic figure who had actually been to the Congo, witnessed the atrocities, and had been commissioned to report on it, then had done do honestly and courageously. Again, the location of Casement in Morel's opinion as having a link to Africa, to the actual Congo for which he worked so tirelessly, seems to play an important part as a physical and also a sentimental link. Casement therefore comes to represent to Morel the physical location of the Congo, an embodiment of the goals of the campaign.

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[79] Casement to Morel, 23 March 1908, fol. 8, MSS. 23, LSE.

It is a fair assumption to believe that Morel must have been keen for this awe to be, or become, mutual, and so he allows Casement to be privy to his ambitions for and organisation of the association. Added to this the reality that much of the sting would be taken out of any criticism or disagreement Casement may have written to him by the evidence of Casement's pride and admiration for him. It is doubtful that such an intimate partnership between two professionals with fixed views would have been quite smooth and fruitful had not at least one of the partners been fulfilling his own personal needs from it also.

As it was, this seems not to be the case. Casement's letters to Morel, especially as the years progressed, show a deep fondness for Morel that swings between almost playfully flirtatious and almost paternal. The flirtatious element is most evident in the names that Casement assigns to them both — along the line he stops addressing Morel by his name, calling him instead 'Bulldog', a gently ironic nickname due to its association with being English. He then signs off as 'Tiger'. In the vast majority of the later letters this is the case. He cajoles Morel, especially when he has criticised him, by using this pet name, which is when the pendulum signs to paternalism also:

> But it has been a mistake, my dear Bulldog – faithful and fast to the end – to stick your teeth into all Grey's[80] limbs at once.[81]

[80] Sir Edward Grey, Foreign Secretary (Minister of State) 1905-1916
[81] Casement to Morel, 31 July 1909, fol. 8, MSS. 23, LSE.

This mixture of playfulness and indulgence is perhaps shown best at the end of a long letter regarding the dissolution of the Congo Reform Association when Casement urges Morel to take on board his advice by writing 'And so do it, my dear, perplexed, over worked and over worried Bulldog, and forgive Tiger all his 'insults' and virulent assaults and gross undernesses'.[82]

Casement, when determined about a certain aspect of the movement, finds no difficulty in advising Morel on what he has done and what he must do, at times at great length, with a very paternalistic tone. However, it is apparent that Casement feels protective towards, and fond of, Morel, to the point of indulgence. And indulge him he does, with what Morel wishes for the most, which is Casement's praise. In the midst of advice relating to the acceptance of annexation of the Congo to the Belgian state, Casement displays this characteristic indulgence:

> I suppose you are spending a Christmas day somewhere and not fighting on it as well as on every other blessed day of the year. What a fight yours has been – what a wonderful struggle all these years – and the break up of the pirate's stronghold nearly accomplished. If ever there was one man better it has been this of you versus Leopold.[83]

Casement shows himself here to be skilled. Although there are countless examples (and this, too, may be counted as one of them) of his praising Morel due to his extreme fondness for, and flirtation with, him, even the cynic would

[82] Casement to Morel, 13 June 1912, fol. 8, MSS. 29, LSE.
[83] Casement to Morel, 25 December 1909, fol. 8, MS. 29, LSE.

suspect that Casement has also deduced by this stage that Morel needs this level of flattery in order to be swayed or convinced of anything. When Casement needs Morel to accept something, or to pause for a moment from his relentless campaigning in order to evaluate progress, Casement praises him with his heady summary of how much he — notably not 'they'— has already done. Casement then marvels at such magnitude of achievement. Casement often shows himself to foresee certain developments, and then attempts to brace him for them, in order for Morel to accept an end to the fight.

None of this praise, however, seems insincere. If it is true that Casement has slightly manipulative powers over Morel, owing to his continuous praise and Morel's admiration of him, it does not necessarily have to mean that Casement has a level of detachment from Morel that puts him in the more powerful position. In fact, there is much evidence to confirm Casement's deep attachment to, and affection for, Morel. Possibly the most convincing evidence of Casement's deep affection for Morel is in his choice of pet name for him. A 'Bulldog', which of course, as mentioned, could have British or English connotations, or fighting connotations, was nevertheless the breed of Casement's own companion on his Congo journeys, his dog 'John'. Seamus O'Síochain remarks that 'almost on a par with human company for Casement was that of his dogs; no name appears more regularly in the diary than that of his bulldog, 'John'.[84]

[84] O' Sullivan and O' Síochain, p. 26.

'Bulldog', then to Casement had associations with loyalty, companionship, and affection. His dog, too, seems to have been important to Casement who at times can seem quite an isolated figure. Such an impression of isolation has its roots in Casement's disillusionment with the Foreign Office, of which he is representative, or is perhaps it is the image of one man travelling up the Congo river in inhospitable climates and against the will of the Congo authorities and their representatives in Belgium, but also not with the fullest of support from the British government who would go on to alter his report. Even during the Congo Reform Association campaign, when the majority of the supporters were imagining the Congo, Casement had actually experienced it. There is a slight dislocation between imagining and experiencing, being representative of something like the Foreign Office, but also slightly muted by it, that appears sometimes to highlight Casement's slightly distinctive position with regard to the whole situation. The admiration on Morel's behalf, then, of his Congo experience and of his apparent view of Casement as an authoritative link to the place and the people, would then have been extremely significant to Casement. So should these associations have any merit, Casement must have felt a depth of affection for Morel that goes beyond the paternal and the playful.

The relationship between the men was no doubt due to a mutual appreciation of the cause and their attempts to further it initially, but what seems to have made the relationship such a successful and such a productive one were their attitudes towards each other: Morel, in his admiration and

subsequent need for praise from Casement allowed Casement to allay his fears, dispel the doubts which may have slowed Morel, and at times to direct and persuade him away from his tunnel vision approach to minute detail when it was in the best interests of the association. In turn Morel, by inspiring deep affection and loyalty in Casement, a man at times in need of a certain level of intimate companionship without ever having to request it, secured Casement's absolute interest and devotion to the association. Publicly as well, Morel needed Casement as Casement needed him. As Casement could not take as direct an active a role in the association due to his links with the Foreign Office, and also due to his own workload and commitments, he needed Morel and his public voice, coupled with his diligent and tireless work, to bring about the change Casement believed strongly needed to be made in the Congo Free State and the Belgian Congo. Morel, who had already been campaigning against the misrule in the Congo before Casement's report in 1903, needed someone with social talent to enrich his rather involved and laborious efforts on the administrative side of gathering evidence and writing letters. Seamus O'Síochain quotes Morel in what is perhaps the best example of Morel's perception of Casement's role in the organisation:

> Morel saw a role for Casement: 'There is no man on this earth that can make him [William H. Lever] see the heart of things as you would do, because you have a power of persuasion and a personality, an individuality, and a way of putting things which I altogether lack.[85]

[85] Seamus O'Síochain, *Roger Casement: Imperialist, Rebel, Revolutionary* (Dublin: The Lilliput Press, 2008), p. 209, quoting Morel to Casement, 12 April 1911, fol. 5, MSS. 24. The 'him' referred to is William H. Lever, who was seeking Morel's advice on building a palm-

As a direct result of these efforts, the campaign was a significant success in humanitarian history.

2.4. The Dissolution of the Congo Reform Association

In 1908, after an international campaign on the Congo Reform Association's behalf, the Congo Free State passed into the hands of the Belgian state. This event prompted the dissolution of the Association which had campaigned against Leopold's misrule there. It is the dissolution of the Congo Reform Association which, perhaps ironically, offers the best opportunity to create a synopsis and an evaluation of what the movement had as its primary goals, and how far those goals were satisfied.

At this point, it is interesting to note that although the Congo Reform Association was a humanitarian movement, labelling as such in a modern context can lead to misunderstandings around some of the subtle, most vital elements which made this organisation unique. A broad humanitarian assumption would revolve around the Congo Reform Association having as its aim the freeing of the Congolese people from a regime of forced labour, as was undoubtedly the case. However, the organisation was one of *reform*, not of changing things entirely. To classify the Congo Reform Association as an

kernal crushing mill in Nigeria at the time. Morel deferred to Casement's opinion on the impact this would have on the indigenous land ownership, and this event illustrates Casement's role in supplying Morel with advice and support.

anti-colonial movement, therefore, is at best a crude interpretation, and at worst, a total misrepresentation of the objectives and motivations of the organisation. Over and over again the association's literature cites *mis*rule in the Congo Free State as the culprit for the abuses and atrocities — this is not to be confused with attacking any rule exerted by a colonising country. In fact, Morel states directly in his preface to *King Leopold's Rule in Africa* in 1904 that 'the aims of the Association are the restoration to the Natives of the Congo of the rights guaranteed to them by the Berlin and Brussels Acts'.[86]

The Berlin Act, the result of the Berlin Conference of 1884–1885, which recognised Leopold's sovereignty over the Congo, is hailed by the Congo Reform Association as being the 'constitution' of the Congolese people — Casement clearly recognises it as such as he summarises 'all we ask of this constitutional nation is that they shall respect the constitution (Berlin Act) so solemnly guaranteed to the people of the Congo twenty-six years ago – by themselves as well as by us'.[87]

So the Reform Association was not trying in any measure to advocate the retreat of Leopold or the Belgian state as a solution to the human rights abuses occurring in the Congo. In fact, they were trying to advocate an adherence to an honourable 'system', free from corruption. Notable here again is Morel's complete insistence on the base roots of the terrible images and atrocities of the Congo being mundane and administrative: trade laws,

[86] Edmund Dene Morel, *King Leopold's Rule in Africa* (London: Funk and Wagnalls, 1905), [n.p.].
[87] Casement to Morel, 12 July 1910, fol. 8, MSS. 28, LSE.

commerce and so forth. In the preface to *King Leopold's Rule in Africa*, he also refers to this:

> It was worthwhile, and it continues to be worthwhile, to incur misrepresentation in the effort to make clear beyond possibility of doubt that the destruction of commercial relationship between the European and the African in tropical Africa means the enslavement of the African, and is the fundamental cause of all the abominations of Congo State control.[88]

Morel displays a characteristic combination of modesty and vanity when he congratulates himself on discovering this system by referring to his position as early opposition of the regime 'for while I cannot claim, and never have dreamed of claiming, that I was actually the first in the field to denounce the atrocities and enslavement which the Leopoldian system rendered endemic [...] I was the first and the consistent denunciator of the system itself'[89]

Morel's commitment to this removal of misrule and corruption from the system was a constant — in fact, Casement's letters to Morel concerning annexation, when the Congo was handed over to the Belgian state in 1908, are very telling. They show a cautious but insistent Casement who is repeatedly pointing out to the perfectionist Morel that their work — that is, their original aim, of insisting that the Congolese are allowed to live by the Berlin Act — has now been completed. On this point he is really quite emphatic: 'one thing is clear to my mind. The Congo Reform movement is dead. Its work is done'. Moreover, Casement is more emphatic still with his conclusion: 'What I see

[88] From the preface of E. D. Morel *King Leopold's Rule in Africa*, [n.p.]
[89] Morel, p. 170.

far more clearly is that once annexation is recognised the Congo Reform Association must shut down. It must end there and then. There will be no reason for its continued existence'.[90]

However, despite Casement's belief, and Morel's acceptance of this belief, that the Congo Reform Association should end after all those years, Casement demonstrates how even a dissolution can be tactical and forceful. He assures Morel that his obituary for the Association must be calculated and thorough in its message 'because, as you see, I want its final day to be still a day of action'.[91] This is the beginning of planning a dissolution which obliges the Belgian state to pay more attention to the movement than ever. As Casement had given to Morel orders on how to establish the movement, so now he gives him orders on how to go about creating a legacy that will keep the pressure on Belgium in the absence of their campaigning (he had four years previously signed off a letter by promising: 'When it will end, no man can say — but how it will end I have no doubt. Tiger' [sic]).[92] This legacy was to take the form of an acceptance of their newly asserted power, but accompanied with a pervading threat that although the Congo Reform Association was no longer in existence, it was somehow omnipresent throughout their dealings with the now Belgian Congo. In a letter in 1910, two years before advising him on the obituary notice for the Association, Casement talks tactics with Morel as he is writing a speech for the still active movement, now concerning itself with Belgian state's rule:

[90] Casement to Morel, 13 June 1912, fol. 8, MSS. 29, LSE.
[91] Casement to Morel, 13 June 1912, fol. 8, MSS. 29, LSE.
[92] Casement to Morel 23 March 1908, fol. 8, MS. 23, LSE.

You don't want to be called irreconcilables or anti-Belgian, but because you have gained something and may well express qualified thanks for that much you should, quite emphatically, make it clear that the Congo Reform Association...will not rest from criticism and from still continuing to guide public opinion on the right road.[93]

In his use of tactics, Casement shows himself not only to be shrewd, but also to be realistic and with an ability for foresight, which he impresses upon Morel in the same letter when he insists that a change in approach is now, quite logically, called for ('there is really no open enemy in the field today to attack at all'). This adaptability ('we have got to deal with things as they <u>are</u>'[sic]) is quite possibly to be found at the root of why the Congo Reform Association managed to survive, and indeed, to great effect, for a decade of campaigning. Adaptation allowed for Morel and Casement to attack on relevant, contemporary ground throughout — this flexibility and capability for change creates more successful tactics:

The Congo Reform Association cannot attack the Belgian state in the same way it once attacked the vampire state of the past – but it can to a great extent still control and still restrain the enlightened public opinion of this country. You should make it clear then to your embarrassed friend, the Belgian state, that however embarrassed he may be you intend to keep on embarrassing him – and others – until he does right [...] You will make it clear that nothing short of this will satisfy the Congo Reform Association.[94]

[93] Casement to Morel, 12 July 1910, fol. 8, MSS. 29, LSE.
[94] Casement to Morel, 12 July 1910, fol. 8, MSS. 29, LSE.

This shows that although the founders were willing to accept change and reality, this acknowledgement was not synonymous with a weakening of will, or a lessening of demands. Nor was it a reduction in political ambition — in fact, it could be said, quite the opposite. In his last paragraph in the letter regarding how to approach the Congo Reform Association obituary, Casement actually widens their message to an international stage, solidifying the Association's position as an international organization. This may have been in part due to his involvement in Irish nationalism, but also to a dedication to the principles the Association had upheld:

> Let it close with a deed as well as with a word on its lips [....] doing something that will arrest the mind and heart of the Belgian people so that they feel they are the trustees, the custodians of a great idea. If Congo Reform Association can do that as its last public act — it will be an international act of the highest value, and you will have proved yourself a great statesman.[95]

Morel would be proved a great statesman, and therefore an internationally significant politician, which would lead into other positions in the political arena. Casement is prophesising that this would become the public perception of Morel, and the final public perception of the Congo Reform Association. And so the Congo Reform Association showed itself to be influential because of its adaptability, its clear focus, and the personal needs and ambition of two men — Morel, in his wish for public recognition, and Casement, in his

[95] Casement to Morel, 12 July 1910, fol. 8, MSS. 29, LSE.

growing passion for involvement in politics concerning oppression and injustice.

The example of the Congo Reform Association, for the purposes of this thesis, does introduce Casement's knowledge of the necessity for consciously positioning the private and public self in order to manipulate a desired outcome. It also shows him to be, although somewhat vain and given to exaggeration, a shrewd judge of public figures in representative roles, across governments and borders of state, on the international stage. Evaluating Casement against a figure such as Morel, though, also adds a dimension of differentiating between experiences of colonialism and of the aims of both men. For some, including Gil Gott,[96] the two men, although mutually supportive and ultimately successful in their goal of ending Leopold's abuses in the Congo Free State, have differing interpretations of the situation, due to their differing locations in relation to it. Gott sees the Congo Reform Association as 'an early example of post-Victorian humanitarianism, a blend of old and new' and notes that Morel and Casement 'represent different moments in this hybrid sensibility'.[97] Marking Morel as a critic of the colonial system in its application, and as a recognised pacifist, Gott does point out that he nonetheless held 'a Victorian and Nationalist faith in the imperial destiny of the British'.[98] As has been pointed out already, it was reform for which Morel campaigned, not independence from colonial rule. His physical distance and

[96] Gil Gott, 'Imperial Humanitarianism: History of an Arrested Dialectic' in Berta Esperanza Hernańdez-Truyol (ed.), *Moral Imperialism: A Critical Anthology* (New York: New York University Press, 2002), p. 33.
[97] Gott, p. 33.
[98] Gott, p. 33.

paternalistic take on the issue is contrasted by Casement's physical placing amongst the people of the Congo. This then seems to become symbolic of a difference in position. Gott maintains that in contrast to Morel, 'Casement thus had a lived affinity with what we might today call subaltern politics'.[99] This affinity, borne out by his Irish nationalist persuasions, and also by a presumed marginality attributed to his sexuality (the relevance of which I would question in relation to the Congo Reform Association, as most knowledge of this results from a later period in his life), puts Casement in contrast to Morel. I believe there is some resonance in Gott's summary of this difference that is played out by Casement's involvement in Irish nationalism that Casement 'understood in a way that Morel did not, that the ultimate goal of humanitarian work could be the political empowerment of subaltern groups (their "self-government") and the need, if necessary, to engage in direct forms of political, even armed, struggle to achieve that end'.[100]

Casement as located amongst the Congolese people as opposed to above (in the sense of colonial hierarchy) is interesting in its implications for his Irish nationalist involvements, but especially because of an assumed affinity with, or relevance to, the subaltern position. Therefore a study of Casement's role in the Congo Reform Association introduces a need to assess his self-conscious positioning within the Irish nationalist cause he would eventually be hanged for, as a means of locating his historical significance within postcolonial, subaltern and transnational studies.

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[99] Gott, p. 33.
[100] Gott, p. 34.

3.0 Casement in his Contemporary Context (1904-1916)

Throughout Casement's involvement in the Congo Reform Association, his interest in and engagement with his Irish identity also became more and more pronounced (as is evident in various correspondence). This means that his engagement within his context of Irish, and Anglo-Irish, contemporaries will come under scrutiny in order to establish his affinity with not just the Congolese people, but with those participating in the formation of the identity of nations (the Congo as well as Ireland). The following analysis of Casement's position amongst Irish cultural nationalists gives insight into their own location within Britain and Ireland, and how they envisaged their future regarding empire and independence.

3.1 Introduction

> The phenomenon of men and women of English stock becoming more Irish than the Irish themselves was repeated many times during the last hundred years [...] All the people

> involved were eccentrics in the strict sense of that word, that is to say that they had deviated from the centre, from the common line pursued by people of similar origin and class.[101]

Roger Casement, alongside his varying works and allegiances, is often perceived as an unusual or atypical character due to his seemingly differing and perhaps conflicting involvements and motivations relating to causes as varied as the Congo, the Putumayo, the Boer War, British diplomacy and Irish nationalism. Casement is indeed a fascinating figure through whom to examine the crossover between competing colonialisms or definition and negotiation of national identity, and is an accessible portal to issues relating to a wide array of academic disciplines from historiography to gender studies to African studies. However, there is, in recognising the multitude of possibilities Casement presents culturally and academically, a real danger of isolating him from his context or contexts — to see him merely as a totally unique one-off, a wild card in the state of play between European, Irish, English and British identity and allegiance. Lifting Casement entirely out of his context, especially in relation to his Irish nationalism, creates a misrepresentation of the reality of how supported he was by others in sometimes quite a similar situation, or at least who faced similar obstacles and ambiguities in their own cultural and national identities. He was not, as the opening quotation highlights, the only eccentric character in the play of his own life and works. Deviation from the central and cultural norm of Anglo-Irish society in the late nineteenth and early

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[101] Leon O'Broin, *Protestant Nationalists in Revolutionary Ireland: The Stopford Connection* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1985), p. 1.

twentieth century is well documented, and amongst such deviationists can be found prominent figures such as Douglas Hyde and W. B. Yeats.[102] Casement's obsession with the Irish cause locates itself easily within an interesting tradition of Protestant nationalism in Ireland. The refuge that this cultural crusade would have offered Casement, and the direct influence exerted by some of the key players cannot be overlooked in any exploration of Casement's own Irish nationalist involvement. Out of this group of eccentrics emerges one key player in Casement's own expressions of deviation, the amateur historian and cultural nationalist, Alice Stopford-Green. Stopford-Green's relationship with Casement on the surface is very similar to the relationship he shared with Morel, but I will argue that there are differences which highlight Casement's growing concern with his own self-definition and self-representation, and for this reason is Stopford-Green a significant figure in this chapter.

3.2 Alice Stopford-Green

Alice Stopford-Green was born in 1848 in Kells, where she lived until she was twenty-six. She was the third daughter of Archdeacon Stopford, a member of a long established line of Stopfords in Ulster. When her father died in 1874, Alice moved to Chester with her mother and sister, and in 1877, she married

[102] Douglas Hyde (1860–1949) was the founder of the Gaelic League (1893) and subsequently served as the first president of Ireland (1938–1945); William Butler Yeats (1865–1939), Anglo-Irish poet and dramatist, was instrumental in the Irish Literary Revival of the early twentieth century, and served as an Irish Senator for two terms (1922–1928).

John Richard Green, who was an amateur historian as well as a cleric. Their marriage was short due to Green's ill-health — he died of his consumptive illness in 1883, after which Alice moved to London, where she embarked upon her quasi-political involvement with Irish nationalism throughout the following years.

Alice's history shows her to have been inquisitive, dynamic, and a lover of a challenge. As a child she taught herself from her father's library, learning languages — German and Greek particularly — and introducing herself to other academic theories and schools of thought. She had a difficult relationship with her mother, largely attributed to an incompatibility in religious beliefs. Having been brought up in a religious family, and by a father who believed it to be his mission to convert Catholics to Protestantism, Alice had perhaps surprisingly a more broad Christian faith, described by O'Broin in *Protestant Nationalists in Revolutionary Ireland* as 'undogmatic'.[103] Her love of learning and education also went against the grain of conventional society's expectation of the role of women, but it would provide her with the ability to become involved in her husband's work so far as to almost outstrip it. During his illness, John Green wrote the first social history of England entitled *A Short History of the English People.*[104] Alice worked with him during its composition, and after his death, Alice completed the editing of *The Conquest*

[103] O'Broin, p. 2.
[104] This work was republished in 1916: John Richard Green, Alice Stopford-Green, Amelia Stopford-Green, *A Short History of the English People* (Michigan: American Book Company, 1916).

of England[105] instead of her husband. In fact, Alice became an intellectual and historian in her own right following her husband's death, producing new editions of *A Short History of the English People*, an account of the life of Henry II, and a study of town life in the fifteenth century. The success of *A Short History* left Alice comfortably off, and gave her the opportunity to combine her love of entertaining with her love of challenging interests. She entertained regularly in her house in Kensington, and became involved with many varied social causes. O'Broin paints a picture of a woman who was 'unusually diligent', and recounts how she would start her work and reading at five in the morning, work until lunch, and then entertain her guests.[106] He claims that she 'profoundly believed in the value of a good meal as a means of making and retaining the friendship of people' especially those 'whose help she needed in whatever cause she happened to be promoting, and these were numerous'.[107]

In December 1890 Alice, through her role as social entertainer, hosted what would become the first of many political meetings in her Kensington home, bringing together representatives of different political persuasions. This meeting is only significant as it marks the beginning of political and social meetings and crossovers between groups, friends, and acquaintances, which would eventually come to include E. D. Morel as well as Casement. Alice

[105] This book has also been republished recently. John Richard Green, *The Conquest of England* (Milton Keynes: Lightning Sources Inc, 2006).
[106] O'Broin, p. 3.
[107] O'Broin, p. 3.

Stopford-Green's talents for networking were to play their role in far reaching areas of Irish nationalism.

3.3 Casement and Stopford-Green

As has been explored in the previous chapter, Casement and Morel's work with the Congo Reform Association in the decade following 1904 drew the attention of many others who were politically and socially minded in English society. Amongst these was Alice Stopford-Green, who had entertained Morel, and who would support the Congo Reform Association in its work. For the purposes of this chapter, Stopford-Green exists as a bridge between Casement's humanitarian concerns in the Congo, which he shared with Morel, and with Irish nationalism. It became an inevitability then that two people who were so interested in both Africa and Ireland should be introduced. In his first letter to Mrs Stopford-Green, Casement names a 'mutual friend' R. E. Dennett[108] as the introducer, although no doubt Morel had already formed a preliminary connection. The letter dated 1904, Casement shows himself to be at as persuasive and presumptuous best:

The name of a mutual friend R. E. Dennett who has often spoken to me of you in Africa should serve as my introduction and afford me a reason, if none other existed, for writing to

[108] R.E. Dennett was a trader in the Congo for another Liverpool company, Hatton & Cookson, during the period of Casement's Congo report. His work in Africa is perhaps best laid out in his obituary in the *African Journal of the Royal African Society*, Vol. 20:80 (July, 1921), 307–08.

you. But I think we must have so much in common in our love for Ireland that I need not go to Africa to seek an introduction to you.[109]

This first letter is a charismatic rally cry which cleverly links the Congo to Ireland directly, weaving the facts throughout with a low-level flattery of its reader that it combines to create what must have been an extremely arresting first read on Mrs Stopford-Green's behalf. It is also an example of how Casement, and mobile society players such as Stopford-Green, are introduced not just to each other, but to different causes, or issues of associated interest, through different locations. Via London society, Casement is discussing Africa through an association with Ireland. Casement attributes his insight in the Congolese situation to what he refers to in this letter as his 'Irish mind'. This Irish mind, he believes, gave him 'insight into human suffering' and also 'into ways of the spoiler and the ruffian who takes 'civilization' for his watchword when his object is the appropriation of the land and labour of others for his personal profit'. This insight led him to make reference to 'the tale of the English occupation in Ireland' which 'so continuously illustrates that gave me the deep interest I felt in the lot of the Congo natives'.[110]

The text, in all its sincerity, still shows Casement to be unable to resist some self promotion ('As a matter of fact, it [the Congo Reform Association] originated [sic] solely with me: I gave the idea to Morel'), and retaining all his ability to engage and secure the recipient through flattery —

[109] Casement to Stopford-Green, [n.d.], 1904, fol. 36, MSS. 204/1, NLI.
[110] Casement to Stopford-Green, [n.d.], 1904, fol. 36, MSS. 204/1, NLI.

having explained his devotion to the Congo, Casement subtly draws a tentative line in allegiance and therefore responsibility between himself and Mrs Stopford-Green:

> And that is the way, I am sure, the claim of the Congo people must appeal to every sincere and genuine Irish nature [....] I feel instinctively that if I saw you and spoke with you for five minutes I could convince you of the whole vile business out there and make you burn at the resentment I feel at it.[111]

Casement had presumed, or claims to know 'instinctively' that Mrs Stopford Green is surely in tune with the insight of the 'sincere and genuine Irish nature', with an 'Irish mind alive to the horrors once enacted in this land', and as a consequence will feel it her high-minded duty to join him in his crusade. This was a very tactical move on Casement's behalf, should he have been writing straight from the heart or with a passed-on knowledge of Mrs Stopford-Green in mind, the results are the same. Much in the same way that Casement and Morel's interpersonal dynamic had, I would venture, a crucial role in the success of the Congo Reform Association, so does the relationship dynamic between Mrs Stopford-Green and Casement seemed to have a played a major part in their adventuring together. Casement includes Stopford-Green in a very seductive complicity — the Irish nationalist question is very much a joint venture. In a letter from Ballycastle on 24 February 1905, Casement

[111] Casement to Stopford-Green, [n.d.], 1904, fol. 36, MSS. 204/1, NLI. Casement's emphasis.

frequently combines both himself and Stopford-Green in his repetitive use of the word 'we':

> *We* must be true to our ideals –and if *we* really are to serve and save Ireland it cannot be helped by supporting any wrong, merely because by doing so *we* are supposedly going counter to the current of English opinion.[112]

Casement is naturally asking for support through this approach, but is also creating a very strong and distinct 'us and them', which proves to be very effective, and although not in direct contrast to his relationship with Morel, certainly different in terms of self-location. Casement is closely aligned to Stopford-Green, and therefore to Ireland. Although we have seen this before in Casement's correspondence and general approach to whichever cause he is referring to, what is of note here and with his relationship with Alice Stopford-Green overall, is that the 'them' in the 'us against them' struggle becomes multiple. In relation to the question of Irish nationalist progression, the 'them' is Britain, most specifically England. In relation to the Congo humanitarian crisis, the 'them' is Belgium, most specifically King Leopold. In this case, England can flip from being the source, in political, moral, and policy terms, of all that is opposite to what 'we' are fighting for, over to being policy makers whose positions may be endorsed. An example of this follows on from the quotation above. The letter is concerned with the details of the Congo Commission of Enquiry, and in it Casement declares that 'in this Congo

[112]Casement to Stopford-Green, [n.d.], 1904, fol. 36, MSS. 204/1, NLI. Italicisation of 'we' is my emphasis.

question English opinion is right – and for once, quite unselfish – such of it as is indeed on the side of the Congo Reform'.[113]

'Them' can also come to refer to anyone who may stand in the way or create difficulties for any given crusade of Casement's — his old foe the Foreign Office, his intermittent foe, the Catholic church (or its 'official' voice in publications such as the *Catholic Bulletin* — 'I hate an "official view"'), or any particular politician, public figure or colleague who thinks of a slightly different means to the same end.[114] Casement does display this same passionate temperament in his letters to Morel, which are full of scathing personal attacks and motivational self-indulgent praise, but he seems to go even farther with this type of exclusive, unifying, 'us and them' approach with Stopford-Green in that he appears actually to enjoy and revel in it. Although Casement nicknames both himself and Morel in their correspondence ('Tiger' and 'Bulldog'), Casement comes to almost hero-worship Stopford-Green in their letters with outlandish and ridiculous titles: 'Woman of the Histories' (24 January 1913), 'Woman of Three Cows' (23 December 1912), 'Quiet Woman of Three Houses' (10 February 1912). This gleeful mockery and over-the-top nicknaming in the later letters shows a Casement who is thoroughly enjoying the cut and thrust of campaigning and crusading with a kindred spirit. There is a reckless irreverence in their letters as they discuss the reactions of other public figures to their endeavours and opinions. It would appear that Casement feels well received by Stopford-Green, and therefore is enjoying his self-

[113] Casement to Stopford-Green, [n.d.],1904, fol. 36, MSS. 204/1, NLI.
[114] Casement expresses his disdain towards bureaucracy in his letter to Stopford-Green 13 July 1911, fol. 36, MSS. 204/2, NLI.

representation in the realm of Irish nationalist agitator. Casement fills Stopford-Green in about a recent comment and development in one letter dated 29 October 1913, where he says 'also meantime an awful visitation has emerged out of Rathlin. That Woman of the Hair and the Voice has risen and scattered me and you as 'those people'.

Casement appears over and over again as a figure who be easily offended, who can easily feel himself to be maligned and misunderstood, sometimes to the point of paranoia — bearing in mind particularly his deteriorating relationship with the British Foreign Office after the publication of his edited Congo Report (1904), during which he became more and more disillusioned with their position regarding the removal of names from the report, and his perceived continued harsh treatment at the hands of the British government and legal system right up until his trial and execution. His letters, especially regarding Foreign Office officials or those in positions of power, often illustrate and offer justification for the deep personal offence he experienced, and frequently displayed, on realising that others did not share his views or passions on certain enterprises. If we then imagine the refuge that he must have found in Alice Stopford-Green, a busy and dynamic Anglo-Irish nationalist socialite, it is little wonder that these letters show Casement expressing glee in having a fellow partner to form an allegiance against any criticism. With Alice Stopford-Green involved in his nationalist missions, Casement finds a listener for his woes, and any criticism can move from being directed solely at him to being levelled at 'them', a team of himself and

Stopford-Green. Therefore the response to this criticism is not as destructively paranoid, but a source of entertainment — with a supporter such as Stopford-Green, Casement can enjoy private rebellions and childish and humorous name-calling. Instead of just reacting with outrage, Casement can write letters that are sometimes the textual equivalent of giggling, or gossiping. Referring to opposition as 'That Woman of the Hair and the Voice' effectively ridicules and belittles someone by whom Casement may have previously been more stung by, and this difference seems to have the effect, when reading through his letters over this period, of strengthening him personally. Suddenly, Casement is having fun. This is of more than just passing significance, as it shows a Casement who does not feel in the background, or marginalized. Or if he is marginalized, it is a chosen position which he is enjoying, and which is not detrimental to his self-esteem with regard to his representation. This image of Casement as a figure so enthusiastically involved in a game of intrigue and excitement presents itself again and again in this later stage of his life — the furtive Casement who wrote letters doctored to appear to be those of a caricatured American woman whilst sailing with Adler Christensen on his mission to Germany spring comically to mind,[115] as well as his preoccupation with the risk of his being kidnapped during his work on his arrival there. There is no mistaking that the business in hand on all of these occasions was of a serious nature, but his treatment of his correspondence along the way shows comedy and a certain *joie de vivre* which is sometimes at odds with the gravity

[115] Adler Christensen was Casement's manservant during his voyage from the United States to Germany, via Norway. During part of the voyage, Casement wrote letters as a woman in a bid to avoid detection.

with which he viewed the importance of his intentions. In his relationship with Stopford-Green, Casement sometimes seems incredibly energised by the thought of their collusion, and is extremely affectionate and buoyant in his recollection of their feats: one letter joyously praises her on her stand against Edward Carson with the farewell 'goodbye my dear good Woman of the Piercing Wail! – you certainly pierced Carson + [sic] Co![116]

Casement is showing a love of caricature here, painting a cartoon comedy of an outspoken banshee-esque Stopford-Green spearing influential political figures, whilst Casement rubs his hands together in glee at the mischief-making they are participating in with those who may have criticised their beliefs or actions. Casement and his 'dear Woman of the Midnight Flight!'[117] are it would seem to Casement, putting the cat amongst the pigeons and stirring up the progress of Irish nationalism in a dynamic way. This again seems to reiterate that if Casement is marginalized at this stage in his life, it is a position with which he is pleased. This is in contrast to his anxiety of misinterpretation and misrepresentation at other stages of his life, especially surrounding the delivery of his knighthood.

3.4 'Sir' Roger Casement: A reluctant knight

[116] Edward Carson (1854–1935) was an Ulster unionist leader opposed to home rule; Casement to Stopford-Green 7 Nov 1913, 29 October 1913, fol. 39, MSS. 203/4, NLI.
[117] Casement to Stopford-Green, 29 Oct 1913, fol. 39, MSS. 203, NLI.

Of course, not all Casement's correspondence with Stopford-Green has this frivolous, gleeful tone which uses idiolect to reverse and recycle insults into positive affirmation of their joint ability to change and further the Irish nationalist cause. As a writer of lengthy and very emotionally involved letters, Casement also writes prolifically of his motivations and aspirations, both in relation to the Congo and to Ireland, much in the same way he wrote at length about similar issues and proposed tactics to Morel. However, where Casement's letters to Morel are frequently of a supportive nature towards Morel himself, towards the validity and importance of their venture, and towards any doubts or obstacles the Reform Association faced, Casement's letters to Stopford-Green seem, when not celebrating their adventures, to show more of a need for her support rather than the opposite. It could be suggested that this may be a sign of Casement's insecurity regarding his location and reception within the Irish nationalist cause. Within the Congo Reform Association, Casement was sure of his position, as he alone had been to the Congo and witnessed first hand the atrocities against which he campaigned. Within Irish nationalism, of course, he was always aware of how his dual location — British Consul, Irish nationalist — could be received. This is particularly evident in a letter from June 1911 on, as mentioned, the subject of his knighthood. Casement received a knighthood from the British government for his humanitarian work in the Putumayo, which followed in much the same vein as his work in the Congo Free State. In this letter, Casement relays his anxieties about having been awarded a knighthood from the British

government, something about which he expressed anxiety and ambivalence throughout his remaining years. Casement felt confused and uncomfortable about this honour, and worried significantly about whether or not being recognised for his work under the British government would brand him a traitor to his Irish nationalist ideals as he acknowledges that 'there are many in Ireland who will think of me as a traitor – and when I think of that country and of them I feel I am'.[118]

The evidence that Casement found this 'refuge' in Stopford-Green becomes even more concrete in this correspondence, when he thanks Stopford-Green for her support by telling her that 'your congratulation has been the best – for you alone [Casement's emphasis] have seen that there was an Irish side to it all'.[119]

Stopford-Green, then, is at this stage Casement's very necessary link between his work in the Congo and (specifically in this instance) the Putumayo and his work in Ireland. In fact, it could be advanced that Stopford-Green was Casement's way into Irish nationalism — a reception in both senses of the word. When she received him as a guest in her home, she also involved him with the other key figures who were concerned with the Irish question. The tone of this letter, although still trying to validate and reassure himself as to his stance on receiving the knighthood, is overall one of relief, and a gratitude that Stopford-Green understands him — an understanding for which Casement seems frequently to have eluded him with others, and at times even

[118] Casement to Stopford-Green, 16 June 1911, fol. 38, MSS. 199, 26 NLI.
[119] Casement to Stopford-Green, 16 June 1911, fol. 38, MSS. 199, NLI.

with himself. Casement is negotiating his own problematic location within the Empire and in resisting it, and is using Stopford-Green as a means through which to try to imagine his reception by others, whilst reassuring himself. More than Casement wanting Stopford-Green's assent, approval and support, in this way he seems also to need it when he asks 'I want you please to keep always writing to me just as "Roger Casement" – will you? That will be a distinction now'.[120]

In Casement's long journey of self-definition and identification, at this point Stopford-Green acts as a very important determiner of his identity. Her 'distinction' of him as not just a British consul who worked towards knighthood ('Very few can possibly believe that I have not worked for this'), but as a man of principle and integrity is reassurance badly needed by a confused and possibly paranoid Casement at this crisis point — her continued referral to him as simply 'Roger Casement' would be, in his own words, 'a little consolation'.[121]

A lot of self-determination and identity exploration happens in Casement's letters to Stopford-Green. In fact, it was to her that Casement addressed his oft-quoted explanation that in the Congo he 'found himself' when he recounts 'I was high on the road to being a regular imperialist Jingo [...] finally when up in those lovely Congo forests where I found Leopold I also found Myself – the incorrigible Irishman!'.[122]

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[120] Casement to Stopford-Green, 16 June 1911, fol. 38, MSS. 199, NLI.

[121] Casement to Stopford-Green, 16 June 1911, fol. 38, MSS. 199, NLI.

[122] Casement to Stopford-Green, 20 April 1907, fol. 37, MSS 18, NLI.

In this same letter he describes himself to her as a 'consul malgré moi' — in fact, through many of this correspondence, he seems to exorcising the demons of being many things despite himself. In doing so, he is proving that in Stopford-Green he believes himself to have found a kindred spirit, and has found himself a perfect platform for working towards his Irish nationalist ambitions *in spite of* his at times seemingly contradictory public identity as a knighted consul in the pay of the British Foreign Office.

Why the relationship between Stopford-Green and Casement existed could be due to this similarity in their social background — their counter-cultural Anglo-Irish identities. Why the relationship flourished, however, could well be related to more than just their social background, that is to say it could be related more to their social status within the circle of 'eccentrics', both being non-conformists with regards to more than their political allegiances. Comparing descriptions of Casement and Stopford-Green shows an uncanny likeness in their plurality — both in their personal approaches to causes and campaigns (Casement and his knighthood and Irish nationalism, Stopford-Green in her strong Irish nationalist beliefs, but also in her London based existence and belief in an inevitability of a permanent link between Ireland and England), and in the varying reactions their contemporaries had to them. Casement, as been frequently noted, gathered as much personal support as personal opposition throughout his life and works, and it seems that this too may have been true, albeit to a lesser degree, with Alice Stopford-Green. O'Broin uses the diary entries of Beatrice Potter, a London based social

scientist and acquaintance of Stopford-Green's, in order to present a woman as difficult as she was brilliant, noting 'she has a weird mind, seldom speaks well of her friends, describes their faults with more sharpness of outline than is charitable and submerges their virtues in sentences implying personal affection as the origin of her appreciation'.[123] She goes on to say in a later entry that Stopford-Green has 'the originality which springs from a lonely, unhappy and self-absorbed youth, from the enforced independence of a friendless womanhood [...] She aims at the position to be gained by personal merit'.[124]

This is the difficult, perhaps unpleasant side of Stopford-Green as experienced by Beatrice Potter, and were it not for a following later diary entry of Potter's the plurality of character of this woman even towards the one person would not be quite as apparent:

> Now I see her differently [...] She is first, a brilliant woman with a veritable fund of intellectual curiosity. Warm hearted, full of divine pity for suffering, more especially mental suffering, ready to sacrifice herself, to give herself away. If there is a moral flaw in her character it is the intensely personal aspect in which all things clothe themselves — her judgement is warped by the opinion of her, the treatment of herself.[125]

So Alice is at once critical and warm hearted, full of pity for suffering, yet paranoid and easily slighted. Compare this to Frank McDermot's evaluation of Casement as 'a liar, an intemperate extremist, spiteful, neurotic, abusive,

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[123] Beatrice Potter as quoted in O'Broin, p. 4.
[124] Beatrice Potter as quoted in O'Broin, p. 4.
[125] O'Broin, p. 4.

humourless and inordinately vain; and also kind and chivalrous, a brave and dedicated man, a born crusader who hated cruelty and oppression'.[126]

The similarities between the personalities of the two become hard to ignore. Both have in common this active empathy with suffering, a drive to be active, but also an at times socially disabling obsession with how they are seen by others. The main thing which they seem to have in common is vanity, which in both their cases exists as a double-edged sword which on one hand pushed them to achieve great things and on the other produced varying levels of spitefulness and bitterness which sometimes led to their missions taking a less credible, realistic or successful route. They are both, therefore, constantly reviewing their reception and representation by others, and are self-conscious in their positioning of themselves in relation to organizations and other people.

This similarity between them is also a difference to others, a bond between the two that manifested itself in the sometimes childishly irreverent letters as already shown. They had a composite nature within the composite identity of Anglo-Irish nationalists, which may well have been fed by another deviation from the norm in terms of gender. If we are to accept Casement's oft-debated homosexuality as a probable reality (not related to the Black Diaries controversy), then this would leave Casement as someone deviating from the social norm of the time, and beyond the boundaries of national politics. The gender–related eccentricity (in terms of a movement away from

[126] MacDermot's views from his articles in *Sunday Times*, 1 April 1956, and *The Irish Times*, 12 May 1956, as summarised in Micheal Laffan , 'The Making of a Revolutionary: Casement and the Volunteers, 1913–14', in Mary Daly (ed.), *Roger Casement in Irish and World History*, (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2005), pp. 64–74, (p. 64).

the expected behaviour and norms of masculinity in his lifetime) can be mirrored by the gender–related eccentricity of Stopford-Green who took on her husband's work after his death and educated herself beyond what even her mother saw as socially appropriate for a lady whose main concern should have been the presentation of herself as conforming to the expected normal education of women. Instead, Stopford-Green became a published historian (amateur in nature, although worthy of recognition nonetheless) and a social centre for politically and culturally controversial thought in her London home. Stopford-Green moved in circles with were typically the realms of male dominance, and in this way also displayed difference to the accepted and assumed norms of her gender.

In such fashions, Casement and Stopford-Green aligned as two figures at odds with the expectations of their social class, caste and gender, and also sometimes at odds with themselves and others' perceptions of them.

3.5 Salon Nationalism

This section has as its aim a desire to explore a notion which I am going to call 'salon nationalism'. It should serve as an introduction to the attitudes held by predominantly Anglo-Irish Protestants of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, attitudes which contributed in multiple ways to the Easter Rising of 1916. This is a vast area for analysis, but it provides a rich backdrop against which to place Casement and Stopford-Green amidst some of their contemporaries.

Alice Stopford-Green's social circle contained varied players in the evolving Irish nationalism of the time. Many of these people figured heavily in the formation of a cultural Irish nationalist movement, which had ultimately as its object Irish independence from British cultural dominance, whether that be direct independence economically and politically as an autonomous nation-state, or in terms of something of a cultural definition separate to that of Britain. The actual political developments (if we can accept 'political' here to be related to direct rule and government) of Irish nationalism in the years that led to the 1916 Easter Rising and the subsequent changes and struggles leading to the 1937 constitution are not, as I have stated, necessarily what I wish to focus on in this chapter, well documented as they are by historians and political theorists. Instead the aim of this chapter is rather to examine some striking aspects of this 'cultural' nationalism (as separate to political agendas) in order to construct an example of identity in this would-be culturally ambiguous group.

Despite Casement's relationship with, and later conversion to, Catholicism he was originally from Anglo-Irish Protestant stock, similar in some ways to that of Alice Stopford-Green and many others such as Douglas Hyde and W. B. Yeats — frequently, although obviously not always — Ulster-born future Irish nationalists. Born in Ireland, but having a strong link to Britain, having worked and lived as British nationals, Casement, Stopford-Green and their contemporaries were born out of the upper classes of the ascendancy, and could as such have been perceived to have no connection to the 'native' Irish people — those whose previous generations would have spoken the Irish language, and who lived in the shadow of the Anglo-Irish 'Big House' land-owners' tradition. However, this group of people found themselves in a common situation which left them neither fully and purely British on account of living away from the British mainland, nor fully and purely Irish on account of their cultural affiliation through their planter or ascendancy heritage. This left their attitude to either homeland open to interpretation. Whereas many of the Anglo-Irish leant unquestioningly and most fully towards their English heritage, many found a superiority in the complexities of being composite. O'Broin quotes W. B. Yeats's father John, who explained the position taken by many of his contemporaries:

> Our feelings were curious and though exceedingly selfish not exclusively so. We loved them [the Irish] and their religion by its doctrine of submission and obedience unintentionally helped us; yet we were convinced that an Irishman, whether a Protestant or a Catholic, was

superior to every Englishman, and that he was a better comrade and physically stronger and of greater courage.[127]

The sense of identity and allegiance here is confused. Although this is the speech of a man from a previous generation, this attitude would have been what many of Casement's contemporaries were exposed to, or cultivated themselves. What is interesting here is that although this is an Anglo-Irish attitude that expresses a certain pride in the (somewhat essentialist) characteristics of 'Irishness', there is no doubt as to which side of their composite Anglo-Irish identity J. B. Yeats assumes them to belong. The Irish side is to be admired, but it is distinct from the dominant English side. The natural attachment and sense of belonging is to the centre of government in England, rather than to the Irish side of Dublin or Ireland as a whole. Ireland was, as J. B. Yeats describes the Irish Catholic tradition, submissive and obedient to the natural leader. Where this places the Anglo-Irish Protestant in the chain of submission and obedience to the colonial order is intriguing.

The Anglo-Irish position was often one of a complete association with British rule. O'Broin illustrates this by pointing out that often — as in the case of the nieces of Alice Stopford-Green — it was even the case that governesses employed were English, in order to cultivate English accents in the children as distinct from the local Irish one.[128] But on the other hand, if what J. B. Yeats believed is to be taken as not just the opinion of one man, but the general

[127] O'Broin, p. 17.
[128] O'Broin, p. 17.

opinion of some less rigid Anglo-Irish families, this affection or involvement (depending on the level of interaction) with traditionally Irish culture left them not slightly inferior socially and culturally to those born and raised in mainland Britain, but the reverse: slightly superior due to their distance from the straightforward centre of British administration and due to an exposure to this supposedly inferior race and their place simultaneously above and amongst it.

Casement's position differs slightly, I would have to suggest, on account in some ways of the family's lack of wealth and status in comparison to other more established and influential Anglo-Irish Ulster families, and also possibly on account of his mother's Catholic background which would surely have left him less ignorant to issues which may have seemed not even to exist to others brought up in a purely Irish Protestant tradition, such as Alice Stopford-Green. However, the presumption of his Britishness rather than Irishness is still strongly evident, most obviously in his early consular work. Of course, throughout his consular work his Irish identity became more and more pronounced, and joined that of those such as Douglas Hyde and Eoin MacNeill,[129] who had a strong influence on the cultural development of a nationalist movement with which Stopford-Green and Casement energetically engaged.

Alice Stopford-Green's interest in history, coupled with her already mentioned love of entertaining, resulted in her being introduced to and

[129] Eoin MacNeill (1867–1945) was a co-founder of the Gaelic League along with Douglas Hyde.

influenced by various political and social theories and causes. She was heavily influenced after the death of her husband by her friendship (established in 1894) with John Francis Taylor, who was Alice's lawyer and later to become the Irish correspondent for the *Manchester Guardian*. O'Broin attributes to this Alice's move towards thinking seriously about the position of Ireland and Britain. She became more critical of British policies, and moved towards a more and more Irish-centred way of thinking. Taylor, who died in 1902, paved the way for Stopford-Green's reception of the brand of Irish nationalism she would encounter with another of her influences, one whom she shared with Casement, the Irish scholar Eoin MacNeill.

MacNeill had been fascinated by the Irish language since his childhood, and inspired Stopford-Green with a cultural approach to Irish identity. Eoin MacNeill played an evidently prominent role in the Irish nationalist movement in the early 1900s, and was also to have a great influence on the focus of Alice Stopford-Green, and to be a great collaborator with Casement. MacNeill grew up in the Antrim Glens and from a very early age attached great significance to the native Irish tongue, having been introduced to it in his childhood by his nurse and others in the surrounding area. This meant that he can be seen as 'the first scholar of the first rank to be interested primarily in Irish history, a pioneer who hacked his way through a primeval forest'.[130]

MacNeill, was vice president of the Gaelic League and was instrumental in its success, which revolved around the teaching of Gaelic

[130] O'Broin, p. 22.

culture — the language, games, literature and traditions associated with an Ireland out of the reach of British rule. The Gaelic League, which was established in 1893, and which will be discussed in the next chapter, played a major role in the development of Irish nationalist thought and development. MacNeill was also involved with Casement in the development of Casement's Irish Brigade (established in 1913) and corresponded with him frequently during this venture.

The relevance of a figure such as MacNeill to Casement and Stopford-Green within this framework of salon nationalism is largely due to the obsession with an Irish nationalist cultural venture. MacNeill was not originally a particularly strongly political man, rather he believed that the future developments of Irish politics was inextricably linked, much like Douglas Hyde, to the establishing and encouraging of Irish cultural and historical movements. The intentions and motivations behind the Gaelic League (established in 1894) — in short, the promotion of traditional Irish culture in a bid to raise the respect and self-esteem of countrymen — became in many ways the focus of Casement, Stopford-Green and those such as MacNeill. Cultural invigoration and cultural preservation, as well as raising an awareness of the history of Ireland up until this point, became a passion for Casement and Stopford-Green. Stopford-Green, for her part, published volumes of historical works (*The Making of Ireland and Its Undoing* in 1908, *Irish Nationality* in 1911, *The Old Irish World* in 1912, and *The History of the*

Irish State to 1014 in 1925),[131] as well as supporting the Gaelic League. Casement was extremely excited by the early works of the Gaelic League, and was a source of great financial support to their endeavours. However, by 1911, Casement's faith in the League had waned, as his throwaway criticism of them in a letter illustrates, where he dismisses their work as 'chanting nouns and verbs in Dublin streets'.[132] Stopford-Green's publication of *Irish Nationality* at that time (1911), though, invigorated him once again, and he became eager to invigorate the other Protestants and Anglo-Irish countrymen to, as he had suggested in a letter to Stopford-Green a few years previously 'realise their nationality'.[133] I am comparing Stopford-Green's anti-English, romanticised Irish cultural promotion through her publications with Casement's radical, sometimes paternalistic in tone, desires for what Irish nationalism should be focused on, and together they offer an example of what I mean by 'salon nationalism'.

I am choosing this term not as a reductive one to mean a nationalism born out of frivolity and of little consequence, but rather to highlight where Anglo-Irish Protestant players placed themselves in the fight for Ireland and Irish identity. Stopford-Green's salon in London, which, after their initial introductory letter of 1904, Casement visited each time he was in London, becomes a symbol for the removed yet actively involved reality of the Anglo-Irish situation. Through entertaining and socialising away from the centre of

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[131] Alice Stopford-Green, *The Making of Ireland and Its Undoing* (Manchester: Ayer Publishing, 1908); *Irish Nationality* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1911); *The History of the Irish State to 1014* (London: Macmillian, 1925).
[132] Casement to Stopford-Green, 13 June 1911 fol. 38, MSS. 199/1, NLI.
[133] Casement to Stopford-Green, 27 June 1907, fol. 37, MSS 19, NLI.

the matter at hand, that is to say, Ireland, and yet at the centre of the British rule and policies which they were acting against in London, this reality shows an intriguing pattern of the reverse which is what salon nationalism is meant to represent. The subculture emerging from Anglo-Irish stock was forming an allegiance that was the reverse of what it should have been — their assumed loyalty and identity should have been British in nature, but were, through their actions and involvement with this nationalist cause, focused more on the Irish. Frequently privileged, upper-class Anglo-Irish figures were fighting a cause which was realistically more relevant to lower-class politically dominated Irish classes. Exaggerating the theme of a reverse situation even further, in a sort of distorted re-colonising, these Anglo-Irish upper-class people were key players in movements such as the Gaelic League, the Irish Volunteers and historical publications which were designed to teach 'Irishness' to the Irish masses once again. The folklore, traditions, and even the language were frequently being given back to Irish society by those who were the least likely to have been exposed to it. Much of this was a concerted attempt to *reverse* the process of Anglicisation. From the London salons of privilege and society, cultural identity, and therefore cultural nationalism, was being redefined and reintroduced. The frivolous connotations of the term salon nationalism are meant to point to the ironies of this microcosm of Anglo-Irish non-conformists — the irony that from the luncheons of a London-based socialite would come later gun running and uprising, the irony that those who may not in their childhoods have even been aware of the Irish language came to promote it as a

vital necessity for the success of a common cause, and the irony that amidst this set of contradictions Casement and Stopford-Green found respite from, and even amusement in, their own contrary natures.

These 'non-conformists', though, are not, as has been mentioned, actually anomalous or unique from their context. In fact, the deviation from the centre of empire, whilst simultaneously engaging with it in other locations, is entirely representative of the situation of Ireland within postcolonial studies. In this way Casement represents the difficulty of inhabiting differing, and at times, contrary locations in terms of self-definition. Terry Eagleton's chapter 'Postcolonialism: The Case of Ireland'[134] deals with the problems of locating Ireland in postcolonial discourse, and how this comes to represent the problems of identity inherent in the people of the nation:

> There are many names for the deconstruction of self and other, and one of them has been Ireland. One has only to glance at the bedevilled history of the country to see how marvellously the binary opposition of imperial self and colonial subject does not work.[135]

So it is evident that if such a combination does not work, there needs to be a negotiation of identity which goes some way to defining the location of Irish versus British, politically, socially and culturally. It is with this self-conscious self-definition that Casement had to be concerned in aligning himself with Irish

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[134] Terry Eagleton 'Postcolonialism: The Case of Ireland', in David Bennett (ed.), *Multicultural States: Rethinking Difference and Identity* (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 125–35.

[135] Eagleton, p. 127.

nationalism, but also that he becomes, in a sense, representative of the self-defining process of an entire nation.

4.0 Casement and Nationalist Discourses

4.1 Introduction

Roger Casement's involvement in Irish nationalism adds one of the most intriguing dimensions to any overview of his life and works, providing as it does the twist in the tail of the story, when the decorated symbol of Britain abroad turns to bite quite publicly and indiscreetly the hand that feeds him. Reasons for Casement's involvement in Ireland's bid for independence are presented by his contemporaries and biographies as being various. Sometimes, it is Casement's realisation of the nature of Ireland's colonial status, discovered whilst he battled against Leopold for the rights of the Congolese, which is credited as his motivation. On the other hand, Casement's nationalistic ideals are regarded as inevitable, given his Irish status and the flurry of activity regarding Irish national loyalty at the time. Occasionally, his impetus is put forward as being nothing more than the result of a petty and paranoid retaliation against the British Government at large, and the Foreign Office in particular, for personal reasons. In most cases, however, Casement is referred to in a manner which seems to mark him as unique, and his

conversion to Irish nationalism as being something which is difficult to fully understand. The principle aim of this chapter is to look at the development of nationalist discourses and ideology, and to locate Casement within it, rather than to continue to attribute this characteristic of being an anomaly to this traitor-cum-patriot. It is designed, through its choice of sources analysed (the myth-making in the story of the Manchester Martyrs, and Casement's own poetry) to show how Casement's self-definition and choices of location are representative of a national movement which is in the process of doing the same. In order to trace the development of discourse, this chapter will also revisit Casement's Congo report, published in 1904, as it is illustrative of Casement's division between the private and the public.

Analysing the development of Irish nationalist rhetoric and discourse as an evolution of ideas into loyalties into action will also allow for an analysis of Casement in this same vein. Moving away from close scrutiny of Casement in relation to, and within the strict boundaries of, his own life and works widens the scope of the impact of his actions (whilst perhaps providing more reasons for them) and also locates this 'unique' and 'misunderstood' figure quite firmly in his time from a more universal point of view. I will argue that Casement, although perhaps remarkable in the extent of his actions, evolved alongside Irish nationalism in a way that makes him, his life and his works, quite a valuable microcosm of nationalist movements universally, and postcolonial Irish discourse in particular in relation to representation and reception, key terms of this thesis.

In order to place Casement as parallel to the development of Irish nationalism instead of within or outside the movement, the chapter will examine some aspects of Irish nationalism and its discourse as relevant to Casement. The focus, however, will not be Casement himself throughout, but the evolution of the Irish nationalist vision, and its associated emerging theories. Rather than being a historically political examination in the truest sense, however, the chapter will concentrate on aspects more situated in the conscious construction of cultural politics and identity. In this way, Casement's correspondence to these theories and realities can be observed and analysed, offering an insight into his own private mindset and self-perception from the Congo Reform Association, through his affiliation with cultural movements such as the Gaelic League, up until his execution for treason.

4.2 Constructing Nationalist Myths and Symbols

Irish nationalism has a long, chequered and extremely powerful past, the keynotes of which are still employed in most aspects of modern Irish national identity, and exaggerated in both their importance and their following in Northern Ireland, a region which remains divided in its loyalty and national identity, and which illustrates quite emphatically the strong religious (specifically Catholic) associations of Irish nationalism. The period of nationalist activity with which this chapter is concerned can be marked off as

the period leading directly to the Easter Rising of 1916. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Ireland was under British Rule, and the ongoing friction between England and Ireland was well established. The Irish nationalist followed a trend of thought and vision, created and constructed by rhetoric and discourse not unique to Ireland's present, nor indeed to Ireland at all. However, alongside the political plotting and discussing, such trends of thought and vision were as inspired and reinforced by the iconography and symbols of nationalism as by the rational practicalities of a bid for independence. It is on these symbols and iconography that this analysis will concentrate, as Casement comes in time, through his own writing, to employ them in his self-representation. As Séan Farrell Moran points out in 'Images, icons and the practice of Irish history', the image 'has a power that succeeds where rational discourse fails; it persuades in ways that reason cannot do; and it influences us in a manner that resists rational analysis'.[136]

And so it is the history and the significance of this powerful Irish nationalist imagery and iconography that it will be most important to follow in this section, relying as it does on constructed ideas of vision, honour, and loyalty. The link between Casement and this analysis is obvious at this point — the man who so famously provided nationalists and republicans to this day with the slogan 'Loyalty is a sentiment, not a law' in his Speech from the Dock, and based most of his discussion of anti-colonial, or at the very least, anti-British government in Ireland on these notions of honour and vision can be

[136] Séan Farrell Moran, 'Images, icons and the practice of Irish history', in Lawrence McBride (ed.), *Images, Icons and the Irish Nationalist Imagination* (Dublin: Four Courts, 1999), pp. 166–76, p. 166.

seen, in many ways, to be a product of his environment. So analysing the symbols and visions that produce this sort of allegiance is important in understanding Casement's works in context, then analysing the construction of such symbols becomes vital. Understanding how, but also why these icons and images came about serves two very important purposes within this chapter: firstly, it allows us to appreciate the cultural climate in which Casement was steeped, and the influence this may have had during that period; and secondly, it brings to the fore this notion of 'construction' of identity, a process through which Casement himself passed during a similar timeframe, climaxing, much like Irish nationalism of the time, with the events of 1916. This sets out the key aspects of constructing an identity, or a representation of self, with which the future can engage and use as a foundation upon which to build its own identity. This will lead into future self-representations, and eventual posthumous representations of Casement, which are exploited in the ongoing negotiation of Irish identity, as illustrated in the following chapters.

National identity, loyalty and allegiances are complex issues, not least because whilst selling themselves as naturally occurring and innate, they are actually centred on a series of very carefully constructed systems and triggers, designed to motivate their subjects to hold them as something instinctive and collective. Each system or trigger then weaves itself into the fabric of tradition, which is crucial to national identity. As such, it runs along the lines of self-fulfilling prophecy, where myth becomes inseparable from fact, and the

tradition of defending and upholding what has been determined as the accepted past becomes more and more solid with the passing of every generation.

Issues surrounding national identity and self-definition, although still crucial in the Irish political and cultural scene, play their strongest role in times of rebellion, such as during the period leading up to the 1916 Easter Rising. Whilst economic and political success and independence were the desired result of this movement, it was necessary to create around this goal an over-riding sense of duty and unquestionable righteousness in order to secure maximum support and sacrifice. This necessity is a reality that is evident — the idea of honour and duty carries a soldier at war much farther than economic or political reasoning, and so securing an emotional response to a movement becomes the first logical means to the end. The language, symbolism, and imagery of national identity and struggle facilitate this necessity, and as noted by Catherine R. Stimpson, these factors do not exist as mere myths or a complete series of acknowledged truths, evolving and adapting when needed because 'as a textual garment, they form neither a seamless whole nor a transparent coat over 'reality'. They instead help to construct realities'.[137]

[137] Catherine R. Stimpson [Foreword], in Mary Louise Roberts, *Civilization Without Sexes: Reconstructing Gender in Post-War France, 1917–1927* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), pp. viii–xii, p. x.

4.2 Martyr Idolatry

The process of constructing these symbols and myths which construct realities of the future is shown quite starkly in an examination of a famous cultural remembrance located earlier in Irish history, but which has filtered through the generations and become interwoven with the Irish nationalist cause throughout: the story of the Manchester Martyrs. Gary Owens, in his article following the evolution of this myth 'Constructing the martyrs: the Manchester executions and the nationalist imagination' shows how fact can be manipulated and stamped in the nationalist memory and imagination to great and rousing effect, and is an example of a system which has been repeated so often it almost becomes instinctive in the national psyche.[138] This remembrance is centred on the execution of three Irish men in Manchester in 1867. The men were hanged for killing a police officer whilst trying to rescue fellow Fenians. The event received major coverage in Ireland, and its subtle (and at times not-so-subtle) manipulation is very instructive to trace. Owens is quick to point out that in this tracing, the term 'myth' is used as 'a narrative through which people understand and explain things rather than a story which is untrue'.[139] This distinction is important: the nationalist myth, and the mythical interpretations of those involved with it, provide a way in which to communicate elements of the cause, ideas and crucial components of the

[138] Gary Owens 'Constructing the martyrs: the Manchester executions and the nationalist imagination', in Lawrence McBride (ed.), *Images, Icons and the Irish Nationalist Imagination* (Dublin: Four Courts), pp. 18–36.
[139] Owens, p. 19.

inspiration for rebellion and struggle, and as a result, to crudely bind any manipulation or interpretation of these stories and facts together as mere 'untruths' or 'lies' would be to misunderstand the very process of the construction of reality on which this section is focused. Much in the way fairytales are used to teach children the realities of good and evil, it is less the characters, and more the message, which is the truth of the situation. In fact, many nationalist histories or myths are not so far removed from fairytales in their nature as could first be thought, and this trend or genre of representation became a characteristic of those involved in Irish nationalism, notably Casement himself, as shall be examined later.

Owens focuses on the reaction of the Irish press to the execution of these three men, and notes that two dominant themes emerged from the coverage which was digested by the Irish readers: firstly, anglophobia, and secondly, Catholic martyrolatry. Both themes, as shall be introduced at this point, were absolutely essential to the core message of Irish nationalism. Examining how this anglophobia and Catholic martyrolatry were conveyed and encouraged in the case of the Manchester martyrs highlights the system used by nationalists to implant these twin aspects in the psyche of those in Ireland. Reports from the executions went into great detail about the nature of the English crowd gathered to watch the hangings, and in doing so displays all the makings of indignant and inevitable Anglophobia on behalf of any reader: the crowd was described as eating and drinking, singing and revelling with 'a gusto that only the eve of an execution can bring to the enlightened

Englishman'.[140] This foul, uncouth crowd was replicated again and again in different reports, giving the impression of a base and gluttonous English culture, delighting and revelling in the torture of the Irish. Far from the English being presented as a civilised, elegant, and powerful product of British culture, reports focused on what Owens terms as the 'by-products of British civilization'.[141] Certainly the reporters concerned did not seem to feel any need to restrain their writing in any way during descriptions of the low-class crowds who came from the distinctly British 'reeking cellars and nameless haunts, where the twin demons of alcohol and crime reign supreme'. In fact, there was no attempt to tone down feelings towards these English creatures who 'came in all their repulsiveness with the rags of wretchedness upon their backs and the cries of profanity and obscenity upon their lips'.[142] The British crowd were put forward as debased, cruel, immoral, unforgiving and unsympathetic — all factors which, if firmly enough imprinted upon the minds of the Irish, would prove to be very useful when translated into the Irish situation under British rule.

In cultivating this anglophobia, the journalists indulged themselves in something which can be seen to be a very powerful tool in nationalist rhetoric, that of melodrama. As shall be seen throughout, melodrama plays a very prominent role in the process of self-identification to the Irish nationalist, and also is used frequently to create these myths that are so important to the cause.

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[140] *Freeman's Journal* 25 November 1867, as quoted in Owens, p. 20.
[141] Owens, p. 20.
[142] Alexander Martin Sullivan, *The Dock and The Scaffold* (Rhode Island: Providence, 1880), p. 3.

Floods of melodramatic prose and presentation manipulate the visions of the condemned men and their executions in a way which leaves no doubt as to the good and evil polarities in the piece, to the identification of the binary opposites of oppressor and oppressed, and which also appeals to any existing sense of suffering and injustice. Melodrama is obvious in these almost hysterical accounts of the barbarous, screeching, debased crowds, but really comes most impressively into play with the descriptions of the martyrs themselves, who enter on to the scene of baying crowds and thick mist that morning as the polar opposite of the British present. By all accounts, the men 'bore themselves with the unwavering courage and single-heartedness of Christian heroes'.[143]

Immediately, the symbols and icons evoked by the reporter spring forward. The Irishmen are everything that the Englishmen are not: courageous, dignified, pure and calm. And, perhaps most importantly of all, they are entering into the realms of 'Christian Heroes'. Gone is the hysterical tone used to describe the rabble, and in its place is a tone and pace in writing that is self-assured, elegant and almost poetic:

> The morning mist hangs like a halo over his [Allen, one of the martyrs] head, throwing into relief his slender but erect form. He stands there for a second with his wealth of raven locks thrown boldly back from his forehead, his deep, bright eyes glistening reverently on a crucifix clasped in his hands, and his pale, young face in earnest dreamy abstraction as if he had

[143] Sullivan, p. 20.

already parted from the world. He throws one look around and down and every head is uncovered and from every lip comes an involuntary murmur of pity.[144]

There is a high level of emphasis and a dense volume of signifiers designed to construct these men as righteous martyrs, and not convicted criminals, within this passage. The reporter here is creating a perspective which provokes sympathy and admiration in the reader, and is availing of every opportunity to reinforce how revered these men, as martyrs to the cause, truly are. The religious imagery is frequent, juxtaposed then by the implied immorality of the British crowd. This myth-making deliberately sets up and reinforces the polarities at play. This martyrdom is akin to self-flagellation, and in this way, the martyrs and those who construct the myth are inverting the power balance between the oppressor and the oppressed to their own advantage. The allusion to religious piety — the halo, the crucifix, the 'saintly resignation' with which one of the other martyrs is described as displaying — appeals to the notion of a higher force, a clear division between right and wrong, and evokes sainthood in the midst of the Irish nationalist cause. Constructing the myth in this way effectively signifies that more than honour and duty to one's country, there is also the not-so-small matter of honour and duty to God to consider. This moves nationalism in the unquestionable realm of holy righteousness, privileged with immunity from doubt.

The men are also presented as possessing all that which a culture and society values most — richness and beauty ('his wealth of raven locks'),

[144] 'Before the Scaffold', *Irishman*, 20 November 1869, as quoted in Owens, p. 21.

courage ('thrown boldly back from his forehead'), integrity and clarity ('his deep, bright eyes glistening') and youth, humility, and vision ('his pale, young face in earnest dreamy abstraction'). These features collectively form a paragon of the virtues held precious in not only a person, but also in a culture and country. Their youth, strength and sense of righteous purpose translate into the ideal for Irish nationalism — a nation filled with strong, earnest and noble characters such as this, fighting the true and just fight for their rich and holy country. This is a message that translated well and often via myths such as these throughout Irish nationalism. What is really being symbolised by these 'rich' images is the association which comes with wealth, which is translated as power. These myths are instrumental in giving power to both the participants and the intended audience.

Of course, the theme of martyr idolatry, or martyrolatry, is also made incarnate through such religious imagery, and is also a key point in the nationalist consciousness. The idea of martyrdom shall be evaluated in more detail in following chapters, and directly related to Casement, but at this point how the martyrs in this example are created as such is of interest. The pity evoked, and the status allowed to them through these beautiful and dramatic visions of purity and self-sacrifice again raise them above doubt or reproach, and reconstruct them as heroes, empowered in a powerless situation. Again, this transfers with ease the notion of sacrifice, struggle and an absolute devotion to the cause to the Irish situation at large, and the reverence and admiration with which these martyrs are written about becomes inspirational,

and in turn aspirational, to any young men of Ireland who would wish to be greeted with the same all-encompassing romance and respect, themes which also shall be developed later.

The martyrs were commemorated in Ireland in a number of ways, but one of the most dramatic was the staging of mock funeral processions for the lost Fenians, some of which were attended by a mourning crowd awash with green clothing. These mock funerals were often also held at night. The symbolism here is again powerful — the green clothing immediately and irrevocably symbolises a unity and interchangeability between the martyrs and Ireland, and shows solidarity amongst the crowd. This incredibly self-conscious adornment of themselves with all symbols of Ireland and nationalism — the colour green, the religious ritual, the honouring of the dead — becomes a dramatic statement, and quickly a newly compiled tradition, which was to be used over and over again. The men stop simply being men executed by the British, and become sons thieved from mother Ireland in the night. What crime they committed and the actual facts of what happened during the execution begin to pale into insignificance, and the symbol this event becomes grows ever more important. The mass grieving which mutated into a type of annual pilgrimage to mark the anniversary of the executions signifies an emotional response to a more general theme of oppression, domination, victimisation, struggle, sacrifice and grief, as well as a rising solidarity and opposition to the forces responsible. Owen also points to the commemorative statues and memorials dedicated to the Manchester martyrs

over time as a further construction and cementing of the implications of this myth:

> Most of the early ones were variations on Catholic cemetery art, Celtic crosses being the favoured form mixed with Madonna-like figures of Erin. By the turn of the century there was a trend toward larger and more elaborate structures that featured harps, wolf-hounds and, on the Tipperary and Kilrush memorials, medallions embossed with likenesses of the martyrs. Statues of Erin, such as the one on the Ennis monument, were draped from the neck down in mourning garb, her waist encircled by a broad band of green silk.[145]

The layering of symbolism and icons of Irish nationality, Catholicism, war and glorification fuse together impressively in this way and form what the *Limerick Leader* defined as 'altars of nationality' where nationalists could 'renew their vows of allegiance to their native land'.[146]

Interesting, too, is the inclusion of Irish mythological symbols — the harp and the wolfhound, for example. Such symbols seem an easy way to link in Irish history before British rule to the nationalist cause, constructing a reality that implies that in shaking off British rule, nationalism will not be creating an independent country, merely restoring it. These green garments and gold harps instantly bring to mind the design of Casement's uniform for his army of Irish Volunteers, which proves how synonymous with and accepted by Irish nationalists such signifiers were.

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[145] Owens, p. 34.
[146] *Limerick Leader*, 25 November 1901, as quoted in Owens, p. 34.

Owen highlights a more humorous, but none the less real, mutation of the myth: the transformation of the appearance of the martyrs themselves. Drawings of the three from the time show mid-1860s young men of working-class origin, whereas in 1893, drawings of the three in the *Irish Weekly Independent* show 'handsome, clear-eyed, well-groomed and well-dressed paragons of Victorian rectitude'.[147] This difference between the illustrations is remarkable — the men have been almost totally transformed for a contemporary audience in a stroke of blatant revisionism. This illustrates quite clearly the tendency in Irish nationalist history to re-interpret the story to fit the evolved myth, and to reconstruct an already consciously constructed reality in order to serve the purpose of the contemporary movement. Conscious reconstruction of myths and the associated loyalties and impulses which they provoke forms a type of collective selectivity not unique to the Irish nationalist movement, and replicated on a smaller, but still notable level, by those involved in the movement, such as Casement himself, as will be explored later.

The example of the Manchester martyrs and its role in Irish nationalism highlights very important aspects on which the movement relies: the embracing of myths and symbols in constructing and furthering the cause, the reality and extreme importance of emotional response to such myths, nationalist imagination and its role, the construction of anglophobia and Catholic martyrolatry, and both rational and irrational historical memory in

[147] As discussed in Owens p. 36, which includes images from the *Irish Weekly Independent*, 2 December 1893.

revising and re-interpreting history in order to create a present and a future acceptable to Irish nationalists as a whole.

4.3 The Gaelic League

Casement's involvement with the Gaelic League is of note for two reasons. Firstly, it shows him as immersed in the efforts of a whole body of people in constructing and Irish national identity, but secondly because it seems reflective of his own personal negotiation of representation.

The formation of the Gaelic League provides a sturdy example of how the characteristics of Irish nationalism were put into practice in pre-Rising Ireland. The ethos and progression of the Gaelic League is charted in other works, for example in *The Gaelic League Idea*[148] amongst others, but for the purposes of this discussion of the history of the organisation by Tom Garvin provides a representative overview of its significance within the creation of the nationalist ideal. Inaugurated in 1893, the Gaelic League was, according to Garvin, 'in many ways the central institution in the development of the Irish revolutionary élite', comprising as it did of many of the future leaders of 1916, as well as prominent and leading figures in what was to become the Irish Free State.[149] It attracted a mass following, particularly amongst the Irish youth, and stands as a vivid example of how a chiefly cultural society can be formed and used for far-reaching political means. The ultimate aim of the League was to

[148] Séan O'Tuama, *The Gaelic League Idea* (Dublin: Mercier Press, 1972).
[149] Tom Garvin, *The Evolution of Nationalist Politics* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1981), p. 78.

preserve and promote the Irish language, and alongside this to promote aspects and elements of 'Irish culture' among the whole population, but most specifically, the young. Casement was amongst the many supporters of this organisation, and because of this it is useful to evaluate the visions and rhetoric of the Gaelic League, standing as it does as an example of the cultural and political climate in which Casement was involved.

Groups like the Gaelic League came about in response to a void in Irish political life — parliamentary associations were floundering and losing momentum in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and support which would feasibly have been given to these groups instead flowed into 'cultural-nationalist' organisations of this kind. Garvin is quick to point out that this peculiarity was not unique to Ireland at this time, as what he terms the 'fashionable contempt for parliamentary politics' was a feature throughout Europe. This contempt paved the way for 'romantic political cults' to flourish on a transnational scale. The Boer War[150] (about which Casement had great knowledge) also led to a shift in political opinion, resulting in a 'galvanising effect on nationalist politics'.[151] In the midst of a climate which was in the process of separating pro- and anti-imperialist affiliations, pro- and anti-union politics, and a rising tide of Irish nationalism more noticeable on the ground than in the parliamentary chambers, the Gaelic League engaged itself in the aforementioned process of construction of identity and traditional culture.

[150] The Boer War (1899–1902) was fought between large numbers of troops from British possessions in the Boer Republics, which led to their conversion into British colonies.
[151] Garvin, p. 91.

Founded in Dublin in the last decade of the nineteenth century, the League's first priority was based on antiquarian researchers and their work of presenting an Ireland that antedated the Anglo-Norman invasion. In this manner, the group existed as a revivalist group, encouraging a return to Ireland before British rule, to a true sense of 'Irishness', and to a firm establishment of self-respect amongst the nationalist community, at home or abroad. The majority of the group's first members were the educated and the middle class, and there was also a great following amongst returning emigrants, or those living throughout the Irish diaspora. As already stated, the League also appealed especially to Irish youths, with its 'mixture of idealistic patriotism, learning, and open air recreation' and was in tune with many groups of this kind throughout Europe at the time[152] This wholesome, non-political, self-respecting Irish cultural group would become one of the main components in the political definition of Ireland in the years to come, despite its attempt to present itself as a merely cultural movement. As Garvin notes: 'In effect, the League educated an entire political class'.[153]

Why this movement is so relevant to this chapter can be explained by the League's sense of self-perception, it goals, and its involvement in 'culturing' an entire, soon to be very influential, group of Irish nationalists. Culture became the weapon – in effect, during this time of political difficulty, culture replaced politics in pre-Rising Ireland, and therefore interpretation of it

[152] Garvin, p. 102.
[153] Garvin, p. 102.

became vital. This culture was to centre on the Irish language and pre-British rule Irish tradition:

> The revival of Irish logically entailed the construction of a new national culture from a dying one. What this new national culture was to look like was not always clear. Certainly, it was to be un-English, which meant, in practice, that English popular culture, English literature and English art, together with the non-Irish and non-Catholic systems of political and social ideas emanating from London could easily be represented as being alien and 'un-Irish'[154]

And so the very definition of Irish nationalism can be seen to have been inextricably linked to ideas of religion, popular culture, anglophobia (or at least, anglo-resistance) and revivalist. The intriguing aspect of such a construction is that this organisation was compiled of people frequently like Casement — those who were English-speaking and chiefly urban dwellers, meaning that they had, in varying degrees, links with British, and specifically London, life. In an attempt to resist becoming an extension of Britain, this 'throwback' approach to culture and identity had to be enforced. The dilemma facing those such as Casement was that, although desperate to identify themselves as fully as possible with the nationalist movement, most participants did not speak Irish — quite a large stumbling block. The second problem and irony was that this reintroduction of a largely out-dated culture effectively meant teaching the Irish how to be Irish, when in harsh reality, those who did embody the Gaelic League ideal of Irishness were, as Garvin

[154] Garvin, p. 102.

puts it, 'busily divesting themselves of it as fast as they could'[155] in order to advance themselves, something unfortunately synonymous with becoming more and more British.

This problem is one faced by most countries in early days of nationalism attempting to overthrow colonial rule — a country promotes a return to the nation they were before colonisation as a means of overthrowing the coloniser, but a return to this culture and way of life frequently means a regression in certain areas, either socially or economically. The lengthy period of British rule and English-speaking Ireland meant that the nationalist vision in some ways did not cater for progress, or make allowances for the fact that for hundreds of years, English had become the language of culture and commerce, and whether desirable or not, was usually the first — and indeed, only — language of most of the influential players on the Irish scene. As such, the theme of emotional response is clear once again, where actions are based more on an emotional response to a situation than on a rational one. The emotional response to the problem of the Irish language was to teach it, and the role of the League became a very important emotional support for a caste of people who, instead of a forced assimilation into the governing British culture to make their mark, could instead boost their self-esteem through an active involvement in this organisation. Such issues of self-esteem were especially felt amongst the Irish abroad in America, or indeed in England itself. Involvement in the Gaelic League suddenly afforded them status, purpose and allegiance, and a sort of bizarre colonial inversion happened in this way. This

[155] Garvin, p. 103.

'inversion' took the form of supporters of the Gaelic League returning from abroad, or from the British mainland, with the purpose of promoting the League's vision and encouraging, if not teaching, those in Ireland what they should do to become involved. In this way, Garvin likens them to civilising missionaries 'working in reverse to engage in quasi-political action'.[156] Education such as this most definitely aligns itself with the notion of constructing identities afresh from various historical ingredients (the Irish language, Irish literature, and so forth), and forms what Garvin terms 'Gaelic Unrealism'. The gap between reality and imagination was one which needed to be bridged quickly if the League were to be successful — such a revival of a variety of Irishness at times so outdated as to need antiquarian researchers to uncover it would require all of the techniques used in the construction of nationalist myths and narratives, as in the case of the Manchester martyrs. And so this neo-Gaelic nationalism marketed itself across the board — as it was (officially speaking) a non-political organisation, all sectors of the community could benefit. As mentioned, it provided self-esteem for the Irish who felt themselves belittled by British rule and their role in British society, it offered a way for members of the Anglo-Irish ascendancy to commune with those from whom they had been separated by their connection with Britain, and interestingly, it offered Protestants a way to affiliate themselves to an identity free from affiliation to religion or politics. For a period at least, the Gaelic League was effective in crossing political divides in the name of culture.

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[156] Tom Garvin, *Irish Revolutionaries in Ireland 1858–1928* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), p. 88.

Of course, such harmony could not last. One of the reasons for this was the inextricably linked nature of the symbols of nationalism and Catholicism. As illustrated in the example of the Manchester martyrs, Irishness and Catholicism have been traditionally interchangeable, if not synonymous, signifiers. The heavy emphasis on the Irish language created by the Gaelic League only reinforced this. Consequently, many of the components of the Irish nationalist vision were parallel to those of the Irish Catholic vision.

The linguistic aspect reintroduces the theme of constructing symbols, as it is linked to the religious associations of 'Irishness'. This religious element also then points to Irish Catholic life and values in terms of symbols and suggestion, which comes full circle to the values and aspirations of Irish nationalism. Mother Mary becomes, through this same system, an easy equivalent of Mother Ireland, and the role of martyrdom in the perpetuation of the religious faith transferable to the role of the population in the perpetuation of national faith, and the fight against ancient English persecution of Catholicism easily swapped for the contemporary persecution of the Irish nationalist. In fact, so forceful was the connection between Irish culture and Catholicism that, as Garvin points out, one newspaper, the *Leader*, was to ask in 1901 'could a Protestant be Irish?',[157] a question which could have been of great interest to Casement.

The use of linguistic and cultural politics really formed a two-pronged attack which mimicked on a small scale the over-riding tactic of nationalist cultural activism: on one hand, the Irish language was promoted as being the

[157] Garvin, *Irish Revolutionaries in Ireland 1858–1928,* p. 85.

traditional language of the revered, pre-British rule ancestors, and in its revival, so too was a myriad of esteemed heritage to be proud of, and which promised to nurture and best serve the free Ireland of tomorrow. However, on the other hand, the English language was promoted as the language of commerce, calculation, oppression and godlessness. Similar to the case of the Manchester martyrs, it was not enough to merely glorify the martyrs as model citizens: in order to truly cement support, the English crowds had to be presented as the polar opposite – base, cruel, self-serving and repugnant. As the English language was the vehicle for British vision, it was to be scorned and mocked. As such, the Irish/English language metaphor formed a symbiotic symbol-system that exists at the very core of Irish nationalist thought and impulse.

What uncovers the reality of these impulses remains the distance between this vision of a clear distinction, with Nationalist-meaning-Irish-meaning-Catholic, and the actual objective situation. As already mentioned, speaking Irish was not at the disposal of those who probably would have wished it the most, and this projected holy trinity of allegiance did not actually reflect real life very often. Of course, a few years into the twentieth century the Gaelic League had lost its cross-community representative faculty, and was firmly nationalist and Catholic. But overall, this vision of unity was just that — a vision, in both senses of the word. A vision in that, despite that often different reality, the League and its members represented Irish nationalism as a whole — Gaelic-speaking, nationalist (and therefore Anglo-resistant)

Catholics, and also a vision in the sense that should this not be the case at present, the construction of such a reality should be the ultimate goal.

It is easy to wonder, then, that if so many players did not conform absolutely to this vision, lacking as they were in one aspect (for example, speaking Irish, or being Catholic), does it naturally follow that they concentrated more firmly on, or exaggerated, those elements that did establish their fellowship? Or indeed, in order to follow this movement, was it inevitable that, element-by-element, they would find themselves mimicking the reality set by this symbol-system in the long term?

Another factor which will come into play, and which should therefore be introduced at this point, is the concept of status amongst Irish nationalists of this time. Garvin rightly highlights the importance of what he decides is 'status resentment':

> The emergent elite was obsessed by a sense of moral superiority and anger at the contempt in which it sensed it was held by the establishment. A curious inverted snobbery encouraged the embracing of a partly artificial counter-culture, constructed as a compensation for the discomfort generated by the existing status system.[158]

So where in other circumstances this strangely impractical revivalist solution may have disintegrated quite quickly, the opposite happened for reasons of colonial status. The elite of Ireland were still lacking status in British terms, and one solution was to grab with both educated hands a concept that they may

[158]Garvin, *Nationalist Revolutionaries in Ireland 1858–1928*, p. 91.

well have scorned at a different time. Being neo-Gaelic afforded them the opportunity not to be merely inferior to the British, but instead different. The sense of moral superiority would prove useful in many different ways in supporting the symbiosis of pro-Irish/anti-British positions, and on many different platforms, as shall be examined in relation to Casement, his life, and his works in Irish nationalism.

This reconstruction of identity leads to two main points when considering Casement and his contemporaries: status resentment and the integral notions of nationalist allegiance. As Garvin concludes at one point 'status resentment, then, could only be cured at the high price of assimilation into the establishment, a cure available to only a few'.[159]

Instead of aiming for this assimilation into the dominant society, social climbers assimilated themselves into the counter culture of the Gaelic League as a backlash to their lower (or at least ambiguous) colonial status. This meant that the reigning standards amongst such people became synonymous with those of the neo-Gaelic nationalist movement as 'Neo-Gaelic nationalism retained the values of self-sacrifice for the group, religious communalism, purity, respect for women, fear of external evils and idealism which were taught by the Irish Catholicism of the time'.[160]

It is against and amongst this climate which Casement's self-perception regarding his Irish nationalism must then be examined.

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[159] Garvin, *Irish Revolutionaries in Ireland 1858–1928*, p. 60.
[160] Garvin, *Irish Revolutionaries in Ireland 1858–1928*, p. 90

4.4 The Destiny of Martyrdom

Although Casement in his consular and other work had travelled significantly, Ireland and its status and self-perception had arguably the greatest effect on his own sense of self. As a traveller who, by the nature of his job, never could settle long enough in one place to call it home, the sense of his own 'roots', if such a thing could be clearly identified, would prove very enlightening in a bid to understand his motivations, both in his work and in his life. Attempts to establish his sense of self must then rely on his private letters which deal with this subject, and his public works in the form of his Speech from the Dock, his Congo Report, and his poetry. This cross-section of writing, whilst at first seeming perhaps quite narrow, is designed to offer a focused example of how Casement viewed himself, how he wished others to view him, and what contrasts could be made between writings from his highest and lowest points in the eyes of the British government. As the importance of place, and the importance of the influence of his contemporaries will both be examined in different chapters, here Casement's development shall be set against the background of the progression of the Irish nationalist virtues already deciphered and highlighted in this chapter.

In many ways, Casement seems to have viewed the Irish nationalist narrative as waiting for a main character, and like his search for a character such as Morel to head the Congo Reform Association, Casement seems to have come to the same conclusion about himself in heading the nationalist

cause: here was a man, indeed. Although always a prolific letter writer and conversationalist, Casement seems to have been gripped by the Congo problem, but absolutely obsessed with Ireland. Indeed, his cousin Gertrude Parry (née Bannister) wrote in her account of his life that 'all through his life on the Congo and later when he was transferred to South America, his letters to relatives and friends are full of one subject – Ireland Ireland always Ireland'[161]

This no doubt seems to have been the case, certainly in Casement's later years, but the manipulation of his own memory, and the memory of others towards the end of his life will be examined at later point.

Casement was, as is evident in the chapter on the Congo Reform Association, passionate about the abuses in the Congo Free state, and in no doubt as to the course of action which must be taken to ensure the freedom of the Congolese workers. Nor did he doubt where the blame lay for the atrocities. His letters to Morel are full of motivational praise and a constant underlining of how important the work which they were undertaking would be in the present, but also in the future. He demonstrates early on an appreciation of longevity of action, and the notion of history in the making, and although an element of vanity must surely be present in such an awareness, amidst the genuine humanitarian motivation behind the movement, this vanity (on Casement's side most particularly) can be seen as a useful spur, and a small indulgence as recompense for such a massive and generally selfless task. Casement presents as a passionate man — his long letters, in their florid and

[161] Gertrude Parry, from the introduction to *Some Poems of Roger Casement* (Michigan: The Talbot Press, 1918), p. xi.

excitable tone and pace, testify quite strongly to this character trait. However, parallel to Casement's passionate private side during the Congo situation runs his public side: controlled, calculating and detached to an acceptable professional level. This distinction can be made by examining his 1904 Congo Report which was presented to the British government. Using this report, although it seems to be slightly out of place in the chronology of this evaluation of Casement's involvement in Irish nationalism, provides a comparative framework for the capacity Casement had to negotiate his private and public representation to a certain degree.

Although it would be incorrect to call the tone of the report cold or detached in the usual sense of the word, it does show the work of a man who at this time is capable of presenting his point of view as objectively as possible, whilst still inferring his opinion on the matter as a whole. Whereas Morel's writings on Casement show a man angst-ridden by his Congolese experience, murmuring 'Poor, poor people' at the end of a passionate conversation about how best to serve them, his report is comprised of passages such as the following:

> At one of the smallest of these Chumbiri villages, where there are not more than ten persons all told, and only three of these women able to prepare and cook the food 40 Kwanga (180 lb. to 270 lb. Weight of food) had to be supplied every week at a payment of 40 rods (2 fr.). These people said: 'How can we possibly plant and weed our gardens, seek and prepare and boil the cassava, make it into portable shape, and then carry it nearly a day's journey to the post? Moreover if the kwanga we make are a little small or not well-cooked, or we complain that the rods given us in settlement are two short, as they sometimes are, then we are beaten by the

wood-cutters, and sometimes detained several days to cut firewood as punishment.' Statements of this kind might be tediously multiplied.[162]

Casement here shows himself to be a skilled reporter and negotiator. His personal tone could indeed said to be, on first reading, detached — he reports the facts, admits an element of tedium in the task with his last line here, and quotes verbatim instead of interpreting the words for himself or describing the women and their emotional state in compassionate detail. However, Casement, by using direct speech quotations, cleverly allows the Congolese women to have their say directly, without manipulation or revision, in a situation where they have had little or no say for years. This lets the facts speak for themselves, and removes any chance of an accusation of hysteria or emotional response on behalf of the author, which may have tainted the reality. The disgust with which Casement often raged against Leopold and his regime in his letters is also disciplined in his report:

It is only right to say that the present agent of the A.B.I.R.[163] Society I met at Bongadanga seemed to me to try, in very difficult and embarrassing circumstances, to minimize as far as possible, and within the limits of his duties, the evils of the system I there observed at work [...] On Sunday, the 30th August, I saw six of the local sentries going back with cap-guns and ammunition pouches to Nsungamboyo, after the previous day's market, and later in the day, when in the factory grounds, two armed sentries came up to the agent as we walked, guarding

[162] This is cited from The Congo Report, as quoted by Seamus O' Síochain, in *The Eyes of Another Race: Roger Casement's Congo Report and 1903 Diary* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2004), p. 57.

[163] Anglo-Belgian India Rubber and Exploration Company, one of the most notorious of the concession companies in the Congo.

> sixteen natives, five men tied neck by neck, with five untied women and six young children. This somewhat embarrassing situation, it was explained to me, was due to the persistent failure of the people of the village those people came from to supply its proper quota of food.[164]

Casement's tone here is, despite the extremely serious subject matter, almost comically that of the stereotypical English gentleman. Whether this is intentional or just instinctive is difficult to say, but compared to his rallying cries against the Englishman as shall be demonstrated later, it is hard not to view this formal tone as a parody. Casement labels the abuse of Congolese natives, tied by their necks in a debasing manner, with women and children included in the group, as a 'somewhat embarrassing situation'. He is every inch the colonial gentleman, regrettably reporting on the 'embarrassing and difficult' — with this tone, Casement comes across as modest, with no urge to rock the boat, but feeling obliged (due to his noble British character, no doubt) to report what he has found, albeit reluctantly at times. Of course, the reality is almost comical in its difference from this projection. Casement, in his writings, displays an ego to rival Morel's, seemed positively attracted to galvanising upheaval and reform, and based most of his career on unearthing truth and controversy. Again, whether this style of writing and representation was conscious, or (perhaps more likely) an instinctive evaluation of his role and how such reports would be received, Casement shows himself to be capable of control and discipline in these early days, with an astute perception

[164] O' Síochain, in *The Eyes of Another Race: Roger Casement's Congo Report and 1903 Diary*, p. 103.

of audience. Although he retained this talent to a point throughout his life, I would argue that in his growing attachment to Irish nationalism, Casement lost control of this discipline and distinctive ability, and with it lost control of his audience and, to a degree, their faith in him.

René MacColl, in his biography of Casement, seems to be of this opinion also, as he paints a portrait of a passionate, yet petty man:

> I picture Casement very much on the defensive, even in his moment of triumph [during the success of his Congo Report]; quick to take offence; on the look-out for slights and sneers [...] my feeling is that Casement could rather easily have been steered away from the path of the treason which he finally chose, by the simple expedient of someone having been a bit nicer to him. All he really needed was to be flattered, made much of, jollied along. He was vain.[165]

It is difficult to argue with this point – the success Casement experienced with the Congo Reform Association, and the hard work which he dedicated to it, was spurred along by the interpersonal dynamic of mutual praise and appreciation cultivated by him and Morel. One cannot help but wonder what would have happened to Casement's anglophobic conclusion had the British government and its Foreign Office more publicly cosseted him and his achievement, not altering his report in any way, and upholding him as a British legend in the making. His suspicion of the Foreign Office and their attitude towards him ran deep, and in its growth, it began to devour any wish to be answerable to its government. Casement was indeed vain, and also self-

[165] René MacColl, *Roger Casement: A New Judgement* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1956), p. 48–49.

aggrandising in his passions. The factual and loyal tone of the Congo Report can be then contrasted with his writings in 1914, whilst travelling to Montreal and New York promoting the Irish nationalist cause Casement suggests that 'if the English had only known the thoughts in my heart and the impulses I obeyed, when I did the things they took pride in, I wonder would their press have praised my 'heroism' and 'chivalry' as they did'.[166]

This is an illustration of Casement's growing tendency toward revisionism. Certainly when carrying out his post as British Consul, he gave an indication of the strength of his nationalist, anti-colonial feeling, but not to this extent, nor did he indicate this cunning duplicity which he gives the impression of being proud of at times later. It seems that the more he felt himself victimised and censored by the Foreign Office, for example (whether in a state of paranoia or otherwise), the more taking a stand against them became inevitable. And when Casement, steeped in status resentment, felt compelled to make this choice, only one obvious, ready-made solution could step up — the role as Irish nationalist. Although, as is evident, he always supported the Irish nationalist cause, the extent of his public commitment to the campaign in some ways illustrates how his private and public self-representations were confused. Casement's anxiety about his public reception gives way to an exaggerated self-perception. His status anxiety leads him to seek out positions where he will be received as powerful. In 1914, Casement wrote to Alice Stopford-Green that 'the Irish here [New York] would make me

[166] Casement writing to Stopford-Green, 4 July 1914, fol. 39, MSS. 109/2, NLI.

a demi-God if I let them'.[167] He was here, albeit unwittingly (and in actual fact, incorrectly regarding himself at this time), highlighting the realm of possibility offered by Irish nationalism to figures such as himself, as already discussed in relation to the Gaelic League. A man in his position could be a lesser Englishman, never quite assimilated into the dominant colonial culture, or he could become a hero in fighting against it. The twin aspects of martyrolatry and anglophobia began to show themselves in a psychology very much based on an attitude of being either with them, or against them — if Casement was not 'with' the British government to a level which satisfied his self-perceived status, then a handy default position of 'against' it was delivered neatly to his sense of passion, melodrama and self-importance in the form of the nationalist cause.

In this way Casement's nationalism developed in much the same way as the Gaelic League progressed. In order to remove himself from the humiliation of being below his employer, Casement drew distinctions between their culture and his by debasing English culture, such as in 1907, in a letter to Alice Stopford-Green:

> If only you knew how I loathe them! I have had enough dealings with Englishmen [...] I have no belief in Englishmen – Do you know what Michael Devitt wrote of them? '[...] They are a nation without faith, truth or conscience, enveloped in a panoplied pharaism, and an incurable hypocrisy. Their moral appetite is fed on falsehood [...] They talk of liberty while ruling India

[167] Casement to Stopford-Green, 29 July 1914, fol. 39, MSS. 109/2, NLI.

and Ireland against the principles of a Constitution professed as a political faith but prostituted to the interests of class and landlord rule'.[168]

This letter in particular illustrates some very important points about Casement and his thoughts. Firstly, the way in which he supports a denigration of English culture and the ways of the Englishman is completely in keeping with the tactics used in constructing nationalist symbols and discourse, such as in the case of the Manchester martyrs and the works of the Gaelic League, but it also begs a closer inspection of the chronology of Casement's nationalist feelings. It is vital not to mislead any reader when chronicling this progression. That Casement had great interest in the Irish nationalist cause during his period of Congo activism must be once again underlined, for fear of any convenient confusion leading to a belief that Casement was blind to the Irish situation until suffering at the hands of the Foreign Office, whereupon he turned to Irish nationalism. The case is rather that his activism can be divided into two rough sections — that of great sympathiser and supporter of long-term Irish nationalism, and that of extreme activism (the Irish Volunteers, his travel to the USA in 1914, and his doomed visit to Germany in the same year) in his later years. It is to this extreme activism that the previous suggestion of the possibility of diverting Casement from his course of treason refers, and not to his involvement with Irish nationalism in all forms. For all his passion (and indeed at times because of it), Casement was an intelligent man capable of being a great political tactician, and to believe that he could have been

[168] Casement to Stopford–Green, 20 April 1907, fol. 37. MSS. 18, NLI.

knighted for uncovering the abuses in the Putumayo, or could have compiled a report for one coloniser on the abuses of another without having an opinion on the situation of Ireland within this global reality, would be entirely unrealistic. Casement makes this connection himself several times, even in this same letter:

> I knew that the F.O. [Foreign Office] wouldn't understand the thing [Congo situation] – or that if the did they would take no action, for I realised then that I was looking at this tragedy with the eyes of another race – of a people once hunted themselves, whose hearts were based on affection at the root principle of contact with their fellow men and whose estimate of life was not of something eternally to be appraised at its market 'price'. And I said to myself then, far up the Lulanga river, that I would do my [sic] part as an Irishman and just because I was an Irishman, wherever it might lead me personally.[169]

This segment shows the romantic Casement, allying himself and the Irishman with victims of colonial abuse. Whereas it is true that Casement did write about the Irish situation during his Congo experience, this letter shows the increase in sentimental nationalist rhetoric, and charts his own devolution from the British government, and the English people — a process that becomes more and more amplified in its anglophobia, drama, and elevation of Ireland and its importance. Casement, and Ireland through the eyes of his own race, was to move, in a manifestation of great self-consciousness, from the role of follower, to the role of master.

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[169] Casement to Stopford-Green, 20 April 1907, fol. 37, MSS. 18, NLI.

Casement moved into the latter part of his nationalist activism with great ambition, fed by all the aspects of neo-Gaelic, Irish nationalist revivalism. As his commitment to the cause in which he found great refuge grew, I would suggest that his acute grasp of political and public reality slipped, almost in inverse proportions. From a purely dramatic and romantic point of view, never was there a man more suited to the nationalist fight of the underdog than Casement. His visionary tendencies meant he lent great support to the Gaelic League, led him to form the Irish Volunteers, and allowed him to indulge himself in fantasies of his own greatness, as well as that of those who 'fought' alongside him. His own revisionist myth-making almost makes that of those involved in the Manchester martyrs pale into insignificance at times. In her article written after Casement's death, his cousin Gertrude shows either how successful Casement was in instilling these myths into her imagined memory, or how she followed his lead in her grief in creating them herself. 'He knew what would happen if England caught him', she tells us, because 'he wrote 'I felt this destiny upon me from the time I was a little boy'. She goes on to recalls an incident from their childhood, when they played a game, and she commented to Casement 'You couldn't do that because you might kill someone and then you'd be hanged'. She claims then that he '...paused and said 'I think I shall be hanged one day — for Ireland' and his eyes were fixed in a dreamy gaze as if he saw into the future'.[170] Clearly Casement was not the only one with a penchant for tragic sentimentality. Of course, nothing can be

[170] Gertrude Parry, in the preface to *Some Poems of Roger Casement* (Michigan: The Talbot Press, 1918), p. xi.

proved to the contrary, but this does seem rather an unlikely actual memory, and seems to fit in more with the myth-making tendencies and romanticism than with any accurate recollection. What is most certain is that Casement, in many ways, is established as a martyr, through episodes such as this, and through his own self-presentation, through his own words, especially as quoted by others.

Martyrdom can be seen as the ultimate blow in inverting the position of masters and followers. The reason for this is that it offers a way to be both. In rejecting the status of the oppressor or master (in this case the British government), Irish nationalists cease to be the follower. In choosing a role within the movement which is prominent and authoritarian, those such as Casement elect themselves master and leader of a different league, forming organisations, promoting themselves and their beliefs, and leading the movement and those whom it involves towards their vision of the future. Paradoxically, by doing this these leaders are also undertaking, and indeed celebrating, the role of follower in becoming one in a long line of those who sacrificed themselves for the Irish nationalist cause. By their self-election to the position of leader, they are encouraging parallels between themselves and those whom they follow, be they historical or even mythical figures. And in the case of Irish nationalism, with its continual association with Catholicism, those leaders are following, in the sense of being answerable to, God, not government. This illustrates the power of martyrdom in breaking the binary, or at the least inverting it, with regards to dominance and submission.

Casement's self-perception as a martyr can never be in doubt. Although there are many examples to prove this, one of the most telling, and most succinct, can be found in his poem 'Last Prayer of Sir Roger Casement', written in the days running up to 3 August whilst awaiting execution:

Lord Jesus, receive my soul!...
Into thy Hands, O! Lord,
My spirit I commend...
Now let my death bell toll
And to my wants, attend.
Forgive these thoughtless cheers
From haters of my race,
For me there are no fears
Save for my resting place.
Pray, Father, Pray for me,
And for the thoughtless throng,
That one day they may see,
Who thus exult in wrong![171]

The conclusion from this piece is that, in his final hours, Casement most assuredly viewed himself as a Catholic martyr to the Irish nationalist cause. In fact, this poem reads more like the climax of the Passion of Roger Casement — the figure of Casement and the figure of Jesus are here interchangeable.

[171] Roger Casement, 'The Last Prayer of Sir Roger Casement', fol. 13, MSS. 082 (2/viii), NLI.

This highlights an evolution in Casement's self-perception and location. This poem comes at the end of a long process of melodramatic delusion which grew as his activism in the name of nationalism became more extreme. Thinking back to the letter which Casement wrote to Mrs Stopford-Green in which he concluded that given any chance, the Irish-Americans would make him a 'demi-God', is plain to see that how Casement perceived himself, and how he was perceived by others, was in the process of becoming two very different things. In his last letter from America to Mrs Stopford-Green, Casement writes:

> We should be safe. I know whereof I talk. I have, perhaps, done more for Irish safety (and Irish virtue, too, for that matter), than you will ever know...[172]

This is a grandiose claim, variations of which run through Casement's letters from America and Germany. Casement's papers from this time give the impression of a run-away train of clandestine adventure, hysterical over-reaction, and a more and more loosened grip on reality. In Germany, he is obsessed with the idea that he is to be kidnapped, and seems to revel in outwitting the generic enemy by adopting all manner of disguise and variation. Even in Germany, his prediction that 'scores, perhaps hundreds, of Irish prisoners would follow us' to form his beloved vision of the Irish Volunteers shows him to have been completely swept away by the momentum of his own

[172] Casement to Stopford-Green, 11 October 1914, fol. 39, MSS. 110/1, NLI.

involvement.[173] His drive to enlist Irish prisoners of war in Germany to fight against the very crown to which they had shown their allegiance by fighting with during the war shows the massive gulf between Casement's imagination, and the actuality of the situation. The records of many of these prisoners tell of Casement's reception in these camps as being much less than he had hoped for, with a poor response to his proposals, and a general perception of him as being at best, ridiculous, at worst, distasteful.[174]

MacColl claims that Casement 'wallowed in his almost perpetual bath of self-pity and persecution mania'.[175] It is difficult, especially in these later years, to disagree with this judgement. In fact, accepting it as the truth can offer quite a useful route into understanding Casement and his master/follower desires. Firstly, I would suggest that such a tendency left Casement as the ideal candidate for conversion to Catholicism, something which he formally did in his prison cell before his execution. Although Casement's relationship with Catholicism had been established by his mother's faith and his secret baptism as a child, it was no doubt made inevitable through the more and more pronounced public relationship between nationalism and Catholicism. The whole iconography of Catholicism must have held great allure — the stories of

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[173] MacColl, p. 146.

[174] A representative sample from the memoirs of S.E. Fielding, a soldier from the British army and a prisoner of war between 1914 and 1915, illustrates this point: 'One day we were all on parade and some German officers arrived. They had a civilian with them. The order was given for all the Irishmen to step out to the front. There were about a dozen of them, the rest of us were dismissed and sent back to our huts. The civilian then asked the Irishmen if they would like to return to Ireland to join the Irish Republican Army and fight against the English. If so they would be returned by a German submarine within a few days. I am glad to say not one of them accepted this offer. Later we heard that the civilian was none other than Sir Roger Casement who I believe was later caught and shot at the Tower of London.' Fol. 73/174/1, Imperial War Museum, London, p. 22.

[175] MacColl, p. 176.

saints and martyrs, of long-suffering figures such as the Madonna, the at times mournful, at times glorious nature of the prayers — all these aspects, together with the promise of everlasting life, absolution of sin, and the incredibly seductive amount of powerful and melodramatic ceremony must have appealed to someone who had a love of sentimentality, but felt himself misunderstood by those whom he tried to serve. Casement (although by no means alone in this tendency, especially amongst Irish nationalist leaders) presented himself as the sacrificial lamb, the unknown saviour who toiled despite little reward for the people he loved. This is clearly represented in his poem, 'Last Prayer of Sir Roger Casement' — even the very fact that his last poem takes the form of a prayer from the very beginning, and opens with words almost identical to those of Jesus on the cross: 'Into thy Hands, O! Lord,/My spirit I commend...' His self-alignment with Jesus continues as he graciously asks God to 'Forgive these thoughtless cheers/From haters of my race,' echoing Jesus' words from the cross of 'Forgive them Father, for they know not what they do'. The parallels Casement is drawing between himself and Jesus as a man could hardly be more obvious — the crowds at Casement's feet would presumably some day, when they become more enlightened, realise the error of their ways, and repent, revering his name for ever in the pantheon of saints and martyrs. Ironically, this was, to a great extent, strangely accurate, as will be discussed in following chapters. In Casement's eyes, this was less a public hanging, a more a crucifixion. The persecution complex suffered by Casement makes martyrdom a fitting means of remembrance — in many

ways, Casement is more use to Irish nationalism as a martyr than as a living activist. This martyrdom, however, and its role in nationalism and in religion, points to another, often debated, tendency in movements of this kind: that of a sort of political sadomasochism.

In the midst of sacrifice, there are occasions when into the discourse of nationalism must creep the admission that in some ways, players can set themselves up for a fall, or can begin to see suffering at the hands of the oppressor as a means of self-definition. Certainly the martyr status was the ultimate moral high ground against British rule — to rather die than accept a certain authority is one thing, but the idea of inviting it is an uncomfortable, but nonetheless very real, one. Casement's act of treason in some lights does seem to have had suicidal tendencies, and certainly this notion of being persecuted seems to Casement in many ways to leave him in a position of more strength, spurring him forward to carry out the will of the Irish nation *despite* the opposition of the British government. Altogether, the self-pity and oppositional strength that comes from being persecuted certainly seems, in many instances, to put Casement in a stronger position, not least morally. Whilst appearing to be follower, submissive to the governing power, only the final conclusion reveals Casement's status as that of master and leader all along.

Casement's evolution from humanitarian British Consul to traitor-martyr, and a self-perceived Jesus equivalent in early twentieth-century Ireland can be traced through his actions, diaries and letters, but the most useful

comparison could be his first public work, the 1903/4 Congo Report, and his moment of glory, his 1916 Speech from the Dock. Whether or not Casement believed he would be convicted and executed is debated elsewhere. Regardless, his Speech from the Dock is undoubtedly his parting shot as those who seek to destroy him. It was never meant to be solely a plea for understanding to the courts — something which Casement himself admits freely in the opening lines:

> My Lord Chief Justice, as I wish my words to reach a much wider audience than I see before me here, I intend to read all that I propose to say [...] the argument, that I am now going to read, is addressed not to this court, but to my own countrymen.[176]

Gone is the respectful English gentleman approach of the Congo Report, and in its place appears a more preaching Casement, including as it does lines such as: 'If true religion rests on love, it is equally true that loyalty rests on love' as an example. Casement relies heavily on ideas of justice, allegiance, race and creed in his speech, rejecting as he does so this court, and his allegiance to Englishmen and their attempt to 'slay an Irishman'. Although of course it is to be expected that a report and a speech should differ in style, it is still important to note the differences between the two here — the disciplined, dispassionate reporter who notes that 'Statements of this kind might be tediously multiplied'[177] just over a decade earlier shows no similar fear of tedium in his

[176] Roger Casement, 'Speech from the Dock', fol. 14, MSS. 092, NLI.
[177] This is in reference to the quotation already given earlier in the chapter from Casement's 1904 Congo Report.

speech, full as it is of rhetorical questions and sound-bites such as 'And what is the fundamental charter of an Englishman's Liberty?'. Capitalized abstract notions — Liberty, Love, God, Loyalty — all pepper the speech, and the tone is one that wavers between indignant and sacrificial. The language and syntax used in the speech is also romantic and slightly archaic, again lending itself to this quasi-biblical, quasi-mythical theme: 'If this is not so, why fear the test? I fear it not.' Its rousing romance in proclamations such as 'If loyalty be something less than love and more than law, then we have had enough of such loyalty for Ireland and Irishmen' shows the romantic element of Casement's belief in the Irish cause, and highlights a total change from the clipped and formal tones of the Congo Report and its 'embarrassments'. There was to be nothing so underplayed in this, Casement's final address. It is easy to get the impression that Sir Roger had been waiting for this opportunity all of his life.

The genetic critic, however, would be interested to study the drafts of Casement's speech. Although he indulges himself in self-righteousness, there is evidence of editorial control over what he wishes to remain after his trial, and presumed execution. The drafts, in Casement's flourishing and distinctive handwriting, appear on many large pieces of paper, and seem to have been passionately scrawled in a flow of emotion, with additions and omissions frequently made. For example, at one point he writes:

When he [Attorney General] said, at another meeting, not in Ireland, it is true, but in England, that Irish nationalists "would neither fight for Home Rule nor pay for it" [Casement's emphasis], I decided to show him that one Irishman might at least try both. If I went further

than he – it was not because I was a coward. He tells you I have played and lost and now I must pay the forfeit. And does he think I ever intended anything else?[178]

The large writing, the scoring out, and the messy appearance on the page show that this was Casement writing in a passion. He was obviously much angered by the Home Rule comment, underlining it often. However, the last lines, beginning 'He tells you I have played and lost...' are scored out, and do not appear in the final speech. In fact, the lines which were read out in court differ in many ways, as can be seen:

If, as the right honourable gentleman, the present Attorney-General, asserted in a speech at Manchester, Nationalists would neither fight for Home Rule nor pay for it, it was our duty to show him that we knew how to do both.

For whatever reason, Casement decided to take the personal element out of the section, and align himself with nationalists in general. Overall, this was probably commendable, as it takes the sense of a personal vendetta away, and moves it into a 'duty' faced by all nationalists. It also firmly removes the petty line 'And does he think I ever intended anything else?' which could be perceived as an irresponsibly self-destructive remark by both sides. The Speech from the Dock was evidently important to Casement as not only a personal address, but also as something which he intended (or at least hoped) would become part of nationalist narrative, securing him immortality in

[178] Casement, 'Speech from the Dock', fol. fol. 14, MSS. 092, NLI.

association with the Irish cause. For many reasons, and despite the fact that he is not at the centre of that narration of nation, he was entirely correct in his prediction.

4.5 Status and Immortality

In his article *Aspects of Survival: Triumphs over Death and Onliness*, Alan Jacobs highlights the issue of immortality when he details aspects of the psychology of survival:

> There is a sense of a special entitlement to life somehow. The survivor wants to exist as long as possible and wants immortality.[179]

Although Jacobs is here speaking of actual survival, much of this theory can be applied to nationalist feeling as a reinterpretation through martyrdom. This power of survival is necessary to nationalism on many levels. It is necessary to encourage sacrifice in the activist himself, and also to ensure the continuation of the nationalist myth and narrative throughout history, to prevent events such as those of 1916 from slipping into historical obscurity. Following the Irish

[179] Alan Jacobs, 'Aspects of Survival: Triumphs Over Death and Onliness', in *IDEA: A Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 2:1 (July 1997) pp 70, 50-71.

nationalist line of thought, martyrdom ensures a permanent place in heroism, and deals an impressive blow against those in power. In unity with the beliefs of the Catholic faith so tied to Irish nationalism, it is in dying that these activists are born to eternal life. Judging by his poetry, the effort he put into preparing his Speech from the Dock, and his over-riding desire to align himself with Irish nationalism, Casement was acutely aware of this. Moving from the realm of humanitarian activist to republican martyr, he was securing his place in the history books, and placing himself beyond criticism in many ways. Because of this, it becomes important to assess the mentality of revolutionaries in relation to colonial and postcolonial discourse.

Garvin, in his chapter entitled 'Ideological Themes of Separatist Nationalism', examines Marx when he speaks of the 'tradition of the dead', and how revolutionaries rely upon this ingrained tendency when carrying out their own rebellions. Garvin notes that 'in reality, modern revolutionary ideologies mingle nostalgia and futurism in ways that are easily recognizable'.[180] Such ways have already been brought to the fore in this chapter — a reliance on historical myth and narrative to bring about a vision of the future that is better than the present for all the reasons included in the nationalist vision — an Ireland free from, and therefore more prosperous, more appealing than its existence under, British rule. The nationalist vision has traditionally a dreamlike, prophetic quality to it, where fact and reality are sometimes pushed aside by the greater message of a utopian ideal far removed from the present day. Casement himself is an appropriate example of this

[180] Garvin, *Irish Revolutionaries in Ireland 1858–1928*, p. 107.

dreamlike vision of the future, with his army, reclaimed from the humiliation of imprisonment in the name of the British crown in Germany would clad themselves in green with gold harps and shamrocks adorning their uniforms.[181] These strong Irish youths would go on to fight the noble fight against their English oppressors and win for this nation the victory to which Ireland was entitled, bringing about a rural idyll for tomorrow, full of Gaelic-speaking loyal citizens. Of course, things did not quite work out in this way, as was clearly illustrated by Casement's dismal failure to recruit as many men as he anticipated on his trip to Germany, and the bewilderment of these men, for whom this vision was supposed to cater. These dreams and visions in ways such as this took on more than a slight hue of fantasy — but fantasies such as these did nourish and seduce many in the Irish nationalist cause, lending a gilded edge of nobility and righteousness to the struggle for Ireland's re-emergence as an independent nation.

Such fantasies of the postcolonial ideal are by no means unique, acting as they do as a catalyst of sorts for many a more realistic political emancipation, but in the Irish case, the ideals themselves were interesting as they dealt with Ireland's oxymoronic status as a colony. Ireland was never viewed as a colony in the way that India, or the Congo, were. Ireland's proximity to England, its language, its longstanding governmental and cultural relationship with Britain meant that identifying a postcolonial society meant either a total retreat into antiquarian ways of life and language, or a total

[181] Casement had planned the uniforms for the prisoners of war he would recruit. They included many icons of Irish nationality: shamrocks, harps and being green in colour.

redefinition of what it meant to be Irish as opposed to British. The often-recounted anecdote of a French journalist asking Irish-born playwright Samuel Beckett 'Vous êtes Anglais?' and his response of 'Au contraire' illustrates this point. In fact, supporting this claim, Fintan O'Toole, in *The Ex-Isle of Erin*, jokes that this perception of Irish identity as put forward by Beckett's quip was so apt, and so ingrained into that national psyche, that it should have been written on the Irish flag.[182] He was not one; he was 'the other', the contrary, the opposite of English — that is to say, Irish. There were so many similarities, so many overlapping realities, that Ireland's vision of its post-colonial future had to construct itself against England. If England were Protestant, so then Ireland was Catholic. If England spoke English, then Ireland would speak Irish. If England were urban, Ireland would be rural, and so on and so forth. Terry Eagleton terms this 'Performative Contradiction'.[183] The feasibility of Ireland defining itself against England was questionable past a certain, very quickly reached, extent on account of the two being (both geographically and culturally) so very close. This cultural proximity was also the result of British colonialism over hundreds of years, which makes what 'the Other' in the Britain-Ireland tussle really means much more hazy. As Eagleton is also quick to point out, 'a colony is not just 'other' to its metropolis but its highly *particular* other — not simply different, but, as it were, antithetical'.[184] Eagleton lays out the problematic aspects of this particularity of being

[182] O'Toole, *The Ex-Isle of Erin*, p. 13.
[183] Terry Eagleton, 'Changing the Question', Claire Connolly (ed.), *Theorizing Ireland* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 80.
[184] Eagleton, p. 78.

different, or antithetical because 'it is not, with Ireland, simply a question of some inscrutable Other, as an increasingly stereotyped discourse of stereotyping would have it; it is rather a matter of some unthinkable conundrum of difference and identity, in which the British can never decide whether the Irish are their antithesis or mirror image, partner or parasite, abortive offspring or sympathetic sibling.[185]

It is with this 'conundrum' that Irish nationalists were, and are, faced. Casement appears here again as a symbol of this debate throughout his life — at once British and Irish, patriotic and disloyal, heroic and delusional. Throughout his life and his works, Casement seems to have attempted to define himself at times against, and at times within these realities, changing his own beliefs and tinkering with his own sense of duty throughout. This performative contradiction in Casement as a man often manifested itself in performative anxiety. This anxiety reveals itself in his concerns regarding his reception throughout his life, especially clear with regard to the issue of his knighthood, when he worries that people will see him as a traitor, not a patriot, an issue which is representative of this continual anxiety about how he is being represented and received throughout his adult life. In light of this, Casement's passionate correspondence with Morel, and in particular with Stopford-Green, can be seen in part to be a response to this anxiety, as he energetically defends his position in relation to positions of power (for example, the Foreign Office). A feature which grows from this anxiety in Casement can also be applied quite often to nationalism at large, which is that of a certain paranoia in its process

[185] Eagleton, p. 78.

of self-identification. The problem in the case of a postcolonial Ireland remains that, because of the proximity and mutuality of Britain and Ireland, there are more similarities between the two than differences, much in the same way that there are more similarities between Casement's work under the British crown and against it than there are differences.

Although elements of nationalist discourse are riddled with this performative contradiction, the power of the nationalist narrative is not undermined. This ranking of myth over history continues in the same strain as decades' worth of nationalist ideology, holding close the reverence for heroes and martyrs of the past, and their important role in creating and constructing the future. In an article comparing modern Ireland's abortion laws and the esteem in which Irish heroes of old are held still, Patrick Hanafin introduces the concept of the role of the 'virtual citizen' in the Republic of Ireland. He points out that the iconography of such patriots is included in the preamble to the 1937 Constitution which pronounces that 'We, the people of Éire, humbly acknowledging all our obligations to our Divine Lord, Jesus Christ, who sustained our fathers through centuries of trial' are continuously 'gratefully remembering their heroic and unremitting struggle to regain the rightful independence of our Nation'.[186]

So the postcolonial future for which Casement and his contemporaries gave their lives 'gratefully' remembers them in its incarnation. In doing so, Hanafin argues, the citizens of this new and independent Ireland found 'that

[186] Patrick Hanafin, 'Valorising the Virtual Citizen: The Sacrificial Grounds of a Postcolonial Citizenship in Ireland', in *Law, Social Justice & Global Development Journal (LGD)*, 1 (2003) ; http://elj.warwick.ac.uk/global/03-1/hanafin.html, date accessed: 2/3/06.

their life was to be sacrificed to the ideal of an authentic Irish citizenship' living in the shadow of the dead.[187] He claims that through honouring the symbolism of sacrifice during the colonial period, it has become part of the 'postcolonial sacrificial social contract' in Ireland today, to which all citizens are bound. This 'sanctity of sacrifice' turns out to be a very powerful tool in defining citizenship and rights in postcolonial Ireland, and protects nationalist discourse in this way. Therefore two dominant elements which emerge from this chapter's view of Casement's chosen role in Irish nationalism are the themes of sacrifice and martyrdom. Hanafin points out that the dead heroes of the Republic do not die — instead they enjoy eternal life and are afforded more rights and status in their immortality than the non-virtual citizens of the present. In stating his point relating to abortion, Hanafin shows the power of those such as the 1916 leaders, and their contemporaries such as Casement by using the word 'virtual' in the same double sense as the French equivalent 'virtuel' —also meaning the possible, when stating that 'the foetus, like the dead hero, is the perfect virtual citizen, carrying with it the promise of regeneration and perpetual life'.[188]

It seems that in aligning himself with Irish nationalism, and in his self-conscious martyrdom, Casement, like those other Irish revolutionaries during the colonial period, has raised the bar of expectations concerning the very sentiments and loyalties he so passionately debated in his own life for those in this postcolonial era he would surely have liked to think himself part of

[187] *Ibid.*
[188] *Ibid.*

creating. His life drawing to an end, it was now time for Casement's posthumous existence, and therefore his representation by others, to begin to take form.

5.0 Preparing Posterity

5.1 Introduction

The ghost of Roger Casement

Is beating on the door.

W. B. Yeats, 1937.[189]

If Casement's execution for treason in 1916 marked the end of a life varied and controversial, it also marked the start of a posthumous existence that would also have such characteristics as integral. From the moment of his death on the gallows, a rebirth of sorts took place, from the infancy of nationalist martyrdom through an evolving upbringing by an emerging Irish state which would come to incorporate Casement as a representative of conspiracy, inter-governmental tensions, repatriation and atonement, through to humanitarianism and gay rights. In effect, his posthumous life displays a more obvious need for a continuous negotiation of identity than one encounters when evaluating his actual life.

The effect and significance of Casement's posthumous life, either in part or as a chronological overview, has already been evaluated elsewhere,

[189] From W.B. Yeats's poem 'Roger Casement', from *New Poems* (Dundrum: Cuala Press, 1938), p. 20.

most notably for this chapter in works such as Lucy McDiarmid's 'The Posthumous Life of Roger Casement' (1997).[190] McDiarmid traces an evolving interpretation of Casement through the evolution of the emerging Irish state itself, and deals with many of the issues which will be raised in this chapter — mythologizing, nationalist traditions in memorialising, reinterpretation of history, performativity. This chapter, however, will focus on some selected multi-genre key signifiers (speeches, poetry and theatre) of this evolution and reinterpretation in an attempt to provide a cross-section of sources that provide an illustration of how posthumously, Casement is 'performed' by the nation most responsible for his afterlife.

5.2 Casement's Prophecies

To examine the memorialising and interpreting of a life after death is naturally to examine the perceptions and interpretations of that life as held by others who survive it, or who come after. Although primarily based on this reality, this chapter must also contextualise works immediately before this period of memorialising in Casement's life, and look first at Casement's own perceptions of himself as he faces the gallows in 1916. Such self-perceptions are important as they contain a sense of self-objectifying and writing for posterity. Although such an idea is problematic, an inroad into Casement's self-awareness and self-perception can be found by revisiting his poetry and

[190] Lucy McDiarmid, 'The Posthumous Life of Roger Casement', in Anthony Bradley and Maryann Gialanella Valiulis, *Gender and Sexuality in Modern Ireland* (Amherst, Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997), pp. 127–59, p. 127.

his Speech from the Dock, not merely as an indicator of his perception of his own life, but as a prophecy or signpost for how he would be remembered after his death. The question posed in viewing this selection of primary sources in this way will centre on whether or not Casement manipulated his own image at the time of his death for the sake of his predicted future analysis by others in the immediate, and distant, future.

The previous two chapters have analysed how Casement located himself during his life in the Irish nationalist tradition, often very consciously. So it comes as not much of a stretch of the imagination to envisage Casement also providing posterity with the resources to locate himself in the Irish nationalist tradition in a similar way after his death. On receiving his sentence of death, Casement would also have had the (relative) luxury of familiarity with the posthumous treatment of those who have been executed under the banner of Irish nationalism. When considered, this places Casement in a distinctive position of potentially being able to predict what would follow his execution, and being able to envisage his entrance into a sort of replication of a Catholic heaven — this replication being the nationalist afterlife. Most of the same rules apply here as regards the living in terms of the honouring and remembering the dead, and there is a similar sense of the eternal place of one admitted to this breed of afterlife. In fact, because the nationalist afterlife is an unarguably human construct, a place within it comes with much more certainty and predictability than in any sort of spiritual or religious afterlife, and

therefore offers what is lacking in any assumption of a heavenly afterlife, which is proof.

Proof of the existence of, and the possibility of entering into, a nationalist afterlife is readily available. One such example — chosen, despite coming from a different historical period than is dealt with in this thesis, because it mirrors so well in certain elements the story of Casement — is the case of the nationalist hero Robert Emmet. Executed in Dublin in 1803 for his leading role in a failed nationalist rebellion, Emmet lives still in this nationalist afterlife as a republican martyr and hero, and in Casement's posthumous life can be heard many echoes of the almost ritualistic memorialising of Emmet's own afterlife. Most significantly for this chapter, Emmet also made a public Speech from the Dock before his execution, which this chapter will argue is a means of 'preparing posterity', engaged with by Casement. Marianne Elliot's *Robert Emmet: the Making of a Legend* examines the mythology of Emmet as a martyr and hero, and in doing so offers insight into how the mythology and legend of Emmet was created.[191] Elliot lays bare the vital instruments at play in the creation of a martyr and hero. Such elements — which will be examined further below — form the general ritual and ceremony of the posthumous evolution of one man into a powerful symbol, worthy of his place in national memory and his eternal 'virtual citizenship' of Ireland. [192] The use of the Emmet legend serves a dual purpose. Firstly, it provides a valuable comparison for Casement's posthumous representation and performance

[191] Marianne Elliot, *Robert Emmet: the Making of a Legend* (London: Profile, 2004).
[192] Patrick Hanafin, *Valorising the Virtual Citizen.*

through its highlighting of popular culture, folklore, editing and an obsession with the physical remains of this martyr in the unravelling of the Emmet story, but also, and at this point most significantly, because Casement would have been aware of it. Emmet's story of a failed rising, an allegedly corrupted trial and a brutal execution became public legend. Emmet was quickly and repetitively cited as a hero in Irish nationalism, and given the focus and emphasis placed on the remembrance of the forefathers of nationalist struggle during Casement's lifetime, the comparisons by Casement between himself and Emmet as he awaited trial and was writing his speech would have been natural to form. Emmet secured his place as a martyr in nationalist memory with an uprising attempt in 1803 and an execution in the same year, but most of all with a strong and oft-quoted Speech from the Dock. Casement, like others, would have witnessed the esteem in which Emmet, and other historical figures like him (such as Wolfe Tone, or the Manchester Martyrs),[193] were held, and the importance of the tradition of the Speech from the Dock in giving a voice to a martyr long after his own lifetime. Casement, and those responsible for the 1916 uprising such as Padraig Pearse and James Connolly,[194] had already borne witness to the national memorialisation of rebels in Irish history, and knew what characteristics contributed to making these men celebrated (nobility, bravery, love of Ireland, and so forth).

[193] Theobald Wolfe Tone (1763–1798) was a leading figure in the United Irishmen Irish Independence movement who was sentenced to death for his part in the 1798 Irish Rebellion. He died, however, from a self-inflicted wound before his execution. William O'Meara Allen, Michael Larkin and William O'Brien, or the Manchester Martyrs, were members of the Irish Republican Brotherhood who were executed in Manchester in 1867 for killing a policeman during a prison escape.

[194] Pearse and Connolly were both executed for their roles in the 1916 Easter Rising.

In this way it can be argued that Casement was familiar with the qualifications and commendations necessary to be admitted into the hallowed Irish nationalist pantheon. And even should it be too speculative to assume that he was aware of the actual conditions which seem to be applied to the condemned in a society which is fighting for its self-determination in order to secure their promotion to this eternal life through memory, it would be infinitely more difficult to argue that he was not at least aware of the status awarded to them. As Emmet himself wrote in a poem about the 1798 executions:

> And those who here are laid at rest,
> Oh! Hallowed be each name;
> Their memories are forever blest –
> Consigned to endless fame.[195]

This is a seductive notion — the exalting tone, the religious mimicry, the promise of the 'endless fame' of the nationalist afterlife would surely have appealed to Casement at the very least as he faced his trial and execution, if not during his lifetime before this point, given the romantic and sentimental tone of much of his correspondence. That Emmet himself became a martyr about whom these words could have been written serves only as a reinforcement, a proof of sorts, of the continuous cycle of death as rebirth into

[195] Verse eight of the poem 'Arbour Hill' by Robert Emmet as quoted in Richard Robert Madden, *The United Irishmen: Their Lives and Times* (J. Madden & Co., 1846), p. 229, as quoted by Elliot, p. 1.

eternal life in this way. Elliot opens her book with this quotation and follows with this observation:

> Thus did Robert Emmet write of those who had been executed after the 1798 rebellion. Of course, he was wrong, very few attained such apotheosis. But *he* did... [196]

So although those who are mourned by Emmet did not necessarily reach the lofty heights posthumously that he did himself, in 1916, over a century later, with the Emmet legend still held in public memory, Casement and his contemporaries would have been able to recognise the existence of such a tradition, and therefore would also have been able to witness the fulfilment of prophecies such as Emmet's which predict endless fame and high esteem. This romanticism is evident throughout Casement's writings. If we return to the accounts of Casement's life by Gertrude Parry, such evidence presents itself. In the introduction to *Some Poems of Roger Casement* Parry again tells the tale of Casement's own prophesising:

> Many years later, when he himself was a prisoner in an English gaol he wrote: 'I have felt this destiny upon me since I was a little boy; it was inevitable; everything in my life has led up to it.' He seemed in a curious way to have a foreboding of his fate.[197]

Combining the idea of inevitability with the idea of destiny marks such terms as synonymous, 'destiny' being an infinitely more romantic and virtuous

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[196] Elliot, p. 1.
[197] Gertrude Parry, Preface to *Some Poems of Roger*

notion than mere tragic inevitability. The two combined produce an air of humility and a projection of prophecy fulfilled, and has religious associations of higher forces having marked out a path for Casement that his sense of servitude for the greater good insisted he followed. There is more than a tinge of 'thy will be done' in this interpretation of what led Casement to the gallows, which is a powerful tool in presenting posthumous Casement as, like Emmet, a proud yet simultaneously humble son of Ireland.

Casement was not a great poet, and as a whole his poetry can only credibly be used as an insight into his perception of romance, love and memorialising. In this role, they are useful to note as they reinforce an analysis of Casement as romantic and slightly melancholic. In his poem 'Love's Cares', Casement equates love as deepened by, or only realised through, suffering:

Oh! What claims Love for a wounded breast?
Love shows his own with a broader scar:
'Tis only those who have loved the best
Can say where the wounds of loving are.'[198]

Suffering as love is bound up in the notion of sacrifice, submission, torment: love in this guise is not carefree and joyful, it is to be treated with much more gravitas than that. Beauty is tragic, depth is painful, and suffering is inevitable in this interpretation of love — each line of each of the four stanzas in this poem begins 'Oh!' ('Oh! what cares Love for a tender heart?'), which has this

[198] Roger Casement, 'Love's Cares', *Some Poems of Roger Casement*, p. 4.

wistful depth in tone that is displayed elsewhere in Casement's life. Recalling Gertrude Parry's oft-recounted memory of Casement, which she also includes in the introduction to these poems, is one example of this wistful depth as she recalls that 'Roger Casement was silent for a moment, his deepset eyes fixed on an invisible goal, and then he said very quietly, 'I think I shall be hanged for Ireland.[199]

As has been mentioned in a previous chapter, whether this account is accurate or not becomes less important than the general tone and sense of romance, destiny and reverence that creeps into Casement's life when the possibility of martyrdom is considered. In fact, another of Casement's poems, 'Parnell', shows him to have been particularly engaged by the notion of a posthumous existence beyond reproach more than a decade before his execution.[200] This piece is a prediction of Parnell's nationalist afterlife:

Hush – let no whisper of the cruel strife,
Wherein he fell so bravely fighting, fall
Nigh these dead ears; fain would our hearts recall
Nought but proud memories of a noble life –
Of unmatched skill to lead by pathways rife
With danger and dark doubt, where slander's knife
Gleamed ever bare to wound, yet over all

[199] Parry, in *Some Poems of Roger Casement*, p. xi.
[200] Charles Stewart Parnell (1846–1891) was a nationalist political leader, a Home Rule MP and leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party. He died amid controversy regarding the split in his political party over Home Rule complications which saw the creation of Parnellites and anti-Parnellites. He was also surrounded by personal controversy when he was named in court in 1890 as co-respondent in a divorce case filed by Captain William O'Shea. The scandal of Parnell's relationship with Captain O'Shea's wife, Katharine, had a significant negative impact on his political reception.

He pressed triumphant on — lo, thus to fall.
Through and beyond the breach he living made
Shall Erin pass to freedom and to will,
And shape her fate: there where his limbs are laid
No harsh reproach dare penetrate the shade;
Death's angel guards the door, and o'er the sill
A mightier voice than Death's speaks 'Peace, be still!' [201]

Casement prophesises that the controversies surrounding Parnell's life will be outshone by his status in death (there where his limbs are laid/No harsh reproach dare penetrate the shade'). It can be seen that Casement judges there to be a 'mightier voice than Death's', which is the last voice, the final line, the over-riding judgement. He also suggests that what is to be revered, recorded and remembered are not the scandals and the controversies of Parnell's life, but 'Nought but proud memories of a noble life'. At some level, Casement therefore must have believed that this would be possible, that pride and nobility would be accredited to those who attempted to help 'Erin pass to freedom and to will', above all other factors. And if he can believe this of Parnell, and was familiar with the posthumous life of Robert Emmet, a predecessor on the gallows, it is not difficult to imagine that when it came to the time of his own imminent death, these 'deep-set eyes' were fixed on a goal that was not entirely invisible.

[201] Roger Casement, 'Parnell', dated 6 October 1891 Dublin, fol. 13, MSS. 082 (2/viii), National Library of Ireland.

As he awaited his trial, his sentencing, and his execution, Casement was in the rare position of knowing he would have a public audience to address (considering how much attention his trial would have been receiving in various different countries), and after his sentencing, of knowing the time and manner of his death. His vision must then have been fixed on both his contemporary and his posthumous audience — little wonder, then, that there is evidence that his Speech from the Dock underwent much editing and correction before he arrived at his final draft.[202] Effectively, this speech would form his last public words, and would provide the public after his death with a firm foundation on which to build his reputation. Of course, the Speech from the Dock was not a new concept, especially in the Irish nationalist tradition, its blueprint was Robert Emmet's own speech from the dock, a century before. Elliot evaluates what she identifies as 'the core of the Emmet legend: his trial and execution, and most of all his speech'. In doing so, she highlights elements of the nature of Emmet's immediately pre-posthumous life that are directly relevant to Casement's similar experience. [203] Calling the speech Emmet's 'bid for immortality', Elliot notes that unlike Tone, 'who was a deist and critical of established religion', Emmet's 'sincere Christianity was more amenable to the blood sacrifice traditions of Irish republicanism, a tradition that he consciously helped create'.[204]

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[202] The folder in the National Library of Ireland marked fol. 14, MSS. 092 contains numerous corrected and annotated versions of fragments of Casement's speech, as well as his final version.
[203] Elliot, p. 77.
[204] Elliot, p. 87.

This is an observation borne out by an examination of Emmet's Speech, and also of Casement's. If Emmet's speech became synonymous with honour, proud martyrdom, and a worthy blood-sacrifice through which he was received into the prestigious and covetable position of everlasting posthumous life, then this outcome, too, was available to Casement. The Speech from the Dock of the potential nationalist martyr can be seen as manipulating another tradition of the graveside oration: in some ways such a speech can be seen as an oration at their own graveside, a premonition of an oration at their own funeral which, due to the manner of their death, will be denied to them at this time. And so the line between life and afterlife begins to blur slightly — a speech from the dock in these circumstances is really a crossover, the point at which there is a fusion of past and future, and a distinctive opportunity for a figure like Casement to initiate his own memorialising.

Casement's speech as a record of his own self-perception has been examined in a previous chapter, but it will be valuable here to re-examine it as a reproduction of a formulaic version of traditional execution speeches within Irish nationalism. Emmet's speech provides a useful comparison to Casement's — again for the dual reason that it exists within the same tradition, but also that Casement would have been familiar with it. The tone of both speeches overall is one of eloquent dignity and righteousness, and both call into question the moral character of the court which charges them. However, what is most interesting is the awareness both display — and it has to be said,

Emmet's most notably — of posthumous judgement, reputation and audience. In 1803, Emmet said:

> For there must be guilt somewhere: whether in the sentence of the court in the catastrophe, posterity must determine [...] the man dies, but his memory lives. That mine may not perish, that it may live in the respect of my countrymen.[205]

In 1916, Casement said:

> If I did wrong in making that appeal to join with me in an effort to fight for Ireland, it is by Irishmen, and by them alone, I can be rightfully judged. Rule, when it comes, if come it does, will find and Ireland drained of all that is vital to its very existence unless it be that unquenchable hope we build on the graves of the dead.[206]

Emmet's speech is more directly religious in tone and signals the overlapping of patriotism and religion when he says 'I wish that my memory and name may animate those who survive me, while I look down'.[207] The notion of 'looking down' reaffirms the idea of a religious afterlife, but also indicates a very clear awareness of his posthumous legacy, and towards the end of the speech, the religious, patriotic, past, present and future are all represented:

> If the spirits of the illustrious dead participate in the concerns and cares of those who are dear to them in this transitory life — oh, ever dear and venerated shade of my departed father, look down with scrutiny upon the conduct of your suffering son; and see if I have even for a

[205] Emmet's 'Speech from the Dock', 19 September 1803, published in A. M. Sullivan, *Speeches From The Dock* (Dublin: Abbey Street, 1868), p. 24.
[206] Casement's 'Speech from the Dock', fol. 14, MSS. 092, NLI, [n.p.].
[207] Emmet's 'Speech from the Dock', p. 24.

moment deviated from those principles of morality and patriotism which it was your care to instil into my youthful mind, and for which I am now to offer up my life![208]

Casement's speech is not so sacrificial and Biblical in tone, but it does come a century after Emmet's speech, and appeals to the anticipated audience Emmet helped to mould. Both make reference to the dead which go before them, and to the future judgement they will pass through, and in doing so they both present themselves as links in a chain — albeit a century apart — in the nationalist tradition of reverence for the dead, and of martyrdom. When Casement speaks of his peers 'whose judgement I do not shrink from', he is also speaking of the judgement of his posthumous peers, whose judgement and interpretation he in fact relies upon.[209]

As the speech at the trial can, traditionally speaking, be seen in some ways to mark the beginning of a posthumous memory and interpretation, it becomes a sort of ritual in itself. Public declarations of this kind had already formed an established tradition in Ireland before Casement found himself in the dock. In fact, in 1868, a second edition of the book containing Emmet's speech, entitled *Speeches from the Dock, or, Protests of Irish Patriotism*, was produced by A. M. Sullivan and published in Dublin.[210] Therefore Speeches from the Dock belonged to an established and identifiable genre for the public. In the preface, it is explained that the previous year, the collection and publication of the speeches of Irish patriots at a low cost to the public was such

[208] Emmet's 'Speech from the Dock', p. 25.
[209] Casement's 'Speech from the Dock', fol. 14, MSS. 092, NLI, [n.p.].
[210] A.M Sullivan, *Speeches from the Dock, or, Protests of Irish Patriotism* (Dublin: Abbey Street, 1868).

an overwhelming success that there was great demand for a second edition. The sales of the weekly published original versions were on a scale claimed by Sullivan to be 'previously unheard of in Irish Literature'.[211] This first volume contains the speeches of Wolf Tone and Robert Emmet amongst others, and serves to give full recognition to the importance of the tradition of speaking from the dock as a nationalist protest, and even the preface of this publication in 1868 nods to the probability of this being a continuing tradition when it says 'it may be that even here the sad array is not to close, and that yet another sequel may have to be issued, ere the National Protest of which these Voices from the Dock are the utterances, shall be terminated forever'.[212]

Throughout a passionate and romantic nationalist narrative of the struggles these martyrs faced, the preface exalts these men and their actions in the dock, recognising in doing so that although there may exist plentiful other material which could be published in order to secure the place of these martyrs in public memory, the Speech from the Dock has a particular resonance as 'the speeches given here are associated with facts which give them peculiar value and significance, and were spoken under circumstances which lend to them a solemn interest and impressiveness which could not otherwise be obtained'.[213]

It is this actuality, the fact that they precede death at the hands of the oppressor (in this case, the British government), and the transformation of the speaker from mortal man to immortal martyr which creates a site of opportunity for a figure such as Casement. Speaking from the dock therefore

[211] Sullivan, Preface, [n.p.].
[212] Sullivan, p. 1.
[213] Sullivan, p. 1.

transgresses many genres — it can serve as a form of auto-biography of nationalism for the individual, a homage to a certain cause or to the tradition in which the individual is located, whilst at the same time offering the opportunity to public speak a personal obituary of oneself. Simultaneously the speakers find themselves participating in history whilst also creating it, and transforms execution from silencing the individual into ensuring that their voice becomes immortal:

> They reach us – these dock speeches, in which nobility of purpose and chivalrous spirit is expressed – like voices from the tomb, like messages from beyond the grave, brimful of lessons of dignity and patriotism.[214]

This sense of dictating to a posthumous audience is extremely significant, especially with regards to Casement in his continuing negotiation of identity. This popular publication was followed by two further volumes of such speeches, the compilation of which formalized the importance and significance of such a tradition in the memorialisation of the individual and of their cause. Viewed as such, the Speech from the Dock can be seen to act as the equivalent to a modern day 'living will', dictating and directing reactions to events important and significant to that person at a time when they are no longer able to be in control of representing themselves. Such a speech offers the ability to send 'messages from beyond the grave', and so if Casement wished such messages to play a role in securing his reception as an Irish nationalist martyr,

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[214] Sullivan, p. 1.

then this would have been a tradition which, should he exploit it, would offer him such a possibility.

As Sullivan's books attest, there are numerous Irish nationalist martyrs who preceded Casement who would be useful for comparison in examining traditional processes of memorialisation, but Emmet, as one of the more celebrated and therefore the most likely to have been familiar to Casement, is an obvious decision. Even amongst the feted heroes of Sullivan's compilation, he is highlighted:

> In all Irish history there is no name which touches the Irish heart like that of Robert Emmet. [...] But in the character of Robert Emmet was such a rare combination of admirable qualities, and in his history there are so many of the elements of romance, that the man stands out before our mental vision as a peculiarly noble and loveable being, with claims upon our sympathies that are absolutely without a parallel.[215]

So Emmet can be singled out as a 'holy of holies' in the Irish pantheon, the blueprint for admirable Irish martyrdom, and therefore a useful route into the exploration of how posthumous reception can be influenced by the tradition of the Speech from the Dock.

As the first indicator of a movement towards posthumous reception, the dock speeches, littered as both Emmet's and Casement's are with Christian, and some specifically Catholic, allusions, they can almost come to serve as a public service of extreme unction, a making peace with and a clarifying of the

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[215] Sullivan, p. 20.

meaning and objectives of their literal lives before their passing over into the eternal afterlife of national memory. The ceremony and ritual of this needs an audience: the actual audience of the court, the contemporary audience of those who will read and redistribute the words, and a future audience to carry on the memorialising which is passed on to them. In this way does posthumous life become a ritualistic and replicated affair. However, when the audience is referred to as regards such a ritual, it must be realised that, ideally, one does not *attend* a ritual, one *participates* in it, and so if the audience to which Casement is addressing himself in his speech — present and future — exists, then they are participating in the traditional ritual of transforming a condemned man into a martyr, a hero, or (at the very least) a memory. This participation is crucial to the ceremony, to the transubstantiation of sorts, of man to martyr. Casement's speech, therefore, with its echoes of Emmet's, kick starts this ritualisation whilst also steering audience participation towards the preferable goal of immortality and atonement.

Casement's poem 'The Last Prayer of Sir Roger Casement',[216] written on the eve of his execution, has also been previously examined in this study as an insight in how he saw himself just before death — as a martyr, a wronged man who must suffer the misunderstanding of those who persecute him for a short time until his full righteousness is restored or unveiled posthumously. For the purposes of this chapter, it supports the idea of Casement writing for his posthumous audience, and takes the form in some ways of an extension of

[216] This poem is found in the folder 'Poems about and by Roger Casement', located at the National Library of Ireland, fol. 13, MSS. 082 (2/viii).

this idea of the last rites — the 'last prayer' before he enters the afterlife. Repeating what I have previously observed, it echoes the words of Jesus on the cross and shows Casement to be consciously aligning himself with the nationalist heroes of the past, such as Emmet, by combining religious allusion with self-determination (following on from his Speech from the Dock where he declares 'I am proud to be a rebel'):

Lord Jesus receive my soul!...
Into thy Hands, O! Lord,
My spirit I commend...[217]

Although this could be seen as a private poem, the catharsis of a man about to face his death, it also finds its place in the public ritual of his transformation from present to posthumous. The words do take the form of a poem, and a poem too seeks an audience. This poem is another appeal to his public, and to the peers he frequently mentions, to interpret his life and death in alignment with martyrdom, Christianity and nationalist values. The real poignancy and therefore power of this poem lies in its ambiguous place in time. Although written just before his death, the poem is unlikely to have found its audience until after his execution, and so exists within the two lives of Roger Casement. His last poem, containing some of his last self-perceptions, thoughts, and appeals, would come then as a voice from beyond the not yet finalised grave.

[217] Casement, in 'Poems by and about Roger Casement' fol. 13, MSS. 082 (2/viii), NLI.

Casement therefore infiltrates his own afterlife directly: the ghost of Roger Casement is beginning to speak for the first time.

Speaking from the dock for Casement, and for the others who engaged in the tradition, is indeed a very important strategic aspect of bridging life and death and of catalysing public collective memory, essential for the construction through repetition of nationalist identity and aspiration. However, it also goes much farther than this if viewed in terms of space and location. Barbara Harlow, in her paper entitled 'Speaking from the Dock'[218], supports the political legitimacy, and also necessity, of the speech from the dock as a tool in negotiating colonial and postcolonial identity:

> The 'dock' [...] represents a strategically placed discursive and political space, whose utterances provide here a specific site and occasion for inquiring into the circumstances and parameters of that translation from interrogation to negotiation. While the focus is on Ireland, the new interlocutionary engagements in Palestine, South Africa and El Salvador, to name but a few of the colonial contexts that are currently being renegotiated, inform as well this analysis of 'speaking from the dock'.[219]

This 'strategically placed discursive and political space' is of special interest and particular relevance to Casement who is negotiating not only his sentence and his prospective memorialisation, but his personal identity and allegiances as a figure who has transgressed spaces and locations at times politically and socially at odds with each other, such as his role as a representative of colonial

[218] Barbara Harlow, 'Speaking from the Dock' in *Callaloo*, Vol. 16: 4 (Autumn 1993), 874-90 (p. 876).
[219] Harlow, p. 876.

powers amongst the subaltern whilst simultaneously finding himself as a representative of nationalist rebellion against that same political power. Casement's speech from the dock is a unifying speech; an attempt to pre-empt questions regarding his national identity, his personal loyalty and his rights of entry to collective memory as a nationalist patriot and hero. In his speech, he draws attention to, in his opinion, the 'mis'-location of his trial, a factor which casts him as traitor rather than patriot, and is wholly indicative of the tension created by the incompatibility of the British-Irish relationship in terms of power and self-definition:

> I assert from this dock that I am being tried here, not because it is just, but because it is unjust. Place me before a jury of my own countrymen, be it Protestant or Orangemen, and I shall accept the verdict [...] It is not I who am afraid of their verdict – it is the Crown. If this is not so, then why fear the test?[220]

Casement, in his speech, comments on his trial being held in London and not Dublin, and in doing so, does draw attention to the change of status in terms of his definition dependant on the jurisdiction under which he is being tried. As a prisoner who has been moved to England to face trial, he has no control over his geographical location. He does, however, have control of his figurative location via the portal of this specific site and space of the dock, which he manipulates in order to place himself before an Irish jury of peers and posterity, rejecting the jurisdiction — politically, legally, and symbolically —

[220] Casement's 'Speech from the Dock', fol. 14, MSS. 092, NLI, [n.p.].

of the British court over his life and actions. In doing so, he reclaims this space created by his interrogation by the courts and uses it to elevate himself, and his words, to a position equal to that of the words of judge and jury representative of power. Harlow also recognises this role of the speech from the dock, claiming that the speech itself 'is an attempt to reclaim – even momentarily – the legal space in which the prisoner has been convicted for the purpose of discursive opposition'.[221]

Harlow highlights also such a redistribution of power given to the prisoner by this political space:

> If interrogation, the discourse that precedes the trial, marks one extreme of discursive exchange, in which the distribution of power, both physical and verbal, and the assignment of political status are completely distorted, then negotiation proposes a discursive situation at the other extreme, in which power and political status are equally distributed to all participating parties. To acknowledge then the political legitimacy of 'speeches from the dock' is in effect to prepare a place at the negotiating table for those very speakers and their representatives.[222]

So the dock, for Casement, provides a discursive space and situation for him to clarify and assert his nationalist position and to attempt to do similar to end his negotiation of identity through one final negotiation in this speech, the final public record of his life and works. Ironically, this discussion is for the Irish audience from which he has been removed, and not the English audience of the court.

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[221] Harlow, p. 877.
[222] Harlow, p. 882.

Casement, in keeping with the tradition of Irish nationalist prisoners speaking from the dock, rejects the jurisdiction of the British court over him, physically and representatively. This is an example of the dock of the government in power offering to those who wish not to be subject to it an opportunity to relocate the trial from punishment to the reclamation of the space for 'discursive opposition', as mentioned by Harlow. Such a speech, then, is important in a nationalist tradition as a means of granting a public voice to the subject people, and in doing so, it also offers a performative space and location from which to reject the opposing power. Casement wastes no opportunity to repeat the tradition of rejecting the power of the British crown over his physical and national identity, declaring that 'conquest, my Lord, gives no title; and, if it exists over the body, it fails over the mind'. Moreover, it 'can exert no empire over men's reason and judgement and affections; and it is from this law of conquest without title to the reason, judgement and affection of my own countrymen that I appeal'.[223]

Although such speeches offer all oppositional prisoners a means of freeing themselves metaphorically from the power of the authority in question by this public rejection of it, with Casement this rejection and this reclamation of power over his own body and spirit is doubly significant. Casement wilfully relocates himself from the London courts to stand before his Irish peers and their future memory in a figurative sense as he has not had actually physical control over the location of his trial:

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[223] Casement's 'Speech from the Dock', fol. 14, MSS. 092, NLI, [n.p.].

It was not I who landed in England, but the Crown who dragged me here, away from my own country to which I had returned with a price upon my head, away from my own countrymen whose loyalty is not in doubt, and safe from the judgment of my peers whose judgment I do not shrink from. I admit no other judgment but theirs. I accept no verdict save at their hands.[224]

This is not, however, the first time Casement has not been in control of his physical location at the hands of the British government. During his consular career, Casement was moved through many stations, in differing colonies, as a representative of the British Foreign Office. There is a pervading sense in his correspondence, and in other works such as biographies of a continual dislocation and relocation as he moved from post to post, at once publicly representing a government whilst also on a more private level lending his support to its rejection from the country he regarded as his own. This support grew more public over time, of course, and came to eclipse, in his own eyes and in collective memory, his consular work. And yet it remains ironic that through every one of the postings in his consular career, and through all of his movement and stationing of a different sort — in Germany and the United States, for example — during his publicly nationalist campaigns, he never had a home in Ireland during his adult life.

5.3 Poetic Memorialising

[224] Casement's 'Speech from the Dock', fol. 14, MSS. 092, NLI, [n.p.].

The immediate memorialising of Casement was a complicated controversy. This chapter will later discuss in greater detail the discourse surrounding the memorialising tradition of martyrs or heroes, and how their own posthumous life becomes manipulated. To lay the foundation for this, four poems will be examined in order to establish the poetic tradition as a swift and enduring *lieu de mémoire* — what Pierre Nora describes as sites of memory used to order, concentrate, and secure notions of the past — in Ireland.[225] The poems which will be looked at are an anonymous ballad entitled 'The Ballad of Roger Casement', 'Roger Casement' by Padraic Colum, and two Yeats poems from 1937, just over two decades after Casement's execution. As the aim of his section is to establish, for later further analysis, the role of ballad poetry as a *lieu de mémoire*, these particular poems have been chosen as representative of how such poetry exist as a memorial, and how its role is crucial in the informing of continuing memory that comes after.

The first poem, 'The Ballad of Roger Casement', which can be found in the folder entitled 'Poems about and by Casement' in the National Library, Dublin, has been chosen as it seems typical of most of the poems included in this folder.[226] This particular poem is undated in the collection, but those similar to it seem to bear dates in and around the immediate period after Casement's execution. Even if this poem itself does not date from exactly this immediate period of 1916, it is undoubtedly informed by those poems that do, and provides one of the best overarching pieces for the illustration of ballad

[225] Pierre Nora, *Les Lieux de Mémoire, Livre I: La République* (Paris: Gallimard, 1986).
[226] Anon., 'The Ballad of Roger Casement', from the folder 'Poems about and by Roger Casement' at the National Library of Ireland, fol. 13, MSS.082 (2/viii).

trends in such a situation. It is worth mentioning at this point that very few of these poems are critically credible as stand-alone pieces of work, and most display a laboured and very basic use of poetic technique. The point is relevant here though is not the standard of the poetry, but exactly this laboured and formulaic approach to writing, made so obvious by a frequent lack of skill on behalf of the poets. It seems to suggest that one does not need to be a poet to compose a memorial ballad — they take the form of traditional and ceremonial tributes, and if they are described as formulaic, it is precisely because they are very much so.

This anonymous poem has been chosen, as has been noted before, not just because it is typical of the majority, but also because it is catalogued in the National Library as anonymous. Removing the identity of the poet from analysis renders this poem a sort of an 'everyman's' ballad, which allows it to be dissected in terms of its adherence to the tradition of this poetry alone. The vast majority of these poems have Casement's name in the title — much like his own 'Parnell', or indeed his 'Last Prayer of Sir Roger Casement' — and this poem is naturally no exception. 'The Ballad of Roger Casement' is a twenty verse long with a rough ABCD rhyme scheme that it struggles under throughout. It begins:

Casement, Roger Casement,
You are a doomed man to-day,
Hanged by the neck this morning
Before the clock strikes nine.

End here is to your treasons
Against the white men's way,
Your love for the slave peoples,
Your scoff at "rights divine".

The first half of the poem continues in this vein, and is slightly unusual in one way in that its attack on the British government and those involved in the trial is satirical in nature, rather than a straightforward accusation:

Your old Victorian fancies
Are out of date and dead.
Their [*sic*] are other rights to fight for
Than the Indians in Peru.
We are all now on the warpath
Agog for blood to shed,
With our bishops preaching slaughter
For the red and white and blue.

Of course, the satirical angle (very transparent as it mostly is) is the only mildly unusual element in this poem. As can be seen, the painting of the British government and anyone aligned to it as brutal, blood-thirsty, barbaric and greedy as the assumed and expected interpretation to be reached by all of these poems is very noticeably the backbone of this first half of the ballad. What is most interesting, and most typical, is the second half of the poem that

moves into the more balladic sentimental eulogising of Casement that appears throughout poetry of this kind. The seventh stanza marks the change in tone:

You knew us better, Roger Casement,
But you told your tale too late.
...
And they laughed at your Sinn Féiners
And the blind old-fashioned hate.
And they got you in their clutches;
And for this today you swing.

This follows directly, in the poetic tradition sense, from Casement's own poem, 'The Last Prayer of Sir Roger Casement', written just before his execution:

Pray, Father, Pray for me,
And for the thoughtless throng,
That they one day may see,
Who thus exalt in wrong![227]

This ballad moves on with this theme of a path misunderstood, of Casement as a martyr who was looking towards a future unseen by those who lacked this revolutionary visionary ability, and elevates him above the British government and his critics and their short-sighted barbarism. The impression then is of a

[227] Casement, 'The Last Prayer of Sir Roger Casement', from the folder 'Poems about and by Roger Casement', fol. 13, MSS. 082 (2/viii).

martyr who displays ultimate virtue and bravery in the face of misunderstanding and governmental abuse. The anonymous poet, in the poem 'The Ballad of Roger Casement' goes on immediately to align Casement, as he had attempted to himself before his death, with the previous generations of dead heroes, the implication being, therefore, that he qualifies as one himself:

You were all too late, my Casement.
You must take the grand old road,
With Wolfe Tone and Fitzgerald
And how many martyrs more,
For Kathleen Na Houlihan
And the whirlwind crop we sowed,
The last of Erin's heroes,
A male man to the core.

This stanza deserves further attention. It aligns Casement with Wolfe Tone and Fitzgerald, received heroes and martyrs in the Irish tradition, with the line 'And how many martyrs more' emphasising this sense of a continuity, a line and a heritage of martyrs within a received and recognised tradition. The line 'You must take the grand old road' furthers develops this notion: from the viewpoint of this poet there is a clear and almost literal 'road' to be taken by those who follow the route of hero, the road less travelled already by Tone, Fitzgerald, Emmet and the martyrs of the 1916 Easter Rising ('MacNeil, Pearse and McDonagh [sic]/And the rest who wore the green/In the ninety-eight tradition' are lines which follow a few verses later). This poem marks out

very vividly the traditional route, the 'grand old road' towards immortality and eternal symbiosis with the imagined Ireland to which they have all contributed.

The romantic interpretation of love and duty, as displayed in Casement's own poems already discussed, appears in this stanza with the introduction of Kathleen Ni Houlihan, or in Irish, Caítlin Ní Uallacháin, the female representation of Ireland.[228] Kathleen Ni Houlihan is usually presented as an old woman who does not have a home, the implication often being that she has been dispossessed of it and her land. In Yeats and Gregory's 1902 play *Cathleen Ní Houlihan*, Kathleen appears at the home of an Irish family and lures the son, whose marriage preparations are underway, away in order to fight in the Irish Rebellion of 1798. She does this by telling stories and singing songs about the Irish dead who have given their lives for her.[229] When the groom leaves with Kathleen, she changes from being old into a beautiful young woman, suggesting that the young man's sacrifice for her has given her new life. There is a nobility attached to fighting for one's country, but a further duty in nobility in fighting for the female, who embodies all the purity, sentimentality and maternal love that is violated by colonial venture, but also the vulnerability and submissive role assigned to the female, metaphorically significant in the roles assigned to England and Ireland. Richard Kearney, in his discussion of Kathleen Ni Houlihan reaffirms this interpretation by the

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[228] There are various versions and spellings of the translation; this thesis will use the 'Kathleen Ni Houlihan' throughout.

[229] *Cathleen Ní Houlihan* was staged for the first time in 1902 to great reviews, and has often been generally associated with the revivalist and revolutionary culture in Ireland. William Butler Yeats, *The Hour Glass; Cathleen Ní Houlihan; The Pot of Broth* (Dublin: Maunsel, 1905).

myth of Kathleen suggests that it is through the blood sacrifice of martyrs and heroes that Ireland is freed and rejuvenated. Whilst this is Ireland's reward, the reward of the heroes is to be 'remembered forever'.[230] Kathleen Ni Houlihan could be seen in some ways to occupy the same place in the Irish nationalist symbolism that is occupied by the Virgin Mary in Catholic religion, and the use of the symbol of Casement and 'many martyrs more' fighting in defence of and for the love of Kathleen Ni Houlihan creates a vision of duty fulfilled, but also a duty passed on to those who must follow this example as the legacy of those who have entered the national memory and afterlife. This association of sacrifice and the place of Catholicism in Irish nationalism established through poetry is highlighted by Lawrence J. McCaffrey who links the blood sacrifice of the 1916 heroes to the Catholic nature of an 'Irish' Ireland:

> The Blood Sacrifice message of Easter Week poets Patrick Pearse, Joseph Mary Plunkett, and Thomas MacDonagh was a heretical integration of Catholic and Irish Ireland. They [...] wove Catholic atonement and redemption themes into a revolutionary tapestry.[231]

McCaffrey claims that although the British would 'smash the first advance of revolution', the image is still reiterated that it will be precisely this blood sacrifice of the martyrs which would 'cleanse the Irish soul of home Rule's collaboration with Britain, thus redeeming the nation'.[232]

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[230] Richard Kearney, *Transitions: Narratives in Modern Irish Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), p. 218.
[231] Lawrence John McCaffrey in his chapter 'Components of Irish Nationalism', in Thomas E. Hachey and Lawrence J. McCaffrey (eds.) *Perspectives on Irish Nationalism* (Kentucky: University of Kentucky Press, 2004), 1-20, p. 15.
[232] McCaffrey, p. 15.

So even post-1916, during and after the negotiation of the nation's relationship with its previous dominant ruler, the message of sacrifice on behalf of this vision of a future still holds significance in creating the associations which would define that emerging nation, particularly defining them against the power from which it is now disentangling itself.

The last line is particularly noteworthy. 'A male man to the core' seems a strange tautology, especially given the variety of adjectives that could have easily been employed here without changing the rhythm or inflection of the line. The choice of the adjective 'male' in place of a variety of other positive possibilities such as brave, noble, proud, to name a few raises questions about the re-establishing of Casement as masculine. Naturally the repetition implicated here by the juxtaposition of 'male' and 'man' could be seen to reinforce how masculine Casement was, with the idea of a 'real' man being strong, brave, a defender of the vulnerable, unafraid to face the consequences of standing for what he believed in. This stereotypical notion of manhood and maleness promotes an interpretation of Casement as noble. But given the controversy surrounding Casement's sexuality, this could also be an early attempt to manipulate the emerging posthumous Casement away from the sexual deviant back towards the manly heterosexual, coupled with Kathleen Ni Houlihan and therefore beyond reproach.

The sense of duty that is passed on by such role models is passed on, too, by this poem, and marks another element usually and necessarily present in poetry as a *lieu de mémoire.* Such poems rarely stray from the formula of

memorialising as the starting point of a call to arms of sorts, as a sentimental appeal to the appreciation of the sacrifice made already which must not be left in vain. This poem, working within this framework as it does, includes elements of this passing on of duty as it returns to the satirical tone once more, highlighting the abuses inflicted by the British:

And a noble boast is Freedom,
For which we Britons die
To free the subject nations
Of all lands but our own.
'Imperium et libertas'
'Twas our glorious Primrose cry.
We used it at Denchawi
We shall use it at Cologne.

Then God save merry England
And Kaiser George our King,
The well beloved alien
Who deigns to be our lord.

The tone here is heavy with a disapproving irony, and coming as it does after the sentimental rhapsodising of the memories of the brave Irishmen who are revered along with Kathleen Ni Houlihan, it produces a sense of the necessity of some action being taken. However, this action is not deemed to be necessary by Casement — he has fulfilled his duty, which is another notion usually put forward by poems of this type:

But you, sleep on my Casement.
Rome's arms enfold you well,
Now doubly dear to Ireland
With her great sons who are dead,
And doubly too her martyr
And her saint, as men shall tell
In their prayers through the long ages,
With a glory round your head.

The mixing of imagery and metaphors is here absolutely representative of the Irish martyr ballad, as is indeed the affectionate, sentimental tone. The poet refers to his subject as 'my Casement' — there is a soothing, almost maternal feel to this verse, and the introduction of Mother Ireland feeds on this image of death as sleep, comfort and inclusion whilst others take over from where the martyr has left off, his role having been played now in the living world. The Catholic imagery interwoven here again suggests an afterlife, an acceptance, and projects martyrdom as synonymous with sainthood, and also lends credibility to the prophetic tone of lines such as 'as men shall tell'. The double use of the word 'doubly' also supports the idea of a dual afterlife — that of heaven and that of the nation's memory — and also of a dual existence into which Casement moves with this poem: the life lived, and the life remembered.

The second poem is Padraic Colum's much shorter poem, 'Roger Casement', also included in the same National Library folder.[233] It displays many of the elements highlighted, whilst adding the element of the lament:

They have taken his strangled body and have flung it in a pit,
Ocon, uch, ocon, ocon,
And brought by fire of the quicklime to waste it every bit
Ocon, uch, ocon
To waste the noble stature, the grave and brightening face,
To damn the princely favour that gave our streets a grace,
To put courtesy and kindness from eminence of place,
But they, they die to dust
While 'twas yours to die to fire,
Roger Casement.[234]

Most of the elements of memorialising patriots are present here: the crudeness and savagery of the British ('...and they have flung it in a pit'), the nobility of Casement's character ('...the noble stature'), the rejection by the British of simple common decency ('To put courtesy and kindness from eminence of place'), the lack of respect for life ('...to waste it every bit'), and prophecy of future recognition ('But they, they'll die to dust...'). However, two additional elements stand out here — the idea of the lament, and the idea of providing repetition in creating a posthumous life.

[233] 'Poems about and by Roger Casement', fol. 13, MSS. 082 (2/viii), NLI.
[234] Padraic Colum, 'Roger Casement', in the folder 'Poems about and by Roger Casement', fol. 13, MSS. 082 (2/viii), NLI, although it was published later in a collection of Colum's poems entitled *Irish Elegies* in 1963 (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1963), p. 5.

The lament is here present in the refrain of 'Ocon, uch, ocon, ocon', which is reminiscent of grieving reprieves. This point is relevant because it ties in with the idea of memorialising and the creation of posthumous life as a ceremony. The repetition becomes a refrain, which is suggestive of ceremony — the tradition of grieving collectively. The use of a refrain is also suggestive of the Catholic mass ceremony where learned responses and refrains are spoken aloud after the priest. The method of grieving or lamenting for a martyr, through *lieux de mémoire* such as these poems, can then be seen also as a learned traditional ceremony which the mourners participate in the guise of poets, song writers, orators and so forth. The existence of such a tradition and a ceremony of remembering, which is learnt, means that in some ways the Casement story need only trigger one response in order for the whole ceremony to swing into action. These poems seem to act as a least one trigger by at the very least aligning Casement with heroes and values upheld by the congregation.

The second element is the idea of creating something repetitious. Colum's prophetic and reassuring last words — a call to duty also — in this poem are striking:

But they, they'll die to dust
While 'twas yours to die to fire,
Roger Casement.

They are simultaneously a warning, a promise, a reassurance, a signifier of destiny, a rallying cry. The images of dust and fire are powerful in their associations of the phoenix from the ashes rising once again, the passion of the imagery of flames, and the creation of a metaphor of eternal flames that need to be fanned and to be kept alive by those who associate themselves with the subject. This fits in neatly and impressively with the martyr poem doctrine, but it also does something more than this by providing a memorable quotation, an impressive easily repeated few lines, an epitaph, a refrain in itself. Repetition comes to be vital in the posthumous tradition — without repetition (of the story, of the ritual, of the fight) no posthumous life would exist at all, and every martyr would die to dust. So another role of this poetry is to provide an easy way for others to repeat this sentiment and this story, which in turn evolves and establishes the creation of posthumous life, to give people quotations. This is an explanation for why so many of the poems have a simple rhyme scheme, or a particularly impressive verse, because it makes the poem more likely to be repeated (indeed, this actual example appears in further discussion in a speech decades later). These poems can then be seen to aid and abet the momentum of Casement memorialising in this way.

The next two poems to be analysed in this way are two poems written by W.B. Yeats: 'Roger Casement' and 'The Ghost of Roger Casement'.[235] It is not the aim of this chapter to engage with Yeats scholarship, but rather to select two of his works about Casement and to include them with close focus

[235] 'Roger Casement' and 'The Ghost of Roger Casement', William Butler Yeats, *New Poems* (Dundrum: Cuala Press, 1938), pp. 20–22.

only. These poems move the time frame to 1937, two decades after Casement's death, and although they display a similar style of memorialising Casement as a martyr, they also introduce some new themes that have evolved out of Casement's posthumous life since. 'Roger Casement' takes the form of a protest poem, and was originally a direct attack on the English poet Alfred Noyes,[236] who published his own account of having seen Casement's Black Diaries at the time of their circulation just before his execution in 1916, and upheld them to be genuine. Yeats's protest admonished Noyes for having added to the degrading image of Casement, and challenged him to correct this wrong. The penultimate verse originally read:

Come Alfred Noyes, come all the troop
That cried it far and wide,
Come from the forger and his desk,
Desert the perjurer's side[237]

Yeats altered this to 'Come Tom and Dick, come all the troop' after a change of heart by Noyes but the poem still stands as a challenge to make amends for the wrong done to Casement's posthumous reputation. In this way does the

[236] The English poet Alfred Noyes (1880–1958) was working in the news department of the Foreign Office during Casement's trial in 1916 and published his own account of having seen the Black Diaries as part of his job as a wartime propagandist, citing their authenticity and expressing his disgust at them. Twenty years later, Yeats wrote this poem attacking Noyes, who then wrote a letter to the Irish Press admitting that he might have been misled about the authenticity of the diaries. This resulted in Yeats changing the lines of the poem which attack Noyes directly. Noyes went on to write *The Accusing Ghost or Justice for Roger Casement* (London: Victor Gollancz Limited, 1957), in which he claims that Casement was the victim of a conspiracy and that the diaries are forgeries.
[237] Yeats, p. 20.

poem contribute to the manipulation, editing and correcting of the Casement legend. It is not a lament, or a sentimental ballad extolling the virtues of martyrdom:

I say that Roger Casement
Did what he had to do.
He died upon the gallows,
But that is nothing new.

It does, however, contain the similar debasing of the British government and those complicit in Casement's execution:

Afraid they might be beaten
Before the bench of Time,
They turned a trick by forgery
And blackened his good name.

The most significant verse of this poem, though, must be the last, as it alludes to the controversial debate, formation and reformation of opinion that followed the twenty years after Casement's death, and highlights the progression made from immediate memorialising to the issues that are most pertinent to this period:

Come speak your bit in public
That some amends be made

To this most gallant gentleman

That is in quicklime laid.

In this verse, Yeats is inviting, if not directly challenging, a public re-interpretation of Casement away from the sexual deviant and back to the martyr and hero. The virtuous Casement is still being presented ('To this most gallant gentleman'), but now posthumous Casement is presented also as requiring an apology, amends to be made for his posthumous handling up to this point. There is a sense of duty here again — a sense that this is the only fair and just thing to be done — but this call is to those who are not supporters of Casement, rather than (as in the previous two poems) to those who are. Yeats is encouraging here a retelling of the Casement story with one, unified and righteous account, which indicates how fragmented Casement's posthumous life had already become twenty years after his execution. There is also a feeling of action being required to restore Casement to the glory which the early ballads and poems bathed him in — Casement in this poem is not in the arms of Mother Ireland, resting peacefully, but is 'in quicklime laid'. The last line of this poem reminds us that Casement still has a foot in the earthly world, is still not at peace, has still not been allowed to cross over into the glorious nationalist afterlife. His body still remains that of a traitor: dishonoured and mortal. The implication of this is that the perceived lies and controversies surrounding Casement which are blackening his name are responsible for holding him back from his ascent, from his full miraculous transubstantiation from mortal to immortal, from earthly to divine. Some of the

congregation – those responsible for these slurs — are not participating properly in the ritual.

The second poem, 'The Ghost of Roger Casement', has more in common, technically, with the first poem studied. Four verses of an ABAB rhyme scheme for eight lines, followed by the refrain of 'The ghost of Roger Casement/Is beating on the door' deal with the failings of the British government ('John Bull has stood for Parliament/A dog must have its day' and 'John Bull has gone to India/And all must pay him heed'), but in a different political time frame than 1916. This is now 1937, and Yeats is referring to a different set of governmental decisions. This is, in fact, not a poem directly about memorialising Casement in the way in which might be expected, despite the apparent similarities in poetic technique. This is a poem which is critical of British foreign policy, but Yeats is using Casement here as a warning. The prophecies here are not those *about* Casement, but those *of* Casement. Casement's ghost is coming back to remind governments that they have been wrong before, that their failings and shortcomings led him to suffer and to be misunderstood, both in his literal life and his posthumous life. 1937 marked a period of transition in national politics and gestures of national identity with the introduction and subsequent establishment of the Constitution of Ireland under Eamon de Valera.[238] This interpretation of Casement illustrates him as haunting those who have not yet learnt their lesson, or haunting those who will not let him rest in peace with his life's work done. The repetition and rhythm

[238] Eamon de Valera (1882–1975) served in office between 1917 and 1973 in various Irish prime ministerial and presidential offices during this time. He was instrumental in the creation of the 1937 Bunreacht nah Éireann, or Constitution of Ireland.

of the refrain 'The ghost of Roger Casement/Is beating at the door' builds tension, and, like most ghost or horror stories, begs a climax, which is not present. Therefore the over-riding feeling of the poem is of a build-up towards a dangerous potential conclusion that has could arrive for new emerging nations and entities if previous mistakes of government were repeated during this transitory period.

Presenting Casement as a ghost is an interesting interpretation. Ghosts are traditionally seen as souls who cannot find peace, or who have not passed over to the afterlife. The mythological reasoning behind this is usually that they have unfinished business in the mortal world. The parallels with Casement and his disjointed, disfigured posthumous reputation during this time are evident. The other important implication in presenting Casement as a ghost is that ghosts are also active entities in that they have the potential to haunt, and to detain a nation or its people in the past. Ireland, Britain, his audience at large, will all be haunted by Casement until he is at peace. At transitional periods such as post civil-war 1937 Ireland, implementing a new constitution, the past can, instead of acting as a reinforcement of identity and direction, act as a warning if the sacrifices of that nation's forefathers are not contextualised and reinterpreted into a new cultural identity. Furthermore, this poem does not seem to guide the reader towards viewing a memory as haunting, but the lack of proper, unified and well-noted memory as something which will inflict haunting upon them. The reader will only be haunted by Casement's memory if it is the *wrong* one — therefore if it becomes a memory

which fails to relocate Casement, and those he may represent, into a defined cultural heritage whilst creating and using his reputation, and instead misinterprets the place of martyrs and marginalised and their representation of difficulties and abuses experienced by the nation as a whole. It is this question of self-definition again, as experienced by Casement personally during his lifetime, and now being handed over to the Irish nation to control, as representative of the process of Irish decolonization or self-determination. David Lloyd's chapter 'Adulteration and the Nation', which is published again in *Postcolonial Discourses* in 2001, discusses the role of ballads as used by the Young Irelanders in cultural resistance from the 1830s onwards.[239] It notes that whilst these ballads have an obvious role as cultural resistance against Britain (in their memorialising of the 1798 Rebellion, amongst other similar events), they play another more influential role in not just transmitting historical memories of these events for future generations, as they also transmit the 'repertoire of means to resist, the tactical knowledge of how and where to conduct armed struggle'.[240] So these memorialising poems and ballads are not just informing future generations, but instructing them also in methods of resistance. The same can be said of these later ballad and memorialising poems about Casement, which fit into this carved niche of cultural resistance through their very formulaic nature. A projection of the needs and visions of the nation

[239] This chapter originally formed part of Lloyd's own work *Anomalous States: Irish Writing and the Post-colonial Moment* (Dublin: The Lilliput Press, 1993) which was published earlier. The inclusion of this chapter in later postcolonial anthologies is mentioned here in order to show its ongoing relevance to the evolving discipline of postcolonial studies; Young Ireland, or *Éire Óg*, formed a political, social and cultural movement in the 1830s which was to have great influence on Irish nationalism in the following generations.

[240] David Lloyd 'Adulteration and the Nation' in Gregory Castle (ed.), *Postcolonial Discourses* (London: Blackwell Publishing , 2001), pp.401–32, p. 408.

is a resistance to a hybridization between coloniser and colonised, or of post-coloniser and post-colonised in future generations, and has as its aim to make solid a collective and defined nation. As Lloyd ventures, if the blood sacrifice is for the state, then it must be clear what the 'state' is, 'for what the state in turn is held to represent', which is, in this case, a 'desired end of an homogenous Irish nation' which is therefore necessary as a 'preliminary to the political struggle in any form'.[241] Hence the need for cultural nationalism, and for memorialising traditions which hold in esteem the posthumous existence of their martyred dead, who in their turn act as a spur for future generations in resistance. Declan Kiberd asserts that 'If colonialism is a system, so also is resistance', and this places postcolonial writing, such as memorialising nationalist poetry, in the realm of cultural resistance.[242] This makes all the more important Lloyd's assertion that in poetry for such a nation, the verse must 'represent the Irish people as the agent of its own history.'[243] I would argue that despite the sometimes overly romantic and lamenting tone of such memorialising verse, their role is very much one of giving agency to the reader and the nation to which they are addressed in that they uphold the agency of those whom they commemorate. The commemorated martyrs — in this case, Casement — are portrayed as having played out the role assigned to them in the attempt to rejuvenate and give a future to their country. Of course, as has been discussed, it is precisely the repetition of these cultural traditions, their formulaic nature, which result in their power, implying to the audience that the

[241] Lloyd, *Postcolonial Discourses* p. 408.
[242] Declan Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland*, (London: Jonathan Cape), p. 13.
[243] Lloyd, p. 409.

tradition will continue: a handing over of the baton of sorts, which is also a means of passing over agency to the next generation of cultural resistance.

So as these poems can be seen as a call to transubstantiate Casement from condemned man to unified nationalist martyr, so too can they be seen as a transformation in representation of the role of the man and martyr, and the sacrificial ritual in which they are participating. This creates reason out of difficult matters, giving a reactive voice to the Irish public which they may not have been able to articulate otherwise. These poems are not received just as mourning, but as defiance in the face of brutality or ignorance. In *Singing the Chaos: Madness and Wisdom in Modern Poetry*, William Pratt quotes Yeats who, when speaking about these Casement poems amongst others, reminds the audience that 'we may and sometimes must be indignant and speak it. Hate is a kind of "passive suffering" but indignation is a kind of joy'.[244] Pratt summarizes that 'Yeats indignation was purgative, it seems'.[245] This transformation and reinterpretation of the poems themselves as indignant, but indignant as a means of purging to attain joy is very suggestive of a memorialising tradition which had within its power a means of resistance against total dominance by or of hybridization with British government. Casement's location within this tradition underlines the power of representation, of creating a version for posterity that is unified and well-established in the identity negotiation faced, too, by the posthumous audience. As Thuente remarks, 'nationalists were well aware of the emotional power and

[244] William Pratt, *Singing the Chaos: Madness and Wisdom in Poetry* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1996), pp. 97–98.
[245] Pratt, p. 98.

the potential for propaganda that resided in 'the telling of the story'.[246] The speeches and poems here examined exist, within their traditions, to locate Casement in a certain nationalist posthumous existence, and are in this way seen to be preparing posterity for Casement's afterlife, and what impact it will have on the future of the nation. This tradition for memorialisation, especially surrounding martyrdom in Ireland, allows for Casement to set in motion the urge amongst his successors and supporters to engage with this concept of retelling the story as a means of giving agency to the Irish nation in its own creation. Due to the power granted by this agency, the urge (or sense of duty) which resulted in these products of memorial tradition can also transform itself from a wish to remember into a desire to reinterpret, and to re-invent the memory to match contemporary Irish issues. Memorialising Casement moves towards modernising him and his public representation.

[246] Mary Helen Thuente, 'The Folklore of Irish Nationalism' in Thomas E. Hachey and Lawrence J. McCaffrey (eds.), *Perspectives on Irish Nationalism* (Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 2004), pp. 42–61, p. 44.

6. Modernising Casement

But I felt no horror at Casement's passing. I felt his death was as purposeful as his life.

Captain J. R. White, 'Where Roger Casement Would Have Stood Today', 1936.[247]

6.1 Where Casement Would Have Stood Today

It has been established, therefore, from a close reading of Casement's speech as preparing posterity, and of the immediate traditional nationalist rituals, that Casement's death and its memorialising can be seen to mark the beginning of his posthumous re-interpretation. This posthumous existence also marks the very distinct beginning of his role as not just a martyr or historical figure, but, to adopt again Hanafin's notion, of the active virtual citizen.[248] The role of Casement as a 'virtual' and therfore imagined, citizen raises again the issue of counterfactual history as mentioned previously. The text examined int his chapter, a seppech entitled 'Where Casement Would Have Stood Today' is explicitly counterfactual in its attempt to decisively put forward what 'would have' been had Casement still been alive. This combines with Hanafin's notion of virtual citizenship to create an idea of a 'virtual history'. It is not the

[247] Captain Jack White, (1879–1946), 'Where Roger Casement Would Have Stood Today', addressed to Roger Casement Sinn Féin Club in 1936. The version used is also available in the National Library of Ireland, fol.17, MSS. 012.

[248] Patrick Hanafin's notion of 'virtual citizenship' in Ireland, as discussed in the previous chapter.

intention of this chapter to enter into discourses of counterfactual history fully, but instead to illustrative how the culminative effect of such elements of virtual history underpin memorialisation and its role in the creation and manipulation of a national identity. Whilst both views of Casement's reputation are being examined in this and in the previous chapter, there can be traced a split between the material of the time period around Casement's actual death both not just chronologically, but also thematically. The traditional memorialising at the time of his execution centres around his deeds during his life and projects prophecies of his place in the hallows of Irish martyrs and rebels. In his role as not just a quasi-saint, but a virtual citizen, this posthumous interpretation shifts gear in that it focuses on what Casement *would* have done or *would have represented* were he still alive. Such speculation is not rare posthumously, especially with influential historical figures, as it is the most effective way of keeping a personality alive. This recurrent updating and re-conjuring of the possibilities of the dead form the very lifeblood of the virtual citizen, preventing him from becoming fossilised, or relevant only within a specific timeframe. Through such imagined conversation with posthumous Casement, those involved in interpreting where he would have located himself today are asking him to bear witness and to comment virtually on contemporary events. Casement is subject to this continuing reassessment and reinterpretation on such a large scale chiefly due to his many layers and contradictions. In presenting a posthumous overview of Casement, this chapter will use representative selective examples to illustrate

how his reputation and reception can be manipulated in order to fit the issues of an evolving Ireland. These texts include a political speech from 1936 and two plays, one written in 1966, the other in 2003.

The multi-faceted nature of Casement's life, and particularly its controversies (such as the British-Irish allegiance), means that memories of Casement found (and indeed, are still finding) it problematic to be comfortably defined and located within the nationalist cultural pantheon, but it simultaneously lends itself to the type of reinterpretation that involves Casement in political and cultural situations which were not relevant during his actual lifetime. One good example of this is the more recent examinations of Casement under the banner of studies of gender or sexuality, emerging from the 1990s.[249] In a different climate, both legally and culturally, Casement plays a role in advancing the discourse surrounding gay rights or gay histories in Ireland as these subjects come into the public arena. This is one role of the virtual citizen: participating in the mutually beneficial process of attention and affirmation. Casement with regard to homosexuality in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century invites a retrospective re-examination of Casement as a man and a sexual being, which affirms that homosexuality is not a new phenomenon, but something which existed in the lives of the legends. The 'saints' and martyrs and influential players of history lend credibility to the

[249] For example, Casement is discussed in works such as Anthony Bradley and Maryann Gialanella Valiulis, *Gender and Sexuality in Modern Ireland* (Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997), and more recently in Marc Vargo, *Scandal: Infamous Gay Controversies of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Haworth Press, 2003), and Kathryn A. Conrad, *Locked in the Family Cell: Gender, Sexuality, and Political Agency in Irish National Discourse* (Amherst: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004).

affirmation of contemporary discourse on the subject. Of course, in being used in this way, Casement is being kept alive in the twentieth century, and has an almost ambassadorial role in a new cause. The virtual citizen Roger Casement has evolved, and still has a position in important humanitarian issues of the day. It is through this 'modernising' that these mutual benefits are reaped.

Evaluating the use of, or modernising of, Casement through recent issues relating to gender and sexuality would provide rich material and evidence of this constant reworking and updating of national memory, and has been very effectively explored in some recent scholarship, most notably in the works of Lucy McDiarmid. In her paper for the Royal Irish Academy symposium in 2000, McDiarmid presented a paper, 'The Afterlife of Roger Casement', which traces evolving controversies regarding Casement's reception into Irish history with regards to his sexuality from 1937 to the 1990s. Although this chapter marks a departure from analysing Casement in terms of sexuality, it is necessary to engage with McDiarmid's work given the focus on the physicality of Casement in many aspects of this work, and also a similarity in the timeframes referred to here. Early in McDiarmid's paper, she notes that 'The chief feature of Casement's afterlife has been its unstabilisability.'[250] This statement is directly supported by the aim of this chapter, which is to show the potential of relocation of Casement's memory precisely because of this 'unstabilisability'. For example, in McDiarmid's analysis, the decriminalisation of homosexuality in Ireland in 1993 'gave a

[250] Lucy McDiarmid, 'The Afterlife of Roger Casement', Mary Daly (ed.), *Roger Casement in Irish and World History* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2005), pp. 178-89, (p. 179).

new power to Casement'.[251] As the Irish nation changes and evolves, so too does its memory. In a different chapter, 'The Posthumous Life of Roger Casement', McDiarmid again mentions this problem with locating Casement or of laying him to rest finally in terms of his reputation, as especially before his repatriation to Dublin, he 'had not been caoined, waked or buried: he was one of the unquiet dead'.[252]

Therefore this chapter shall examine how Casement is manipulated as one of the 'unquiet dead', how he is given a voice by his posthumous interpreters. I would like to broaden how Casement can be applied to the evolution of the Irish nation by not focusing directly on his sexuality, but instead on the constant summoning of Casement by those who succeed him for various political and cultural reasons, marking a departure from McDiarmid's study. Declan Kiberd's *Inventing Ireland*, which traces the formation of modern Ireland and its history through an analysis of its literature, provides a very decisive link between how those writing about Ireland simultaneously are translating the nation and shaping its evolution, which a study of Casement and his posthumous evolution at times mirrors. In the chapter entitled 'Post-Colonial Ireland – "A Quaking Sod", Kiberd quotes Daniel Corkery writing in 1966 describing the state of the Irish nation:

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[251] McDiarmid, p. 183.

[252] Lucy McDiarmid, 'The Posthumous Life of Roger Casement', Anthony Bradley and Maryann Gialanella Valiulis (eds.), *Gender and Sexuality in Modern Ireland* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997), p.132.

> Everywhere in the mentality of the Irish people are flux and uncertainty. Our national consciousness may be described, in a native phrase, as a quaking sod.[253]

Kiberd underlines this interpretation from the 1960s by using the term 'quaking sod' in the title of his chapter, and traces the developments of literary movements in adding to, and in dealing with, this state of 'flux' in the consciousness of the Irish nation at this time. Following, to an extent, this methodology, this chapter will examine the response of a national consciousness to Casement's posthumous memory through a close reading of a political speech agitating against fascism from 1936, addressed to Irish supporters of the Roger Casement Sinn Féin Club; a radio play written in 1966, but not broadcast until 1973, written just following the repatriation of Casement's remains, and broadcast during the early years of the Northern Irish Troubles; and finally a play written in 2003, which is intended to examine relationships between Ireland and England and their experience of Britain's imperial past. These choices outline how, due to the state of 'flux' of Casement's reputation, his voice, or his virtual citizenship, can be invoked at times of change in Ireland, Britain, and elsewhere.

The first analysis is that of Captain Jack White's speech, entitled 'Where Casement Would Have Stood Today' delivered in 1936,[254] on the twentieth anniversary of his execution to the Roger Casement Sinn Féin Club. By choosing a source from just twenty years after his death, this evaluation

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[253] Kiberd is quoting Daniel Corkery in *Synge and Anglo-Irish Literature* (Cork: Mercier Press 1966), p. 14 in *Inventing Ireland: The Literature of the Modern Nation* (London: Vintage, 1996), p. 555.

[254] Captain Jack White, fol.17, MSS. 012, NLI.

will illustrate how Casement's posthumous life was manipulated through, not just to serve the Irish nationalist cause, but also other issues on the political and social agenda of the time, in this case the anti–fascist campaign in Ireland, and amongst the Irish living England, during the Spanish Civil War.[255] The very title of the speech 'Where Casement Would Have Stood Today' shows the speaker's intention to conjure up the virtual Casement, to summon his ghost, in order to rally his troops through assumptions based on analysis of Casement's life and death.

Jack White was a contemporary of Casement's, born in County Antrim in 1879. He served during the Boer War, was decorated for his role, but resigned from military service in 1907 due to a rising disaffection with the army. After the death of his father in 1912, he took an avid interest in Irish political life, and campaigned alongside Casement and other contemporaries, supporting Irish nationalist interests. He was involved with various Irish groups, such as the Irish Volunteers, before serving in the First World War in France as part of an ambulance crew. However, he returned to Ireland after the 1916 Easer Rising to campaign against the execution of the leaders, and was arrested during his efforts. This arrest resulted in White being transferred to Pentonville prison, where Casement was being held, on the day before Casement was executed.

As is evident in a glance at White's life up until 1916, he was a figure who had much in common with Casement socially and culturally, as well as politically. He, too, was born in Ulster, experienced the Boer War, and was

[255] The Roger Casement Sinn Féin Club was located on Bridge Road in Bootle, Liverpool.

stationed abroad whilst continuing his involvement with, and support of, the progressing Irish nationalist cause. On the eve of the watershed event of this study of Casement's life and posthumous life, which is his execution, White is located, not least physically, alongside Casement. However, after Casement's execution, which transforms his location to the posthumous, White's location does not alter. Casement's actual involvement in subsequent political life has now come to an end, but White's has not, and so when he becomes involved in the anti-fascist movement during the Spanish Civil War,[256] he invokes Casement to lend support to his cause, predicting that if Casement had not been executed, he, too, would have entered into this concern with White, interpreting his memory of Casement to add weight to his campaign.

White claims, in his introductory acknowledgements, that it is not his intention 'to deliver a panegyric' on Roger Casement as he states that he has 'the strongest and deepest objection to the all too common Irish habit of breaking a man's heart by misunderstanding him when he was alive and canonising him as soon as he is dead'.[257]

It seems that in beginning by noting this, White is disassociating himself, and Casement, from the glorified worship of Casement as a two-dimensional character in history through this instant canonisation on his death. It also invites the audience to recognise the fact that White has knowledge of

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[256] Ireland's position during the Spanish Civil War (1936–39) is the subject of emerging academic interest, illustrated recently by the first major academic analysis of Ireland's role in this war in Robert Stradling, *The Irish and the Spanish Civil War 1936–9* (Manchester: Mandolin, 1999), followed by Fearghal McGarry, *Irish Politics and the Spanish Civil War* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1999).

[257] White, [n.p.].

Casement personally, and has insight into his life, lending credibility to any assumptions he goes on to make in the speech. White also announces in this indirect way that Casement was misunderstood during his life. The Black Diaries scandal in particular was still at large during this period, but there were other issues surrounding Casement's life — his consular service and his knighthood most of all — which were rendering him difficult to locate with ease in the Irish nationalist tradition. This speech was addressed to a Sinn Féin club, which naturally must point towards the Irish nationalist beliefs of the audience. Moreover, this club being the Roger Casement Sinn Féin club denotes that Casement's role in Irish nationalism and rebellion for this group would not have been in doubt — Casement was their figurehead, their hero memorialised. It is directly because of this that White's vocalisation against a panegyric is interesting. A re–evaluation of Casement and of the misunderstood ambiguities may be absolutely necessary for a crowd who remained unconvinced as to Casement's credentials, but if the aim of White's speech were to secure Casement in the worthy nationalist memory, then surely this would be a case of preaching to the converted when such an audience (the Roger Casement Sinn Féin Club) already hold him in emblematic esteem. Modernising Casement, in terms of his nobility, bravery and other heroic characteristics bestowed upon him precisely by this nationalist memory, does, however, require a reinterpretation and a realignment of some facts, if only to encourage the viewing of Casement as a man once again, and not just as a symbol. White does not wish to deliver a panegyric, a laudatory speech, for to

do this is to eulogise, a funereal focus that is at odds with what such 'modernising' hopes to achieve. Eulogising can afford to be generous and two dimensional, and to overlook misunderstandings and ambiguities as it refers to something that is now in the past. White, if he is to be successful in catalysing this audience, needs Casement to be very real, and very much part of the present. White needs to build up Casement to be the type of man who would fight against the rise of fascism in these times, and fortunately for him there is much in Casement's political and personal life to suggest that this would be a possibility. Throughout this analysis of Captain White's speech, it matters less whether many of his assumptions have merit, and more that he is choosing to highlight aspects of Casement, both as a man and a historical representative, in order to conjure up a relevant figurehead for a different humanitarian struggle. Casement is being used a medium though which to connect cause and people.

The tribute, which is probably the most effective way to describe the crucial elements of the speech, begins then by re-iterating Casement's role as an Irishman of great compassion and nobility, as White says he will treat Casement as what he was, which was a 'great and typically Irish human figure, an Irishman who took the leading part which he did take in the birth of the new Ireland because all through his life, he was being spiritually reborn as an Irishman himself from the physical womb, so to speak, of his English and Imperial connections'.[258]

White connects with and reaffirms the nationalist view of Casement by those who hold him in high esteem (most obviously, his audience for this

[258] White, [n.p.].

speech's delivery), but also makes evident an important distinction. He describes how it is a finer tribute to deal with Casement as 'a great and typically Irish *human* figure' which seems rather a deliberate choice of words.[259] The flurry of support around Casement from his loyal admirers around the time of his execution, especially, as we have seen, in poetic memorialising, are ready to canonise and elevate Casement as a martyr, a hero and a patriot all at once. White wishes to present the 'human' Casement, and in doing so, invites his audience to admire Casement the man, as well as Casement the figurehead. He does not, however, ignore the traditional spiritual side to the matter. As has been noted, there is interwoven through the fabric of Irish nationalism the spiritual aspect, manifest as religion, mythology and essentialist nature. Without such a spiritual element, the Casement invoked would lack depth and credibility with regards to nationalist culture. White's image of Casement being 'spiritually reborn as an Irishman' therefore satisfies the received nationalist ideal that to be Irish, to be a patriot, is something higher than duty and little lower than sainthood. White manages, in this short paragraph, to define once again Casement as being Irish as opposed to English and Imperial; to keep Irish patriotism akin to something spiritual and innate; but also disconnect Casement from the inertia of being history in order to show how Casement's work is not yet complete, twenty years after his death.

White analyses Casement's links to the British government by stating that this spiritual rebirth as an Irishman is 'why he felt so acutely the depth of

[259] My emphasis in italics.

the conflict between Britain and Ireland, because that conflict was not only outside him but inside himself'.[260]

This again humanises Casement, and raises the ongoing thorny issue of national duality. However, in approaching the topic as such, White allows an opportunity to explain away Casement's British affiliations as a sort of lack of spiritual maturity, and allows him a stage on which to promote once again the superiority of Irishness as compared to Englishness, as an enlightened Casement came to understand himself. White uses the frequently quoted writings of Casement to Alice Stopford-Green in 1906 to explain how he found himself victim to this struggle, and also his self-discovery:

> It is a mistake for an Irishman to mix himself up with the English. He is bound to do one of two things – either to go to the wall if he remains Irish or to become an Englishman himself. You see I very nearly did become one once. At the Boer War time, I had been away from Ireland for years, out of touch with everything native to my heart and mind (...) I was on the high road to being a regular Imperialist jingo – although at heart underneath all, and unsuspected almost by myself, I had remained an Irishman (...) and finally, when up in those lonely Congo forests where I found Leopold, I found also myself, the incorrigible Irishman.[261]

Although White claims to be attempting to move away from the Irish tradition of canonising in favour of presenting a more realistic, human, attainable and relevant Casement, he keeps entirely within other aspects of the myth–making and Irish nationalist tradition that have been raised in chapter three, most

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[260] White, [n.p.]
[261] Casement in a letter to Stopford-Green , 20 April 1906, fol. 36, MSS. 115, NLI.

notably in this case, the aspect of anglophobia. White's selection of this conclusion shows that Irishness is a quality more than just a political label, something native to heart and mind, and also something which is difficult to eradicate, despite the evident lure of and ease of transit to Englishness. In this, White shows himself to have much in common with those who participated in the elevation of the Manchester Martyrs in 1867. This essentialism of what it is to be Irish forms a major part of the speech, as White's analysis shows when he asks 'now what does Roger Casement, up against the horrors of man's inhumanity to man which he witnessed in the Belgian Congo, mean by finding himself an 'incorrigible Irishman'?'[262]

This question is really at the centre of this attempt to reintroduce Casement for the good of the anti-fascist cause which White is championing at this event. This speech is being addressed to those who in all probability would like to view themselves as 'incorrigible Irishmen' in the same sense as Casement. So it is crucial that if White is to align the audience with his cause, he must summon a version of Casement that appeals to nationalist conviction, but who also remains credible as someone who would believe in the need for action on this issue. If this can be successful, then the sense of duty which attaches itself to the predecessors of the Irish nationalist heroes and martyrs can be harnessed and directed towards an aligned cause. White's interpretation of this definition of the incorrigible Irishman seems effective as he elaborates that 'surely he means an incorrigible hater of tyranny, an incorrigible lover of freedom and human brotherhood, and that at any time or age means an

[262] White, [n.p.]

incorrigible rebel translated into modern language and conditions' and also 'up against the inhuman and would-be international tyranny of Fascism' means it 'is not far from meaning an incorrigible Socialist'.[263]

The speech continues in this vein. White has therefore taken Casement's own words and used them to transport Casement through Irish nationalism through rebeldom to Socialism. He asks the audience of 1936 to follow him on this natural journey of evolution for which Casement himself, in his own words and by his own deeds planted the seeds, and which he surely would have followed had he been alive. The irony exists, of course, which indicates that had Casement not died at the gallows, he probably would not be viewed as such a worthy and influential Irish nationalist figurehead to invoke. The line of argument is quite convincing, however, as White asks if there can be 'any doubt where Roger Casement would have stood today in the great fight between tyranny and human freedom and equality in which he stood so manfully in his own day for the oppressed Negroes of the Congo?'[264]

White naturally speaks of Casement's campaign against British rule in Ireland, but focuses more heavily on his humanitarian efforts in the Congo, quoting large sections from the Congo Report and reinforcing what injustices Casement himself would have witnessed in its researching. This has the effect of reminding the audience that in their eyes, Casement's great achievements were not limited to the Irish cause, but to any international humanitarian cause, such as the Congo in his lifetime, which are in the same vein as any

[263] White, [n.p.].
[264] White, [n.p.].

achievements made in the fight against fascism now in his afterlife. Elaborating on this, White calls the audience to a type of active service:

> Or would he have stood with Connolly for the freedom of Spain, through the freedom and rise of status of its working class, as Connolly stood for the freedom of Ireland through the freedom of every Irish man and woman? There can be no doubt in any sane mind of the answer to that question, and it is fitting that we, met here as we are to honour Roger Casement's memory, should pay him living honour by our living contribution by continuing the cause for which he lived and died, rather than here dead lip-service.[265]

The Casement who fought the tyranny in the Congo Free State is Casement the martyr and Casement the patriot, dead and ascending to the hallows of Irish nationalist memory, passing the baton to the next generation of sons of Ireland. The Casement who stands beside Connolly in Spain, however, is Casement the virtual citizen, resurrected in the 'living honour', not mourned by 'dead lip–service'. This becomes the not the lamenting memorialising of the immediate period surrounding his death, but the active memorialising of twenty years later. White is urging them to remember Casement through actions, through asking themselves what he would do were he afforded the opportunity, not just in Ireland but throughout the world. This ties in with the necessity for repetition in memory, and of a sense of duty of action in carrying that memory forward. Casement's memory is adapting with the times, and Spain is being presented as the new Ireland, the new Congo, and as such deserves all the attention and efforts that he himself devoted to his contemporary causes.

[265] White, [n.p.].

Casement the virtual citizen is becoming a symbol here for all the humanitarian values held in high esteem during this period.

The constraints of realistic potential during physical present life are removed, and now Casement can be applied, with a few valid suggestive ties to his actual life, to any situation without reprisal, precisely because he is not there to say differently or, indeed, to fail. The memory of the man is enough to incite loyalty in later audiences, and the potential for what Casement would have done is enough to galvanise the same audience into action.

The problems White has to deal with in memorialising Casement are quite skilfully handled. These problems involve what can be called Casement's vanity, the difficult side reported by his detractors, and there is of course the ever-present matter of the scandal surrounding the Black Diaries and Casement's sexuality. The latter is dealt with in a confident and totally dismissive manner during an argument as to the 'skill of the British ruling class in ruling subject nations by division' of which Ireland is 'the supreme illustration'. White's approach is through the discrediting of Basil Thomson as a representation of the British ruling classes, and also as a flawed man himself:

I have been struck by other instances of a nemesis which seems to pursue the enemies of Ireland and strike, with a strange fitness of punishment to crime, at those who slander Ireland's champions. Thus it was Basil Thompson [sic] who circulated filthy stories about Casement before and during his trial. And it was Basil Thompson, who met his own downfall for alleged

sexual improprieties committed in Hyde Park. To say the least of it, to be the instrument of the British ruling class in persecution of Ireland or Ireland's champions seems unlucky.[266]

In this time period of 1936, when homosexuality was still regarded as illegal and socially unacceptable, White must deal with the issue still clinging to Casement's memory deftly. He does so in a way that places Casement beyond reproach, whilst at the same time gaining another opportunity to deliver his anglophobic rhetoric. Casement is portrayed as being a victim of the ongoing injustices of the British class system. Casement's vanities, too, are explained as a misinterpretation and misrepresentation, integral to which is a British tendency to underestimate. White concludes that there is, in the 'best type' of Irishman, what he calls a 'noble romanticism, a sense of the drama of the fight of good against evil'. This characteristic is something which 'supports him with a sense of the dramatic even if he stands single-handed against the world'. White claims that their English counterparts are not instilled with this same ability:

The English with their truly wonderful team spirit and their fear of singularity or eccentricity, cannot understand it, and regard it as vanity [...] This quality then in smaller types [of Irishmen] makes them 'too big to be used and too small to be useful', but in a man of

[266] White, [n.p.] Sir Basil Home Thomson (1861–1939) was the Assistant Commissioner of Scotland Yard at the time of Casement's arrest in 1916. His career came to an end when he was arrested for propositioning a prostitute in Hyde Park in 1925.

Casement's calibre it lifts him above himself and his own safety, while positively enjoying the highest expression of his own spiritual being.[267]

The anglophobic undertones in this extract take the form of an essentialism of sorts, a view that Englishmen have their abilities, but they are not as individual or as spiritual as those of the 'Irish race'. Therefore misunderstanding is to be expected, as the Englishman has no recognition of the characteristics of the so–called Irish hero. There is again the sense of Casement being elevated to something higher, both spiritually and metaphorically — what has been called Casement's vanity is actually a noble romanticism which 'lifts him above himself'. This notion of ascension is repeated throughout Casement's posthumous memorialising, and carries with it the implication of becoming more than just a man, and more than just a memory in a way that is both religious (to associate with Catholic nationalist ideals) and representative of the difference between the living Casement, and Casement the posthumous symbol. As White says, 'he becomes identified with his idea and enjoys something of the bliss of union with something greater than himself, which the Saints enjoy in time: Beatific Vision'.[268]

The Beatific vision, in Roman Catholic theology, is the supreme experience of life after physical death, as it marks the difference between the mediated understanding of God during life, and the immediate, direct perception of God, happiness and blessedness experienced by those who rise

[267] White, [n.p.].
[268] White, [n.p.].

to this elevated position. One of the main points of significance of the use of this terminology in White's speech is the allusion that Casement, if enjoying Beatific Vision, can intercede between man and God. This would position Casement as saint-like, immortal and capable of intercession as he would have unmediated access to God's presence. The speech in some ways teeters on the edge of having a seance-like tone, a summoning of Casement as a guide and a connection between the past, the present and the afterlife. This style is heavily overlaid with Catholic imagery which seems to aid further interpretation of Casement the man, but also of Christian metaphor as a call to duty. Speaking further of Casement's vanity, or sense of melodrama, White creates a brilliant fusion of memorialising aspects of Irish cultural nationalism:

> For a moment I want to stress this peculiar Irish quality of which I think he was an outstanding example, this sense of his own drama in taking his destined part in a great world-drama. I don't think the English ever understand it and we don't always understand it ourselves. In small men it may sink to love of the limelight; but in great men I think it may rise to what Christ meant when he told us not to hide our light under a bushel but to set it on a candlestick. And even the gallows proved nothing but a noble candlestick for Roger Casement.[269]

Catholic martyrdom, anglophobia, repetition in memorialising: all of these elements combine not to only urge the audience to hold Casement and his life's works in high esteem, but also to indicate that Casement did begin as just a man, but rose to lofty heights, still revered twenty years later at this stage, by sacrificing himself for the greater good under whichever guise it presented

[269] White, [n.p.].

itself. Naturally, this is followed by a request that these members of the Roger Casement Sinn Féin Club, these 'Irishmen whose lives and work are cast for the present in England', should come together to 'honour Casement's memory in the most loyal and living way that is possible', which is 'namely by continuing Casement's work'.[270] Casement's work, in this instance and in the eyes of Captain White, is to fight against fascism in the political climate of 1936.

The aims of, or effects achieved by, White's speech seem to be grouped into three, albeit interlinked, categories: firstly, establishing Casement as a worthy player in the continuing memorialising of Irish national heroes; secondly, to reinforce the validity of his idea as to where Casement would have stood with regard to fascism; and thirdly, to use this combination as a call to arms to his audience of 1936. From the viewpoint of an analysis of Casement's posthumous life as presented in this chapter, White's techniques both reinforce what has already been surmised from Casement's own feelings about his death, and from his immediate memorialising, and also point to some subtle, and some very clear, departures from exact replication of this means of remembering. The similarities can be found in the anglophobia, the reverence in which Casement is held, and in the religious allusions already noted.

One example of the differences twenty years later in Casement's posthumous life is the use of the word and notion of 'spirit', which is indicative of the form of the virtual citizen. White paints an overall picture of

[270] As the Roger Casement Sinn Féin Club was based in Liverpool, England, speeches delivered to this club have also been collected by the National Archives of Ireland, and include those speeches given in Essex Hall in London.

an omnipresent Casement who survives his execution in a higher, and ultimately better, form. His death was laden with potential, and was in many ways the beginning of White's Casement. White's image of Casement as a simmering mass of energy to be called upon in the future is shown when he says that 'his body has smouldered away in quicklime', before going on to (mis)quote the lines from Padraic Colum's memorial poem 'Roger Casement':

They shall die to dust,
Where you have died to fire,
Roger Casement.

The correct verse reads:

But they, they'll die to dust
While 'twas yours to die to fire,
Roger Casement. [271]

The use of the word 'smouldering' and the fire imagery in Colum's poem connect to conjure images of a rebirth, a metamorphosis, where Casement lies in wait until being reborn a stronger force. This is a fire to be kept alight, in White's view. Casement's spirit smouldering in Pentonville prison yard shows

[271] Padraic Colum, *Irish Elegies* (London: Dolmen Press, 1963), p. 5.

that Casement's 'spirit' continues as 'the spirit of the dead continues; [...] but without doubt in their influence on the lives of the living'.[272]

The way in which one can pay homage to Casement, whilst also keeping the fires of his memory burning is to 'honour his memory by co-operating with his continuing spirit'. This sense of continuation is used in immediate memorialising as well, but here it differs in that it does not limit Casement to the hallows of the other side, the afterlife. His 'continuing spirit' signals a continuation in his work and allegiance which his body alone is incapable of committing to. Co-operation with this spirit is the best way to pay tribute to Casement's role in humanitarian and political action, but also, if looked at it from a certain angle, is the only way to facilitate it. Casement, like some kind of Holy Spirit, will work through the activists alive in this period of his posthumous life. Casement's influence is being channelled through White and the members of the Roger Casement Sinn Féin Club by this speech. And in this channelling exists a re-interpretation of Casement in order to fit the needs of White's time. White is very eager to avoid the fossilisation of Casement and his memory, and seems to feel that this continuing invoking of Casement's spirit keeps it alive, and enables it to remould to fit contemporary requirements. This belief is reiterated throughout, in statements such as 'life never stands still and if we embalm the dead in the cerements of their own time alone, we rob not only ourselves but them of their influence, which, to live and grow, must obey the first law of life, adaptation to changing environment'.[273]

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[272] White, [n.d.].
[273] White, [n.p.].

To keep Casement contained within his own lifetime, and his legacy solely connected to the work he carried out personally, is then to rob Casement of his spirit, and to rob those who follow him of the benefit of his inspiration and patronage. In fact, it almost comes across as though White believes that Casement's sacrifice on the gallows was for the purpose of something greater, such as this very role. White says of Casement's execution: 'But I felt no horror at Casement's passing. I felt his death was as purposeful as his life'.[274] This is a move away from Casement's death, and therefore his ascension to the pantheon of martyrs and heroes, being a reward for the sacrifices during his life. Instead, it seems that from White's viewpoint, Casement's work has only just begun.

White's speech serves as an inspiration to the audience, and as an alignment between Casement's past, their present, and their mutual future through this intercession and channelling of Casement's spirit, a 'spirit' which is more open to manipulation and interpretation than the actual fact-based memory contained within Casement's life story. White reaches his climax in a way reminiscent of 'Prayers of the Faithful'[275] in the Catholic mass ceremony, which come together to form a promise of action with a promise of memorial:

Let us be the incorrigible Irishmen that Casement realised himself to be. Let us make the light shining from the candlestick of the Pentonville gallows shine wider and brighter, and link its

[274] White, [n.p.]
[275] The traditional layout for a 'Prayer of the Faithful' begins with 'Let us pray...', repeated with different requests.

rays not only with those of Connolly, of Fintan Lalor, Mitchell, Davis, and Pearce, but also with every fighter for freedom past or present.[276]

White's speech illustrates effectively how Casement's role as a virtual citizen means that he can be resurrected and given speech, even with regard to causes and campaigns which were not in existence during his own lifetime. The duty to memorialise Casement can be manipulated in order to create an obligation to act in response to this speech he is being given, galvanising an audience within a different time frame to reinterpret his memory in accord with the political, cultural and social issues of the present.

6.2 Theatrical Memorialising

The memorialisation and reinterpretation of Roger Casement through poetic tradition and political speeches leads to the treatment of this figure through a medium that can encompass both these elements, which is the medium of theatre, or to be more precise, the theatricality of plays. Representation through theatre introduces a combination of the facets of memorialising relevant to Casement and his posthumous reputation as seen in the poetic tradition, but adds a further dimension as the genre must, by its very nature, move into the realms of fiction. The fictitious element of this type of

[276] White, [n.p.].

reinterpretation or 're-presentation' (to use Spivak's terminology)[277] is present in the need for the playwright to bring to life historical characters or perhaps to create them entirely, to detail the scene against which the action is played, and most importantly of all, to provide a script which forms the very essence of the work. The writing of the script becomes the playwright effectively putting words into the mouth of the character — in this instance, Casement — and as such is a very intricate and telling example of which aspects of the historical figure's controversies and themes, and indeed, those of the other players surrounding him, the playwright wishes to address. Kiberd also engages with theatre in his study of the inventing of modern Ireland, and this importance of the play is re-iterated by Dawn Duncan who argues for its prominence in critical discourse by stating that 'rather than continuing to privilege the novel as the literary location of the postcolonial voice, I particularly turn attention to Irish drama and its ability to more officially engage public perceptions of identity and responses to postcolonial struggles'.[278]

As a genre for study, the playwright and his creation can be viewed as a posthumous presentation of a historical character very consciously manipulated for a contemporary audience, giving voice to the concerns of national identity of that particular audience.

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[277] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?', in Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1988), pp. 271–317.

[278] Dawn Duncan, 'A Flexible Foundation: Constructing a Postcolonial Dialogue', in David Theo Goldberg, Ato Quayson, (eds.) *Relocating Postcolonialism: A Critical Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), pp. 320–33, (p. 323).

There are two plays which I have chosen to evaluate in this way, both of which have Casement as the central character. Robert Gregg's *Interrogare* is aimed at the recent audience of 2003,[279] whereas David Rudkin *Cries from Casement as his Bones are Brought to Dublin* was commissioned in 1966, almost forty years previously.[280] Each play selects a different significant event in the Casement story — Gregg's play is set during Casement's interrogation before his trial for treason in 1916, and Rudkin's is set during the repatriation to Ireland of Casement's remains in 1964. These plays serve as an illustration of how Casement, and his story, can be used as an artistic reworking of the playwright's views on historical and political events, as well as an exploration of a multi-faceted protagonist.

Robert Gregg's play, *Interrogare*, consists chiefly of a dualogue between Casement and Basil Thomson, his primary interrogator. Set in 1916 at the time of Casement's arrest, the play is sparse in its scene-setting and the physicality of theatre, inviting all focus to be placed on scripted conversation alone. It is important to note that this play has been chosen not for its place in the archives of Casement studies or production theatre (in fact, this play has never been formally produced), but because it finds its use as an example of Casement's manipulation by Gregg in order give voice to personal explorations of his beliefs and experimental methodology. Gregg, an academic

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[279] Robert Gregg, *Interrogare*. This play forms part of the *Histrionics* series, and can be accessed at http://loki.stockton.edu/~greggr/interrogare.htm. Date last accessed: 16 Sept 2008.
[280] David Rudkin, *Cries from Casement as his Bones are Brought to Dublin* (London: British Broadcasting Company, 1974).

historian,[281] wrote this play with two distinct aims in mind: firstly, to bring attention to the role of Basil Thomson, the Scotland Yard representative, in Casement's conviction, and secondly — and perhaps most importantly in this instance — as what Gregg himself calls 'an experiment in approaching historical writing through a medium seldom used by the historian'.[282] So this play is chosen to illustrate how Casement is being used in 2003 as an experimental means to enter into the discourse of the history of empire.

That Gregg has strong views regarding the Casement story is very apparent, both in his introduction to the play and in the script itself. He is also a supporter of the view that Casement's Black Diaries were forgeries by British intelligence workers, going so far as to imply in the introduction that Thomson himself may have had a hand in their formulation ('such speculation about his role in the potential forging of the diaries is not unwarranted.')[283]. However, it seems that in this approach, Gregg has merely found an artistic vehicle to carry his anthropological beliefs into a debate on a projected stage. Gregg suggests that 'the interrogation can be imagined as the coming together of two competing anthropological perspectives of empire'. In a correspondence,[284] Gregg stresses that although the play is based on a study of Casement and Thomson, it is intended to be fictional. This assertion provides the playwright with total artistic, and to some degree, historical, freedom in

[281] Robert Gregg is Professor of History and Dean of Arts and Humanities at Stockton College, New Jersey.
[282] Gregg lays out these points in the introduction to the play, [n.d.].
[283] Gregg, [n.p.].
[284] The correspondence refers to e-mail exchanges between myself and Dr Gregg, the relevant e-mail dated 30 August 2007.

creating the Casement who is a clear mouthpiece for his own themes, unencumbered by the restrictions of Casement's actual movements, words and emotions, or those of Thomson. The play can then exist as an interrupted speech-led exchange between the characters, with the playwright's voice quite clearly in evidence throughout.

The first facet of the play as recreation of Casement for a contemporary audience is in the actual characterisation itself. In no other medium does this recreation have so literal a meaning as in theatre, where the speech, movements, accent and tone of the historical figure must be strategically chosen and presented. It is obvious that the playwright wishes the sympathies of the audience (and if not sympathies, then at least loyalties) to lie with Casement, as he is characterised throughout as witty, confident, self-composed and politically astute, in addition to being principled and alert. Thomson is conversely presented as sarcastic, patronising, self-serving, and easily outwitted by Casement. There is a third character in the play, that of Sir Reginald Hall, head of Naval Intelligence, and in many ways for the purposes of this study, he presents a more interesting character for evaluation as a sort of 'go between' for Thomson and Casement. The play opens with Thomson receiving news by telephone of Casement's capture, and from the very first scene, the playwright's consciousness of the posthumous reputation of Casement is clear. Thomson informs Hall of Casement's capture, and throughout this scene Hall acts as something of a voice of reason:

THOMSON No, really? What a surprise!...Good. Thank you. We look forward to welcoming him in the morning. [*Replacing the receiver and turning to Sir Reginald*]. Our bird has not flown. (...).

HALL Why did you act so surprised on the phone, Basil? We've been expecting the man for weeks. (...)[285]

Hall subtly, and at times blatantly, underlines Thomson's enjoyment of Casement's arrest, whilst showing himself to be more hesitant about both the proposed plans for Casement's conviction and also Thomson's approach. Thomson reveals that preparations are in place to forge diaries in order to ensure Casement's conviction, to which Hall replies:

HALL Yes, how's that going to work? It must be difficult forging diaries – surely Casement's whereabouts on each day can be testified by the people he met. Will they not be sceptical about the revelations?[286]

The stilted and rather unnatural speech by Hall's character so early on in the play hints at his role within it. Hall, in this scene and throughout, seems to be the voice of the English gentleman with a sense of fair play and audience awareness — later in the same scene he asks Thomson 'But, Basil, do you not have qualms about doing this? It's hardly cricket really, is it?'. Again, the contrived style of speech, with the carefully placed idiom, shows that the character of Hall is playing a facilitating role in the interaction of Thomson

[285] Gregg, [n.p.].
[286] Gregg, [n.p.].

and Casement later on, but more importantly in the early scenes, in the interaction of Thomson and the audience. Thomson asks the questions the audience would like to know, which has a twofold effect. Firstly, it allows Thomson effectively to set himself up for disapproval. For example, in reply to Hall's question as to whether or not the public would be sceptical about the forged diaries, Thomson answers 'Well, we have certain things going for us. First, all our work around here is based on the premise that people are gullible'. Hall's questioning allows Thomson clearly to insult and ridicule the public, cementing his position as a figure of dislike for the rest of the play. Secondly, Hall allows Thomson to speak these words to the audience — the play's immediate audience, but also to Casement's posthumous audience. Such antagonism invites this audience to side with the playwright in creating a desire not to be gullible, to re-examine the facts of this Casement story, and in particular to pay attention to the cynical and untrustworthy character of Thomson. Hall continues:

HALL Will they be believed? [...] He is a loner, and so there are many times when people have no idea what he is up to. [...] We will just be filling in the blanks in people's imaginations. [...] Casement has created some smoke, we only have to produce the fire.[287]

This speech seems to reach directly out to the audience of Casement followers, both cultural and academic, and the words are extremely potent, not least because they are true. A reworking of the Casement story in 2003 is precisely

[287] Gregg, [n.p.].

this — filling in the blanks of public imagination, acknowledging that there are so many sides to Casement that constant interpretation through evolving media is necessary, and attempting to separate the smoke from the fire. This particular line echoes those prophetic words of Padraic Colum once again ('But they, they'll die to dust/ While 'twas yours to die to fire,/ Roger Casement.').[288] The implication of this is that as a later posthumous audience, we should now be aware that pitfalls of this sort have been encountered before, set up by those such as Thomson throughout history, and that therefore we should look afresh and from a distance at the positions taken and roles played by both Casement and Thomson or his supporters. In a more general sense, it seems to hint that such constant re-evaluation of history with fresh evidence and a cynical eye is necessary in order to rendered gullible by the smoke of myth and propaganda.

When Casement, Hall and Thomson are together for the first time in the third scene, Casement quickly asserts himself as a man in control. One of the first things he mentions, interrupting Hall as he does so, is his knighthood:

HALL Sir Roger...

CASEMENT [*interrupting*] Before we continue, you should know that I swore off my peerage after the Home Rule debacle.[289]

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[288] Padraic Colum, 'Roger Casement', *Irish Elegies* (London: Dolmen Press, 1963).
[289] Gregg, [n.p.].

The playwright is being very direct in rapidly dealing with any issue which may muddy the waters of his presentation of Casement. In the first scene he immediately raises the diaries controversy, and in Casement's first interrogation scene, he has Casement cast aside his knighthood unprompted, which is not an accurate representation of Casement's ambivalent relationship to his honour. This character will not be caught out by the favourite weapons of Casement's derision – his diaries and the paradoxical situation regarding his knighthood. Casement here explains at length his reasons for ever using his title, and shows himself to be politically astute in doing so:

CASEMENT Indeed, one can get more attention from the Americans as 'Sir Roger', rather than as a plain old mister – especially when one is competing with so many lords and ladies who fan out from the British Embassy to besot the unsuspecting natives. [...] No doubt, the Americans will be dragged into the war merely so that they can grovel for the kinds of trinkets that a second-tier aristocrat would leave out as a boxing-day present for the community poor.

HALL I don't...

CASEMENT Anyway, the work I did to earn my knighthood cannot be taken away from me.[290]

Casement is acting out the role of a man who possesses a clarity of vision and a cynical finger on the pulse of, as Gregg offered, 'competing anthropological perspectives of empire' throughout. He does not fall into the traps laid for him by his present (in the play) or posthumous (in contemporary terms) audience.

[290] Gregg, [n.p.].

Hall, on the other hand, attempts to speak more than once, only to be interrupted or over-ruled. As such, he seems to become a symbol of impotence, of a regrettable lack of conviction in standing up to either Casement or Thomson. He plays his role adequately, but with none of the passion or verve of the other men, and in this way becomes a sort of puppet of administration. He is presented as both a facilitating puppet in terms of history, but also a facilitating puppet in the cast of the play, not only illuminating the nasty and underhand character of Thomson, but also promoting Casement's eloquence and control of the situation in his ineffectual line of interrogation.

A definite nod to Casement's posthumous role in national memory is also included in Gregg's work as he puts the familiar words of prophecy into the protagonist's mouth, again in response to Hall. Hall relays the news of the execution of the 1916 leaders to Casement, and claims that he was lucky not to meet the same fate, to which Casement replies:

CASMENT I am sure that I won't disappoint you in the future, Sir Reginald. I am sure that you and Mr Thomson will devise some method to execute your will.[291]

The playwright shows Casement to be aware of his fate, and also implies that it is underhand tactics which will secure it. This prophecy also shows him to show a confident awareness that he will in the future be alongside the 1916 martyrs of Irish history, an awareness which the posthumous audience must recognise, again because of its truth. This advantage of hindsight and the

[291] Gregg, [n.p.].

unfolding of history in the long period between Casement's death and the time of the play's creation shows how powerful a tool theatre can be in the reinterpretation of a historical figure, as a character can be brought back to life in a way unique to this medium with a confidence not available to the interpretation of that character at the actual time. The playwright allows Casement this confidence of knowledge, especially in lines such as:

CASEMENT Think what you will. But there will be ghosts that return from this confrontation.[292]

That these ghosts are real, and haunting still, is evident in the very reason for the existence of this play, which is driven by a continued hunger to exorcise such phantoms of wrong doing and misinterpretation. There remains a stage, both metaphorical, and in this case, literal, for the playing out of the Casement story decades after its birth.

One another element of this play stands out in its strength of presentation; that of the sexualisation of Casement's speech and metaphor. The fifth scene sees a lengthy exchange between Thomson and Casement regarding colonial politics, and is characterised by very overtly sexual themes. Of course, because Gregg wishes to make a case for the forgery of the Black Diaries so crucial to Casement's final conviction and also so crucial to the controversy surrounding his posthumous formation as a nationalist hero, it is inevitable that this issue would be raised. However, the strength of the language, and the extent to which it is intertwined into Casement's dialogue on

[292] Gregg, [n.p.].

colonialism is worthy of note. Casement uses the language of sex as an extended metaphor:

> CASEMENT I will go farther: for you, the British Empire stands and falls, is erect or flaccid, to the degree (45 degrees or above) that it can stamp out this sexual disease, as if something akin to a venereal disease will infect not just Britain's finest at the Front, but the last woman and child standing on the street corner waiting for the tram. The fact that the Anglo-Saxons carry sexual infection wherever they go is lost on you. [...] I, on the other hand, have seen what peoples do in Africa and South America and have come to believe that there is an alternative to lying back and thinking of England; we can stand up and fuck it into oblivion.[293]

Casement uses sexually violent language in his attack on Thomson's beliefs, and also on his personal history. The playwright here is clearly making a point relevant to violation of rights and policies, as well as to hypocrisy and secrecy. Casement therefore comes across as straightforward, unabashed, absolutely sure of his convictions, and as shedding light on the lies and hypocrisy of Thomson both as a man and as a government representative. This sexually violent language can be seen as representative of the tensions involved in the thematic position of the play — as discussed by Christopher Innes in an interpretation of sexual violence in modern British theatre, such sexually violent images are 'turning performances into acts of provocation' which is a means of expressing 'a sense of outrage — and frustration.'[294] So this experimental use of Casement as a way of exploring perceptions of empire in

[293] Gregg, [n.p.].
[294] Christopher Innes, *Modern British Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 197.

2003, the sexually violent language can be seen to hint at the frustration or tensions in locating modern society within the context of its international relations.

However, perhaps the most relevant point in relation to this heavy sexualisation of the script is that it serves as a concrete indicator of a more recent audience. Casement discourse now can discuss more openly the sexual side to the Casement story, partly through distance from the subject, but mostly through a changing social acceptance regarding sex and sexual language in the media. A 2003 audience are frequently exposed to dialogue of this kind, and so Casement's frank and aggressive use of sexual swear words and analogy make him seem forthright, whilst establishing him as very much 'of this time'. What it does not render him is untrustworthy, base or corrupt, as well it may have to an earlier audience. This is a firm example of even Casement's very speech being manipulated and changed in order to 'update' his case to a modern posthumous audience, which is also yet another aspect of his continuing evolution of relevance after his death.

David Rudkin's play, *Cries from Casement as his Bones are Brought to Dublin*, is a very different, and much earlier play than Gregg's. Rudkin's play differs also in that it was commissioned by the BBC in 1966 as part of a tribute to Historical Rebels. Although Rudkin chose Casement, the commission meant that he had both a context to place the play against, and also a target audience in mind. This makes the play less of an indulgent experiment than Gregg's. It is also a more rounded and credible — there is

evidence that Rudkin has researched Casement the man as opposed to just the historical figure — in fact, through the BBC, Rudkin was granted access to the Black Diaries when writing the play. The tone and dialogue of the play is very much informed by his discoveries:

> I found in them [Casement's Diaries] many Casements in one man, and in him I could see at work a transgressive sexuality not only consistent with his separatist politics but actually catalysing them. I saw in these homosexual encounters a character who – in a passive role and invariably with men of other nation, race or colour – was dramatizing a laying-aside of his British self.[295]

Rudkin's view of Casement's role in dramatizing aspects of his own identity fit easily into the structure of the play, set at the time of the repatriation of Casement's remains to Dublin, a key point in Casement's posthumous journey. Rudkin deals with both these elements in tandem, stating that 'this radical sexual interpretation, and the historical resonances of Casement's uncompleted burial, furnish the two main polemical systems of the play'.[296]

That Casement's repatriation is a fundamental point in his posthumous life, with what Rudkin terms 'historical resonances', is clear even in the very creation of the play. Rudkin experienced difficulty with the BBC who were reluctant to broadcast the play in the early seventies, given what the BBC referred to as 'particular difficulties in the matter of Ireland'[297], and the play

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[295] From the playwright's notes on the play, www.davidrudkin.com, date accessed: 21 April 2008.
[296] Also from the playwrights notes, as above.
[297] In his notes, Rudkin quotes this line from a letter he received from the BBC at the time.

was not broadcast until 1973. The Casement story still held enough political resonance at over half a century after his trial and execution to be politically contentious. The repatriation of the remains had appeased some audiences and incensed others (such as members of Sinn Féin), who maintained that Casement's desired last resting place was in Murlough Bay, in County Antrim, Northern Ireland, and not in Dublin. The Casement issue was yet another reminder of the position of Northern Ireland as opposed to that of the Republic, and reinforced the complex relationship between North and South, Britain and Ireland. Casement in this era comes to represent the lack of resolution of the issues of his own day, whilst creating some more as his story progresses with his literal and metaphorical journey home. It is hard to disagree with Rudkin when he claims that:

> His story does not end there [with his execution]. [...] Whatever one's feelings about the 1922 partition of Ireland, there is no denying that even in his grave this troubled man exerts a poignant significance.[298]

The play begins with a biography of Casement read by different 'voices', all of which supply chronological information:

> NEUTRAL Nineteen-fourteen, the Great War: Casement moves freely in Germany as Kaiser's guest, recruiting an anti-British Brigade among Irish POWs there; negotiating German military assistance for a rebellion in Ireland.

[298] From Rudkin's notes, as above.

AN ACTRESS WITH AN IRISH VOICE April the twenty-first, nineteen-sixteen: lands on Ireland's south-west coast with fruit of his mission. Arrested within hours; brought to London; interrogated; imprisoned in Tower; tried; hanged.

AN ACTOR WITH AN ENGLISH VOICE Judicial process perfectly proper.

IRISH On paper[299]

The accents are marked and included by the playwright (for example, in the case of an English voice: 'the Heome [*sic*] Office find it would be against the public interest to yield to presshah' [*sic*]).[300] The constant referral to voices, exaggerated accents, and crowd noise is integral to what seems to be one the play's central messages, that of audience, reception and the giving of, or denying of, a voice to the public and the private. But of course what makes this focus on voices all the more important is the nature of the medium. This is a drama, with all the considerations of genre this comes with, but moreover it is a *radio* drama, and therefore the speech is everything, the audience being denied the focus of props, scenery, set or movement other than that communicated by sound effects, most of which are created through crowd sound. Therefore the speech, the accents and the words of Casement and the other characters become doubly symbolic. Although Rudkin also immediately deals with the sexualised Casement like Gregg, it is in a very different manner and with very different effect:

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[299] Rudkin, *Cries from Casement as his Bones are Brought to Dublin* (London: British Broadcasting Company, 1973), p. 7.
[300] Rudkin, p. 8. Throughout the play, words are misspelt to mimic accents.

CRIPPEN [301] (*stage Cockney*) Hey. Hey, you. Oy, you, nine nine one two. HalfPaddy rise and shine. Wakey, wakey, hands off your cock and reach for a sock. (obscene croon) Hey, fruity boy...Casement! Roger, sir...

CASEMENT (*heard waking – Sudden cries of dread*)

CRIPPEN (stills him) Hey, hey...! Not come to hang ya. All over and done with, that is: fifty years ago...all the same, halfPaddy: news for ya...

CASEMENT (stage Ulster) It'll have to be brave and good. You have interrupted me again. A sauncy young fella of a fusilier was opening his thighs for me.

CRIPPEN Oy oy oy oy, oy, oy, oy; does that have to be your first remark?

CASEMENT I must die [sic] up till my black reputation[302]

The tone of the play carries this humour and tongue-in-cheek tone throughout as this is how the playwright chooses chiefly to present many of the controversies and ironies of the play, not least with regard to Casement's sexuality, as this example shows. The addition of Crippen forms a contrast between reality and the projected — the projected view to the public is a repatriation, a bringing home of one of Ireland's sons and martyrs, rescued from the indecency of his lowly grave in Pentonville. The projected view is that of a grand and stately affair, in keeping with the nationalist rhetoric.

[301] Crippen is the corpse buried alongside Casement in Pentonville. This is an allusion to the anecdotal belief that it would be difficult to guarantee that it was Casement's bones, or remains, that were being repatriated given the circumstances in which the remains of executed prisoners were buried.
[302] Rudkin, p. 9.

Crippen's character provides a way into the reality, direct access to Casement, and shows remains corrupted with the bones of a base cockney criminal who constantly riles a bewildered and extremely displaced Casement. The contamination of the remains highlights how Casement's repatriation has more to do with public and social fanfare than a direct concern with the man himself — one of the Dublin-accented officers digging up Casement's remains acknowledges the impossibility of knowing whether or not they are in fact those of Casement himself, but succinctly underlines how this is a symbolic political gesture with the line 'It's the thought that counts. Here. These bones'll do'.[303]

The reality is that this is the case — it is not the authenticity of the relocation, but the movement in itself which counts — a movement forward in Irish politics, in the Casement story, and in national memory. The tools of such mythologizing and memorialising — ballads, ceremony, poetic memorialising — are mocked by the balladeer who, as Crippen and Casement scream and shout as they are being moved, delivers this verse:

BALLADEER [*recitative*]

Some will call it a just irony,

Others a typically macabre Irish farce,

For her hero to be brought to his homeland at last,

A poisoner's toe up his skeletal arse.[304]

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[303] Rudkin, p. 10.
[304] Rudkin, p. 11.

Casement, disinterred, begins to talk and remember his deeds and history. This is the first time the audience hears Casement speak in his various voices through his own chronology, and the playwright has manipulated the medium to full effect by having Casement slip between a variety of accents as he speaks of various memories — most notable is his switching between Ulster and English, especially when speaking about sexual memory:

[*faint hint of Ulster tinge*) Boys, Accraman's was enormous. Only on a spit the like of that would I be at home-

[*English*] Quiet, Casement. There's a knighthood in this.[305]

This slipping between accents highlights the dislocation within Casement himself, between his private desires and his public ambition or persona. Variations in Casement's own speech are juxtaposed with the outside events — as his remains are being flown to Ireland (with the satirical announcement from the Irish hostess that 'The Captain and crew of the Saint Flannan welcome Sir Roger Casement aboard their aircraft for the flight to Dublin. [...] We have pleasure meanwhile in providing for his entertainment a programme of Gaelic songs, interspersed with meditations on the spirit and the flesh, by Father MacEnroe of the Community of the Milk of Our Lady of Knock',[306] mocking again the ceremony of Irish nationalist memorialising), Casement attempts to clarify his identity:

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[305] Rudkin, p. 14. Casement is referring here to a possible sexual encounter with a man named Accraman.
[306] Rudkin, p. 16.

CASEMENT Did I become a Catholic before I died? I've some dim memory like that. Have I went [sic] religious at my end? For why?

CRIPPEN To swop your third class ticket for a First Class, just before your ship hit rock...[307]

The Ulster syntax adds humour to this bewildered statement, and the ironies here are significant. Crippen's cynical take on Casement's eve of execution conversion is in many ways accurate — Casement's embracing of Catholicism helped his status amongst the Irish heroes and martyrs, and yet it seems totally insignificant to the exhumed patriot. Again the projected future vies with the reality at the playwright's hand as Casement struggles to reconcile what he remembers with what he is being told. This marks an evolution of his story that Casement was not there to witness — he believes he is being awakened to be hanged, yet instead finds himself on a first class ticket to patriotism in Dublin. In effect, Casement is attempting to do with his own life and posthumous existence what the nationalists, scholars and biographers have been attempting to since his death. Casement's realisation of this activity without him involves an additional sense of dislocation from an original viewpoint of the dead Casement confronting the living Casement, and offers an new interpretation of the word 'remains' in this context. What remains of Casement to be repatriated must be aligned with what Casement was in life. Casement attempts to address his many facets in an exchange with Crippen:

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[307] Rudkin, p. 16.

CRIPPEN [...] I am wiv you always: a puncturin voice.

CASEMENT [*dry*] Little I ever needed that. I had voices in me no King nor Cardinal would like to hear. But they were mine, Casement's voices, mine, all mine: the voice of Empire at my beginning, the voice of Ireland at my end; the voice that championed negro and Indian; the social charmer, the moral agitator; the voice of the Foreign Office; the voice of Sodom. All are Casement, all one man; like many bloodstreams, fuelling one discordant heart. I suffered in my dissonance but am thankful, thankful and joyous, I was on earth a while to suffer so. I go from England now, my living grave, to Ireland, land of my life; [...]. And at the mere thought of being there again, I come alive again, with tears...[308]

Casement here refers to himself as a whole, and to England as his 'living grave'. Ironically, on his emotional return to Ireland, he is not simply whole, his remains are corrupted by the additional bones of Crippen. Casement is not allowed to be merely whole in death, but instead of being diminished, or less than whole, he conversely has the added baggage and complexities of the unknown – controversy, plurality and no unified interpretation of his place in Irish, or indeed, transnational history.

A different voice, that of the 'author', a character who is involved in relaying the tale of the diaries, voices his interpretation of Casement through his various identities within the diaries:

[308] Rudkin, p. 16.

AUTHOR Through all the schizoid, kaleidoscopic multiplicity, many-personed, many voiced, there is emerging one awareness: the shell of Sir Roger, [...] being violently sloughed; the full winged pathic-and-patriot Casement struggling obscenely to be born.[309]

Unlike in Gregg's play, Casement is presented as struggling, and with something 'obscene' in the attempts to quantify him, to locate what remains of him properly in Ireland geographically and culturally. The author claims that Casement was a triumph – his triumph being relevant precisely to this reinterpretation. The author also claims that Casement has 'a relevance to all mankind' because of the fact that he 'recreates himself in terms of his own inner truth' which makes him a 'hero for the world'.[310] These are poignant and relevant conclusions, but are shown not to hold to the Irish public, who answer these claims with sectarian abuse towards the author:

[*Disturbance, screams, violent intrusion into hall. Voices shout:*]

IRISH VOICES [*shout, dangerous*] Where is the Orange bastard is slanderin our heroes? [*quiet, dangerous*] Blow out his eyes.[311]

Rudkin here displays an Irish public unwilling to accept the multiple voices and identities of Casement, even in light of the touching and encompassing summary of the Author. The sectarian abuse shows how crudely divided Casement's memory has become through political tensions of the time, and

[309] Rudkin, p. 24.
[310] Rudkin, p. 24.
[311] Rudkin, p. 25.

reinforces the play's location in the sixties and seventies alongside the Troubles in Northern Ireland. Casement's identity in this timeframe is as fragmented as ever, perhaps even more so given this addition to his memory of the intervening political years. Casement goes on to discuss the Irish language in a following scene and asks 'Where is my speech? Was it ever my speech? I am unvoiced'. Casement uses the complexities of the Irish language to distinguish his own position:

CASEMENT 'The Copula. Irish distinguishes two separate aspects of the verb To Be. One. To describe a subject, e.g. The day is cold, the verb ATA is used. Two. To make a statement of identity, e.g. It is a book, the copula IS is used'.[312]

Casement is distinguishing between his own actual identity and his statement of identity, and in doing so shows the problematic void between them, in which he seems to reside. His public truth, or variations of it, is not the full story, and yet he cannot reconcile his private truth with the role, or statement of identity, which the contemporary public wish him to have. In fact, it is less the private truth than the public truth which matters now, both politically and culturally. Casement is a tool to be manipulated — in dying a patriot he has sold his soul to the history makers of his posthumous life. This is particularly relevant in the last scene, where Casement realises he is not to be buried at Murlough bay, but in Dublin. He is in the hands of the ceremonies of memorialising:

[312] Rudkin, p. 30.

CASEMENT [*speech gradually becoming stage Ulster again*] I'll not lie in a Dublin'll do this to me – an Ireland'll disregard me so, it is another lie – Not such an Ireland, I will not lie here –

CAPTAIN Whisht Casement, the President is making a moving speech, your biographers have come, there's not a dry eye in the graveyard –

CASEMENT [*choked fury*] Not here, not here, I will not lie here –

CAPTAIN Quit thrawin' in your coffin man, for God's sake, the Cardinal himself is lookin' our way – Keep still in there, lie still – his Eminence is comin' over, oh my God –

THE CARDINAL [*Dublin gutter speech*] Hey. Lie back down in there![313]

The guttural speech, the ordering, the disregard for Casement's own wishes or happiness, alongside the reverence given to and the power exerted by authority figures shows Casement's posthumous repatriation to be a less glorious and grateful acceptance than he had imagined and wished for in his life. He asks the cardinal 'Am I a property, then?' to which the cardinal replies 'I'm disgusted at you. Lie down. Be a good hero, shut your mouth. Be a good patriot, lie down.' This exchange symbolises how Casement is only useful to the nation as a memory, or as a myth carefully and ceremoniously created. He is only needed as a symbol, not an agent at this stage in his posthumous life.

Casement, when buried, asks a youth by his graveside 'Am I to have no rest from paradoxical significance?'. This is the crux of Casement's identity

[313] Rudkin, p. 75.

problem, his plurality means that in death he now represents the paradox of Ireland's identity as a whole. Casement, on speaking to the youth, advises him by concluding 'Your torment of identity is not enviable; but it is the pain of change'. In these finishing lines, the playwright seems to be suggesting that Casement embodies Ireland's dilemmas and struggles as they mirror his own, and it seems ironic that the only way in which Casement can align himself wholly and entirely with Ireland is in his role as a fractured and dislocated postcolonial entity, especially in view of the situation in Northern Ireland.

Drama and theatre as a medium for memorialising and reinterpreting the posthumous figure proves to be an interesting method of recreating his life and the players within it by giving them speech, movement, and even accents to reflect their individual role. The play also goes a little farther than this as its content also reflects the contemporary audience, and therefore provides a valuable method of comparison between the Casement story and the time in which it is being told, as well as how it has been manipulated and altered by political and social changes through time.

The process of modernizing Casement, then, through the re-interpretative tools of aligning his story with political oration on a contemporary issue, or the theatrical exploration of his controversial identity with modern lexis and a more liberated audience is evidence that the baton passed to posterity by Casement in his Speech from the Dock has been taken up, and continues to be passed forward. This process, this continuous use of a person or figure as a means of creating a fluid and evolving site of memory,

mirrored in the memorialisation of other national and transnational personae, shows how the creation of national identity, or of national responses to new events, are heavily influenced by the existence of that culture's heroes. And if a nation needs to draw so heavily on its historical figureheads, then it stands to reason that such figureheads need to be flexible and open to reinterpretation in order to be of relevance to the contemporary audience. As such, Casement's downfall in his actual life, his multiple representative identities and the difficulty this created in locating him firmly in one tradition or another, in some ways comes to serve him well posthumously, as this flexibility keeps alive attempts to locate him within Irish history and culture, and aligns him in national memory with Ireland's other significant virtual citizens.

Nora's work *Les Lieux de mémoire*[314] on the *loci memoriae* of France can, up to a point, offer a useful realm for comparison when dealing with the cultural memorialisation of Casement in the years since his death. If his work puts forward a definition of a site of memory which is linked to the memorial heritage of a community, and necessitates a drive or a will to remember, then Casement can be aligned with this theory in a transnational sense. What happens culturally in France or elsewhere in memorialisation is mirrored in the Casement example. Casement as a virtual citizen offers an abstract site of memory; a forum for the debate on construction of identity, and for crystalisation of Irish nationalist associations and symbolism in both life and death. Using Casement as such, where 'site' is synonymous with a non-material forum or opportunity, aligns him with most historical figures in

[314] Pierre Nora, *Les lieux de mémoire.*

collective memory, figures remembered by history as a symbol of something now important to that culture's sense of national identity. Examples of this even thoughout Europe are endless, but usually such figures are upheld in memory as they represent something which those exist to actively memorialise either wish to instill or preserve in their own culture, politics and international location. This is where a straightforward and basic interpretation of Nora's umbrella term of *lieux de mémoire* achieves a location of Casement alongside numerous other transnational figures. Casement as a *lieu de mémoire*, an abstract receptacle for Irish nationalist memory of sacrifice, martyrdom and anglo-resistance at death, is interchangeable with Emmet or any of the other members of the pantheon of national heroes. This site of memory provides an opportunity to remember and to replicate what are being produced and reproduced via such forums as the core ingredients of national identity, an occurrence not unique to Ireland or to France.

A more involved analysis of Casement in conjunction with Nora's term *lieu de mémoire*, however, uncovers some of the key issues examined in this thesis. Casement as a replication of the nationalist martyr tradition, made from the same basic mould as those who preceded him is only convincing in a rather two-dimensional way. Casement was successful in selling himself, through his speech, religious conversion, and poetry, as another martyr in the fashion of other familiar cultural icons. He also did this at a time when it was in the interests of the Irish public — or, to be specific, the Irish nationalist public — to add the weight of another martyr to the drive for Irish independence after

the 1916 rising. However, if Nora's terminology and definition is applied to Casement in a more particular way, the effect is that of showing Casement as a complication of this transnational memorialising tradition, quite the opposite to his being a replicated example of it.

Such a conclusion is reached if the site of memory is used in the more literal, material sense. Casement's grave, which is, culturally speaking, a natural site of memorialisation, where people go with the intention of actively remembering, has already been changed. As his remains were moved from Pentonville prison in London to Dublin for a state funeral in 1964, Casement's symbolic location and formal national memorialisation changed his status from traitor to patriot, from British to Irish. Through such a significant national gesture, Casement was located legally and culturally on one side of a polar opposition which had been an issue for him, for his contemporaries and even for the courts at his trial. Casement frequently made attempts in his own correspondence, especially with Morel and Stopford-Green, to negotiate these difficulties in self-determination with regards to the perception of his nationality. His position as British consul in the colonies of other European powers (notably, of course, Belgium's colony of the Congo Free State) whilst still having a strong personal sense of Irish loyalty complicated and augmented his sense of dislocation during his lifetime, and also complicated public reception and representation of the man and his work during and after his death. Casement's attempts to align himself with Irish nationalism and mark himself as different from the government and nationality are evident,

especially in the early days of the Congo Reform Association as he discussed his Congo Report (1904) and claimed that he was looking at the Congolese victims of forced labour through 'the eyes of another race'. This difficulty in public location was only heightened by the knighthood awarded to him by the British government in recognition of his work for the British Foreign Office. As discussed in previous chapters, Casement seemed to suffer from a resulting status anxiety, which drove him to attempt reconciliation of his own loyalties and aspects of his own public image throughout his life, culminating in the events of his trial and execution. So various sites in Casement's life are difficult to present in a unified mode of memorialisation: his humanitarian work, which should attach itself with ease to the image of a nationalist martyr willing to sacrifice his life for the cause of Irish freedom, is complicated by its association with British victory. His location in British history for this same achievement is disrupted by his eventual traitor status, yet his reception into the nationalist plans for a rising was always tainted with a suspicion provoked by his British knighthood. Then, of course, the issue of his alleged homosexuality almost irreparably altered his reception, representation and reputation amongst all divisions, continuing to do so posthumously. To find a definitive site for Casement presents difficulties then. Even though the removal of his remains to Ireland is a significant gesture of ownership by Ireland, and by Irish nationalists, the grave of Casement in Glasnevin cemetery is still not a definitive site by any means. Calls in recent years to have Casement buried in the place he would have wished have grown louder as Sinn

Féin councillors ask that his remains be moved to Murlough Bay in Co. Antrim.[315] This call has been rejected by the local council in a gesture almost as significant in some ways as that of his repatriation to Dublin in 1964. The politics of location is very prominent in this instance, with regards to the geography of Casement's final resting place. Casement's grave, inscribed in both Irish and English and situated in Dublin, the capital of the Republic of Ireland, represents his reception into a cultural identity of nation and its history, which foregrounds the link between geographical location, language and national identity. As Catherine Nash comments when discussing place names, their location, and their significance argues, 'linking language and geography, place names, at once both material and metaphorical, substantive and symbolic — read, spoken, mapped, catalogued and written in the everyday intimate and official bureaucratic geographies of road signs, street names and addresses — are all about questions of power, location and identity'.[316]

Casement's remains are therefore both material and metaphorical, and so too is their location. The government and people of an established Republic of Ireland could welcome Casement back onto Irish soil, into the public *lieux de mémoire* of a country now independent from British rule and over forty years into their own constitution which vows to uphold and honour those who died in the struggle for this national achievement. Northern Ireland, however,

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[315] Sinn Féin councillors in Ballymena, Co. Antrim, amongst them Cara McShane, have been calling for Casement's final resting place to be moved to Murlough Bay in time to mark the centenary of his execution. An example of this is found in the *Ballymena and Moyle Times* 22 June 2006, in an article entitled 'Call for Tribute to Roger Casement'.

[316] Catherine Nash, 'Irish placenames: post-colonial locations' in *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, New Series, Vol. 24, No. 4 (1999), 457-80, (p. 457).

is crossing yet another literal and symbolic border, where there are still two distinctly separate memorial heritages in opposition, only one of which would display the will to remember, or participate in the active memorialisation necessary to establish Casement's grave as a unified, reconciled and representational site of memory for Casement's achievements and status. In opposition, a counter-community of memory locates Casement still as a traitor and a dissenter, whose reputation is still as tarnished as at the time of his execution. So this figure comes to highlight the continuing lack of reconciliation and determination of a unified Irish and Northern Irish identity through the complications produced by the actual physical location of a site to facilitate the remembrance of Casement.

The manipulation and reinterpretation of Casement's posthumous existence therefore stands as an example of an emerging modern nation reinterpreting its own history at flashpoints of national consciousness. As Ireland's perception of itself changes and evolves, so too does its perception of Casement, illustrated by the various differing means and reinventions of how he is represented by those responsible for granting him his ongoing virtual citizenship, a citizenship which is flexible throughout the emergence of the state.

7.0 Conclusion

In his preface 'Remembering Fanon: Self, Psyche and Colonial Condition', Homi Bhabha states that 'in occupying two places at once – or three in Fanon's case – the depersonalized, dislocated colonial subject can become an incalculable object, quite literally, difficult to place'.[317]

In considering the life and afterlives of Roger Casement with relation to postcolonial and transnational theory and criticism, this statement serves as an introduction to the discussion of a figure such as Casement in his self–representation, and in his representation by others. Bhahba's article and theory can here be used in a very specific way through the images it produces, rather than in relation to postcolonial theories and criticisms in general. Through this quotation, an image is produced of the 'depersonalized, dislocated colonial other', and the dilemma of this subject's location. This image can affix itself to readings of Casement and his life, from both an objective and a subjective viewpoint throughout his life and afterlives. This thesis focuses not on a biographical evaluation of Casement, nor an attempt to establish Casement's place in Irish nationalism from a strictly historical perspective. Instead, the previous chapters come together to show how Casement's dialogue of self–representation, and his representation by others, especially posthumously, underscore the emerging major theme of location, in the interpretation of a

[317] Homi K. Bhabha 'Remembering Fanon: Self, Psyche and Colonial Condition', in the preface to Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (London: Pluto Press, 1986), p. xxii.

symbolic and multi-layered figure such as Casement in the formation of national identity.

Casement's posthumous interpretation and the images produced from such discussion and invocation find their most comprehensive and appropriate overview in the term 'afterlives'. The term 'afterlives'[318] recognises the disjointed state of the reputation of posthumous Casement, a state which rejects the suggested unification and cohesion of the more straightforward term 'afterlife'. It also allows for the variety of contributions to the definition of Casement after death — contributions from biography, cultural memory, international controversy, nationalism, and even from Casement himself (in the form of his preparation for his death and its reception). The term also gives a very necessary sense of continuity as implied by its association with the idea of colonial afterlives. The effects of Casement's ongoing interpretation and evolution, of the transformation and progression of the myth and the reality as its influences (social, political and cultural) are played out mirror the journey of the surviving elements of colonialism. The sense of continuity and evolution created by this term acknowledges the existence of such a process of construction of an identity through an examination of the various images and the negotiation of contradictory elements which can be relevant to an individual or to a collective. Finally, the fact that Casement has not one afterlife, but many afterlives, bears witness to the reality that in some ways,

[318] Lucy McDiarmid uses the term 'afterlives' to refer to representations of Casement after his death. Lucy McDiarmid, 'The Afterlife of Roger Casement', Mary Daly (ed.), *Roger Casement in Irish and World History* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2005), pp. 178-89.

Casement had not merely one life, but, as a result of his problem of location and the contradictions this gave birth to, many lives.

The first chapter shows Casement in his role as British consul in locations colonised by different colonisers to those whom he represents — most specifically, his role in the Leopold's Congo Free State. That is to say, Casement did not hold an official position in a country administratively run by Britain. In this instance Casement is a representative of the British government reporting on the actions of King Leopold of Belgium in his colony of the Congo, producing his Congo Report in 1904, resulting in his involvement in the humanitarian campaign of the Congo Reform Association. Already Casement can be viewed as a figure playing different roles under the umbrella of the thematics of colonialism and its aftermath. Firstly, his role as a consul for the government which in many ways acts as the metropole to his status in the binary of the Ireland-Britain situation marks a cross-over of locations in his early career. When stationed in the Congo Free State, he is not in an official British position, but in a Belgian one (or, more precisely, in a colony that will become a Belgian state colony in 1908). Another binary is here added — instead of a straightforward colonising representative in the colonised location, Casement's position (although obviously by no means uniquely) is that of the colonial representative in another country's colony, of which he is not a representative. In fact, his position becomes that of a colonial representative who returns to another country's colony, resulting in his agitating against their colonial rule (Casement was commissioned to return to the Congo in 1903 by

Britain). Casement's resulting Congo Report (1904) is an agitation against King Leopold's abuses in his colony, played out in the arena of a competing coloniser, Britain.

Another layer is added to Casement's representative location after the 1904 publication of his Congo report through his involvement in the establishing and supporting of the Congo Reform Association (1904–1912). The dialogue of the first chapter between Casement and Morel is an inroad into Casement's personal opinions and his experiences of Leopold's regime. In this role, Casement plays the supportive humanitarian, and as such is agitating against colonial abuses in both an official (the Congo Report) and a personal (the Congo Reform Association) capacity.

The following chapters trace how Casement then begins to occupy many different, and at times oppositional, places in terms of what he represents publicly and privately, and in how he wants to represent himself. The overlapping spheres through which Casement moves are mostly comprised of his involvement with the Congo Reform Association and its humanitarian activities, and with Irish nationalism, both culturally and politically. The intersection of these ideas of colonial abuses and the status of national identity are played out in his dialogue with figures such as Alice Stopford–Green, and in his public involvement with cultural movements such as the Gaelic League. Casement, knighted by the British government for his consular works in the Putumayo, yet immersing himself in the increasingly Anglophobic rhetoric of cultural nationalism, shows himself to be negotiating,

through his letters, the complications of his public location and status, and reveals the machinations of his efforts to formulate a unified, or at least understandable, public persona. Much of this negotiation deals with his divided status as a knighted British figure and a campaigning nationalist presence, as well as his attempt to juxtapose unambiguously his previous career as a colonial representative with his credibility as an 'anti-colonial' spokesperson within the Irish situation.

The idea of 'status' needs clarification in the context of Casement's life and afterlives. Referring to Casement's status means indicating his location in a formal, even legal, sense — the British consul, the Foreign Office representative, the knighted subject, the traitor, the patriot — as a means of objective identification. As his status in this sense changes, mostly throughout his actual life, this term is useful in the definition Casement's formal position or situation, against which can be pitched his private self-representation or subjective view. However, 'status' can also mean a degree of credibility or importance in social standing, something which is also extremely relevant to Casement's negotiation of identity. The recognition of this aspect of status is vital to understanding the contradictions within Casement's life, as his 'formal' status was, for the most part, clearly defined, but often at odds with his private desires, or status aspirations. For example, whilst a knighted British consul and representative of the British Crown, Casement was trying to establish himself as a serious contributor to Irish nationalism and a recognised player in the pursuit of Irish independence. The tension between these

contradictory positions produces, alongside other aspects of Casement's life and history, a type of status anxiety. Resulting from this status anxiety — an insecurity relating to his credibility or absorption or full assimilation into whichever organisation or movement he aspires to belong to — is the evidence of much of his process of identity negotiation, contained in letters and personal correspondence. In this way does the term 'status' align with and act as a complement to a discussion of location in relation to Casement's life and afterlives.

Such continuing negotiations of identity climax with the chapter dealing with Casement's greatest act of rebellion as concerns his location within nationalities and their associated allegiances, that is, his act of treason. His voyage from the United States of America to Germany during the First World War shows how, in hindsight, Casement moves the Britain-Ireland opposition out of the geographical realm of both nations and plays out an act of treason in locations away from the centre, introducing third parties. In his recruitment drive for soldiers from representing Britain imprisoned by the enemy of Germany in prisoner of war camps, Casement can be seen to be inviting these subjects to examine and negotiate their own identities away from the usual physical location of Ireland, whilst also reinforcing his own public display of political identification and allegiance. Casement invites these young prisoners of war to relocate themselves by joining him – from British soldiers and representatives of the British crown and government to young Irish freedom fighters, clad in green uniforms with harps and emblems of a utopian

Irish unity of nation and culture. In other words, Casement himself becomes a vehicle for the creation of another aspect of essentialist 'Irishness' in his imaginary construct of Ireland and its citizens.

It is perhaps this trial and execution which offer the most fertile ground for examining Casement's attempt to define and simultaneously influence his location, as well as status, in relation to his national identity. Importantly, and paradoxically, this fertile ground is created when Casement is at his most trapped. His physical location outside of his control, it is his social and posthumous location which this type of negotiation hopes to influence. The last chapters highlight many of the crossovers and intersections of Casement on a public, personal and symbolic level. Publicly, his trial and execution trace the actual fact of his moving locations — from Ireland to England, to Africa, South America, and his various other consular posts, to his return to Ireland, to the USA, to Germany, and finally to Ireland to be removed to England once again. The trial publicly states that a figure such as Casement will be tried in London, the capital and central administrative point of Britain, rather than in Ireland, despite Casement's claims that it is in front of a jury of his peers (to him meaning Irish men) that he should be tried. That the judicial process judges that his peers are those of a British, and indeed, English, law court marks quite significantly the tension of formal identity and jurisdiction which is echoed in Casement's own negotiation of personal identity. There is also an irony, or perhaps an element of the binary opposition in the public reality of the knighting and execution of the one figure by the same authority. In such a

way it becomes a public playing out of, if not the coloniser also becoming the colonised, then the representative of the coloniser becoming the representative of colonised of space in the very symbol of the centre of colonisation in Britain, the legal system of state, crown and government. Another element to be added to the public complication of Casement's trial and execution is the crime of which he was convicted. The treason was in relation to the collusion with an enemy at war with Britain, not simply in relation to a straightforward case of Irish rebellion or insurgence. Again Casement's locations — both actual and symbolic — are multiple and inter-related for a public audience, as his treason combines a direct collusion with an enemy force with a planned Irish uprising against Britain.

Casement's Speech from the Dock also plays a major part in this overlapping of locations in the public sphere. As well as publicly aligning himself with previous Irish men who then became martyrs by employing many of the received traditions of speaking form the dock, Casement also represents a voice of the Irish nationalist in the British arena, or in his own view, the voice of the oppressed in the house of the oppressor. Having the opportunity to speak to the public — whether it be Irish, British, European, American and European — Casement also gains the opportunity to explain and lay out some of the public ambiguities of his identity, and also another opportunity to align himself with a selected clear representation of his allegiances, beliefs and ideologies.

On a personal level, Casement's trial and execution highlight how he would like to be represented, and what he would like to be representative of. This is shown by his poems, letters and of course, the drafts, and his final delivery of, the Speech from the Dock. The images which he selects and chooses show in themselves the interaction between and symbolism of Catholicism and Protestantism, heroes and martyrs, British and Irish and the value of life and death, actual life and posthumous life, in a continued tradition of defining an identity as a nation or a culture. In person, his 1916 trial and imminent execution means that he must address the complexities and contradictions of his public persona in order to influence what he will come to represent after his death. Through his process of doing this, Casement's personal desires and self perception at this time can be reconstructed, and his efforts to marry public and private: man and symbol, and life and afterlife highlight very evidently Casement straddling different locations: physical (alive and dead), geographical (Ireland and Britain, at the very least), and symbolic (past, present and future) locations.

Posthumously, instead of Casement's identity becoming more concrete and unified, the opposite happens as his identity and his representation and performance by others become even more fluid and varied. In itself, this is not remarkable. What is remarkable is the unfinished nature of the Casement narrative. This is directly due to the continued theme of the difficulty in locating his reputation, myth and contradictions into one, solid location. Interestingly, however, the reality is that these complexities create a duality in

themselves. The fact that he is difficult to place completely means that he is also easier to manipulate to illustrate and represent emerging and evolving themes and aspects of myth, memorialising and developing post-/postcolonial theories and criticisms. Such factors are identifiable in discussions and tensions revolving around Casement's place in the 1916 uprising in Ireland, the place of the martyr, hero or 'virtual citizen' in the creation of a nation and its constitution, the physical site of memory and the repatriation of remains, and the periphery areas or micronarratives which move into view in the process of decolonisation, such as feminism or queer studies.

The terminology I have related to Casement in terms of location can be stretched to encompass the notions of location, relocation and dislocation, which creates a treatment of representations of Casement (both by himself and by others during and after his life) which is more accessible. 'Dislocation' is a binding term between Casement and his contexts, as it is this sense of becoming removed from something or somewhere, rather than trying to find a place there to begin with, which creates friction, publicly and personally in the Casement story. His removal from, or his beginning not to fit into the mould of, his actual location results in dislocation — from his consular post and reputation which became to be at odds with his Irish cultural and nationalist outlook, from public servant to traitor, from noble Irish insurgent to degraded sexual deviant, from bones in British quicklime to an Irish state funeral and national memorial. Such dislocation is also the result of constant relocation through biography, competing national memories and national conspiracy, and

the shifting boundaries in the decades following Casement's death of the evolution of the Irish nation, geographically, politically, socially and culturally.

Bhabha, in explaining his understanding of the 'process of identification' claims that 'the very place of identification, caught in the tension of demand and desire, is a space of splitting'.[319] Although Bhabha is making reference here to a master-slave relationship in relation to the psyche of the traditional colonial condition in post-/postcolonial theory, this statement is useful, too, in interpreting the dislocated figure and reputation of Casement. Aspects of Casement's life and his representations — by himself and others — can also be seen as 'spaces of splitting'. The tensions of his life and negotiation of his personal and private identity can be viewed as 'splitting', if to split is to mean to break away from. Casement's life and works are peppered with examples of 'splitting' as denoting a division, but the most significant interpretation of this 'space of splitting' comes when the idea of division becomes more theoretical. It has already been noted that to examine Casement with regard to the colonial situation is to note a breaking of the expected binary or of straightforward polarities, especially in a transnational sense with regard to his consular service, his nationalist campaigning, and his accused treason. The split between Casement's identity and interpretation throughout his life, his posthumous reputation or afterlife, and the intersection of both of these aspects which exists as the period of time covering his trial and

[319] Homi Bhabha, in the preface of Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (London, MacGibbon and Kee, 1968), p. xv.

execution illustrates the overlapping sense of location, dislocation and relocation of the image of Casement and what he represents. Perhaps one of the main reasons why Casement, viewed as a constantly relocating image or controversy, is linked to the era, or indeed specific time in which he died. Casement's life, story, location and representation starts the process of becoming posthumous at a similar time to which Ireland starts to become, in a sense, 'post-colonial' from the 1916 Easter Rising onwards. His posthumous evolution runs alongside the evolution of the Irish Free State and Éire, and because of this fluidity — a direct result of Casement's split and dislocated identity — he is at various interfaces used to mark the changes resulting from this dual evolutionary process.

One such interface results from what Kim McMullen highlights as the micronarratives of decolonisation — the questions of feminism and emigration, amongst others — issues which exist on the periphery of discourse during the early stages of decolonisation.[320] Casement, in his posthumous afterlives, can be, and has been, used to relate to such issues of the periphery and minority in more recent times, especially with regard to sexuality and gender studies. McMullen claims that 'when a discussion of cultural identity is persistently constituted in terms of national debate, "difference" — of gender, sexuality, class, religion — becomes already spoken for in a totalizing discourse that equates the "political" with the "public" domain of the nation'[321]

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[320] Kim McMullen, 'Decolonizing Rosaleen: Some Feminist, Nationalist, and Postcolonial Discourses in Irish Studies' in *Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association*, Vol. 2., No 1. (Spring 1996), 32–45.
[321] McMullen, p. 35.

The 'differences' within Casement's own composition, and their critique through his posthumous handling by playwrights, political activists, academics, journalists and active memorialising by the Irish state, echoes and also invites a critique of the 'post–colonial' as far as it can be relevant to Ireland. These critiques and emerging micronarratives which are ever-evolving split the binary of colonisation and post-colonisation by reminding us that there is also 'decolonisation' which is not necessarily synonymous with postcolonialism.

If Casement is in the process of decolonisation, but cannot be called post-colonial, given that this process is not near its completion as Casement's final location (both physically and symbolically) is as yet unfinalised, as explained in the final chapter, then he also becomes, not in a crass or simplistic sense, symbolic of the position of Ireland in colonial discourse. Casement can only be included in the 'postcolonial' as his representation is still in a state of flux and redefinition, his location in a secure politically, socially and culturally filed and classified 'post' colonial nation still dislocated. The problems arising from calls to have Casement's final burial place moved to Northern Ireland mean that metaphorically Casement is still locked in a struggle to be fully 'post' anything, but also that the struggle for Ireland and Britain in the definition of their own splitting of boundaries, borders, space and history is very much still ongoing. In discussing this problem of the clear definition of postcolonialism, Vijay Mishra and Bob Hodge in their article 'What is Post (-) colonialism?' put forward that 'what emerges [...] is the fact that we are really

talking about not one 'post-colonialism' but many postcolonialisms'.[322] Casement's plurality, gained through this continual splitting of space, identity and binaries, would seem to support their idea of a model for the construction of meaning' which 'advances metonymy over metaphor, hybridity over purity, syncretism over difference, pluralism over essentialism or pantextualism, and diglossia over monoglossia'.[323]

Such plurality and acknowledgement of the hybridity and composite nature of the many representations of a figure such as Casement and his location open a door to the language of the interconnectivity of the transnational. The difficulty is placing Casement across the boundaries of the binary, whilst crossing a plurality of borders. Beyond the binary of Britain-Ireland, there is the opposition of Belgium and Britain, Belgium and the Congo, and Casement's situation in relation to these oppositions. Casement plays out the Britain-Ireland opposition in both the USA and Germany, resulting in his combining of the opposites of patriot and traitor. His posthumous afterlives show how even within the binary of Britain and Ireland there is plurality and fragmentation. Casement's burial place highlights quite strikingly the divisions and borders still impossible to cross. It is exactly this sense of crossing borders which moves Casement into the realm of the transnational. His literal crossing of geographical and political borders during his life is mirrored by the figurative crossing of boundaries and borders of his afterlives. However, the most significant indicator of the transnational nature

[322] Vijay Mishra and Bob Hodge, 'What is Post(-)colonialism?', in *Textual Practice*, 5 (1991), 399–414, (p. 399).
[323] Mishra and Hodge, p. 399.

of the continuing Casement story is present in the fact that Casement does not simply 'cross' borders or boundaries. That is to say, throughout his negotiation of identity — in both the aim of his works and in his personal sense of identity — Casement does not cross a border and simply stay there. In fact, Casement, both metaphorically and literally, is seen continually going to and fro over certain borders (his return to the Congo, the repetition of his Congo Report in the form of his Putumayo report, receiving his knighthood as he agitated for Irish independence, flitting between discreet administrator of the Congo Reform Association and Foreign Office representative, his covert journey from the USA to Germany and then back to Ireland). If Casement crossed a literal border and stayed there, it would perhaps be more apt to define him in terms of the international. Had he crossed a border — in the sense of a metaphorical boundary — and remain there, Casement's story would be a more straightforward case of relocation or evolution. What makes Casement dislocated is the same thing that makes him transnational: the fact that he cannot be talked of in terms of simple linear movement, rather he is frequently in two locations at the same time. As such, he gives an interconnectedness to both locations which goes beyond the realms of nation or state or similarly defined entities — British and Irish, treason and patriotism, martyrdom and sainthood, coloniser and colonised, public and private.

This sense of the continual movement across borders and boundaries, or existing on both sides at once, also re-iterates the struggle to be fully 'post' anything. The link with a nation such as Ireland here is all but indisputable —

the interconnectivity between Ireland and Britain in the present day, especially through the overlap of the Northern Irish situation, creating borders within literal, metaphorical and political boundaries, is ongoing. This continuity of ongoing negotiation and cross-over has, amongst other issues, ensured that the application of the terms post-/postcolonial were extremely problematic in Irish studies and in the wider arena of postcolonial theory and criticism. These problems are being addressed, untangled and redefined by ongoing research, but in viewing Casement in terms of the transnational, we can also view him and his life and afterlives as representative of the ability to move to, and around the transnational. Such a representation can then be translated into a state of relevance for Ireland, and provides opportunity to move the Irish question, as it stands, away from post-/postcolonial studies and into the realm of the transnational.

This thesis, and its approach to the representation of Casement and his negotiation of identity, both during his life and posthumously, explores the relationship between the postcolonial and the transnational, and the individual and the collective. Through a study of his dislocation, Casement is relocated from the problematic spheres of postcolonial studies, especially problematic within Irish Studies, to the more progressive and perhaps more fertile ground of transnational studies. The nature of transnational studies seems more suited to a relocation of Casement as it recognises the shifting nature of the subject, as represented by the shifting and nomadic nature of Casement's own narrative.

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