REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
YUZUNCU YIL UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

(POST) COLONIAL AND POLITICAL EVALUATION OF BRIAN FRIEL'S PLAYS

M. Arts Thesis

Sümeyra BAĞATUR

Van

September 2012

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SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSİTÜSÜ MÜDÜRLÜĞÜ‘NE

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INTRODUCTION

Brian Friel (1929-) is the first playwright from Northern Ireland who has enjoyed international reputation. As an Irish person, born and grew up in Ireland, he has witnessed and experienced many problems Ireland has suffered for decades. Thus, each work comes from the deep core of the country. In his oeuvre, what we have is the post-colonial, political, social and cultural problems that the Irish have had to face up to now. In this study, I aim to present how artistically but at the same time realistically Friel has looked at the post-colonial and political problems which ravaged the country. In an interview with Des Hickey and Gus Smith (1972), Friel notes the importance of the writer for his/her people: "A writer is the voice of his people and if the people are no longer individuals I cannot see that the writer will have much currency" (49). With such a deep social responsibility and consciousness, Friel works meticulously on the problems that his country has been going through.

The English colonization, the Ordnance Survey, the drawbacks of being a colonized nation, searching for an identity, the Catholic discrimination, the violence the government exercised over the citizens during The Troubles, the political corruption and treachery and many more are all points Friel wholeheartedly depicts in his plays and we will investigate in this study. Friel knows very well that English colonial rule in Ireland undoubtedly devastated the traditional life and local economy. English settlers not only took over large lands but also oppressed Irish Catholics politically and economically. Moreover, the colonization suppressed the

Irish by taking their Irish language from them, persecuting the Irish Catholics and denying all their traditional values they had. Of course, such deprivation and oppression triggered Irish people's persistent struggle against English colonizers for their national independence, which ended in the foundation of the Irish State in 1921.

In the first chapter of this study, I will give the biography of Friel so as to explore significant points in his lifetime which have contributed immensely to his artistic creation and development as a playwright. In Section 2, the Irish and non-Irish literary figures that have been rather influential in the emerging of Friel's career as a literary man will be examined. In Section 3, from the beginning to his mastership, a list of Friel's plays will be given.

Chapter 2 examines Friel's post-colonial perspective for showing the deep effects of colonialism on the Irish life in plays *Translations* (1980) and *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* (1964). These plays are also important as they have earned him fame at home and abroad, and established him as the most important living Irish playwright of our time.

In Chapter 3, you will find two political plays by Friel: *The Mundy Scheme* (1969) and *The Freedom of the City* (1973). With these plays, I study the political corruption in the Republic that has been panned satirically by Friel; and present how he has been concerned with the governmental injustice and violence over the civilians in the Troubles.

CHAPTER ONE: BRIAN FRIEL'S LIFE, LITERARY CAREER AND WORKS

Section 1.1: Biography of Friel

Friel was born into a Catholic minority in Omagh, County Tyrone in Northern Ireland on 10th January 1929. At age seven, Friel was teachered by his father at school for which Friel says, "he always thought I should have been his brightest pupil, and I think he suspected that I was dull on purpose, just to annoy him" ("The Green Years" 14). He was not a dull child but a quite silent man which has been one of his distinctive characteristics. Friel's mother, Mary Mcloone was from Glenties; and according to O'Brien, "this place would later drive him to call himself a sort of peasant" (qtd. in 1) as he spent his holidays there. This small town would later become the setting of *Dancing at Lughnasa*, the play which is dedicated to "five brave Glenties women" (Friel *Lughnasa* 1), referring to Friel's mother and four aunts.

Friel's father was from Londonderry. At the age ten, with his family, Friel moved to another city as his father began teaching in the Long Tower School, Londonderry where Friel grew up. He went to Long Tower School, and for his secondary education he studied at Saint Columb's College, Londonderry. From this school, between the years 1945-1948, he attended Saint Patrick's College, Maynooth. Kaya calls "the two-and-a-half years Friel spent there a disturbing experience" (18) as Friel made a leap to a teaching post, instead of becoming a priest.

In 1948 he received a B.A. degree, and continued his education with a postgraduate teacher-training course at St. Mary's Training College (now St. Joseph's College of Education), Belfast (Kaya 18). In 1950 Friel began teaching at schools in Londonderry following the "footsteps of his father and two sisters" (Kaya 18). Friel got married to Anne Morrison in 1954, and they have four daughters and one son (Kaya 18). After teaching about ten years, he quit teaching and began writing.

With Stephen Rea, Friel instituted the Field Day Theatre Company in 1980 which successfully became "both a touring theatre company and publishing house" (Kaya 18), a detailed analysis of which will be given in the following parts. In 1967 Friel moved to the village of Muff, Co. Donegal, six miles away from Derry in Northern Ireland. He built a rural house and has been living a settled life there with his family since then.

While evaluating the post-colonial and political issues, it would be better to have a look at the conflicts that occupy Friel's life. I agree with Kaya that "as soon as he was born he was subjected to the forces of authority and the problem of communication between the English and Irish cultures" (19). The dualities are the most outstanding points that I have encountered while studying his life, first of which is with his own name: Friel's "original Gaelic names were Bernard Patrick Friel" however, since at those times the "registration of Gaelic names was discouraged by the Protestant authorities, his name 'Bernard' was changed into its Anglicised version 'Brian'" (qtd. in Kaya 19). Ironically enough perhaps that is why he has two birth certificates for which Friel says that "one which says my birthday falls on January 9th, another which favours January 10th" ("The Green Years" 14). He goes further to think that "Perhaps I'm twins" (qtd. in Kaya 19).

The duality crisis extends much further as Kaya states: The city of Londonderry, just like his two birthdays, two names, two citizenships both in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, bears two names: Londonderry (to the Unionists) as officially the United Kingdom named it in 1922, after the Northern Ireland was annexed, and Derry (to the Nationalists) before that period. Deane accepts that "the city of Londonderry and its hinterland is almost impossible to name," emphasizing with the example that "now BBC newsreaders, while retaining the official name of the province, accent it as "London-*derry*" whereas it was formerly pronounced "*London*-derry" (qtd. in Kaya 19).

Another doubleness Friel experienced is that he spent his childhood summers in his mother's home county of Donegal, which was adjacent to Derry. As we know, Donegal lies to the north of Northern Ireland, but it is at the same time a part of the Republic. In 1920, the border was drawn and Londonderry and Donegal became separated (Deane 11). We know that Friel's family is originally from Donegal, which is "famous for the unspoiled beauty of its scenery, has always been an image of possibility for Friel" (Kavanagh 219). Donegal is often visited for holidays and we remember that Friel, too, spent his childhood summer holidays there and in Heaney's words Friel's imagination was commuting "between politics and transcedence" (qtd. in Kavanagh 219). Pastoral settings of Friel's plays are believed to be direct reflections of Donegal.

All in all, I believe, it is quite hard to reject Roche's idea that "Brian Friel inhabits the two Irelands, casting a cold eye on both jurisdictions and their political shortcomings in his plays (2). These dichotomies in his life and environs have been well-resonated in various ways in his work throughout his literary career.

Section 1.2: Friel's Literary Career

Friel has been a remarkably prolific literary figure of Irish literature for decades. The long life he has been leading endowed us the chance to have such substantially treasury works speaking on behalf of him and Ireland. Leaving behind about fifty years of a shiny career, now at the age of eighty-three, Friel has been the owner of the international reputation in contemporary world. Though he has famed for his public reticence, by the help of his works, mainly plays, as the main gate of his intellect, he has indeed generously ushered us into the deep corners of his mind and heart. Patrick Mason, Tony Award winning Broadway director, on Friel's genius says:

> Brian Friel is an absolute master of the craft of playwrighting, and over the years that has been an extraordinary resource for the Irish theatre. He's also an incredible example, an absolutely dedicated artistic craftsman, and the work is actually quite astonishing, both in quality and quantity, as is the sheer commitment and courage of the man, the way he has continually reinvented himself, confounded all expectations and come up with this extraordinary body of work. He is a universally known playwright and he has obviously enhanced greatly the reputation of Ireland and Irish theatre. Friel is an example to us all. It's not just the clear genius of his work, but it is this dedication to the art, the discipline of the man, the kind of relentless, self-critical, Yeatsian "cold eye" on his own work, the way he has given himself to that - and God knows, the cost of that is enormous - but the achievement is equally great. ("Brian Friel: A Dramatic Life")

Like Mason does, praising the works of Friel becomes a must as each one is a clear proof of his genuine dedication to the matters of his Irish tribesmen. Both the "quality of his work and the longevity of his contribution" ("Brian Friel: A Dramatic Life") are exceptionally rare in Irish literature.

Friel began writing while he was teaching in 1950s. He wrote essays, short stories, radio plays. However, it is not before he had a contract with the *New Yorker*, which had earlier refused his stories, that he quit his teaching post for dedicating all his time to writing. For his short stories, critics agree that he was immensely influenced by Irish story writers O'Faolain and particularly O'Connor; and from abroad Chekhov and Turgenev through their short stories and plays. Elmer Andrews describes Friel "as a writer both inside and outside his society" adding that "he both writes from the deep down in his environment and at the same time as a detached observer" (8). Friel has been much more concerned and worried about the social and political uneasiness of Ireland than anything else. Especially the Troubles and particularly the Bloody Sunday obviously enabled Friel to re-evaluate his responsibilities as a writer in the progression of his career.

Irish playwrights like Samuel Beckett, Sean O'Casey, John Millington Synge, William Butler Yeats, along with James Joyce, are the home-influences for Friel in his dramaturgy. Both technically and thematically Friel has had the seeds they had sown before. As a typical Irish tendency, these dramatists enlarge on the bitter loneliness and suppression of the Irish. The insularity they cannot ever get rid of is the basic element that turns out to be the central point they focus on while producing their works. Friel observes this loneliness and the desperate suppression of the Irish people who have been colonized for quite a long time now and left in the midst of the chaotic loss of their mother land, mother tongue and the power to rule. All this cruel treatment finally comes to mean the gradual and ultimate loss of the Irish identity. Perhaps Jung's theory of collective unconscious turns out to be the case in Ireland too and just like their ancestors, the younger generation of Ireland maintains the

melancholy of losing their own identity, thus perhaps unconsciously surrenders to become a colonized subaltern people. In an interview to Ulick O'Connor in 1981, Friel, for such a desperate situation, grimly touches upon that:

> The cultural climate is a dying climate, no longer quickened by its past, about to be plunged almost overnight into an alien future. The victims in this situation are the transitional generation. The old can retreat into and find immunity in the past. The young require some facility with the new cultural implements. The in-between ages become lost, wandering around in a strange land. Strays. (160)

Alienation and loneliness are characteristically Friel's points and similarly Beckett's plays elaborate on such issues too. In Friel's plays we have roaring silences just like Beckett's fragmented words. Having read *After Babel*, a book by George Steiner, Friel discovers a feature of language: Lojek phrases that "language exists not just to communicate, however, but also to conceal...Language serves not just to tell things, but to hide them from outsiders, to disguise them, even to change them" ("Brian Friel's Plays" 86). Lojek further gives examples in *Translations* (1980): the Irish translator Owen translates the sentences of the English Lt. Lancey to his people more to conceal his threatening words than to reveal the real meaning of them (86). Similarly, in *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* (1964), the split character of Gar is a distinctive approach of Friel in elaborating on language's role in concealment more than in giving away (86). Public Gar's speech is a censored version of Private Gar's; that is, what Public Gar utters is all a barrier to hide away his "Private" side. Each "Public" word of Gar becomes a reticence and hindrance back from his "Private" world, which constitutes the core of his true self. Again in *The Communication Cord*

(1982), the farce version of *Translations*, emphasizing this feature of language it reads “maybe even saying nothing...maybe silence is the perfect discourse (47).

Friel also discovers the fictive world of the reality in George Steiner, who is an influential European-born American literary critic and philosopher. For Steiner, “language has the capacity to ‘unsay’ to imagine and speak it otherwise...Truth is limited whereas fiction, lie is tremendously limitless” (qtd. in McGrath 41). In many of his plays like *Philadelphia, Here I Come!*, *The Loves of Cass McGuire* (1966), *The Freedom of the City* (1973), *Volunteers* (1975), *Translations*, and *Making History* (1988), Friel supplies us various versions of so-called reality. Especially *Making History* is the play which Friel appreciably presents us the entire required background notion that we need to conceive the possibility of the various versions of the reality as natural. The play consists of the conflicts of the historian Lombard, who is trying to write a “heroic”, so a false, distorted biography of Hugh O’Neill, the Earl of Tyrone, who does not consent to such a “diversion” of the reality. The play displays how subverting the realities is taken for granted and such a historic person’s biography does not necessarily have to reflect the reality.

Friel, as an Irish man has always felt deeply the unfavourably adverse tension rose in Ireland. The reaction of an Irish person in such a dismaying world is frequently given as his silence or illusion. The chasmic contrast between the reality and the imagined world and the psychological reaction of the person to this bitter condition dominantly populate Friel’s plays. This reaction is a way to alleviate the pain of the harsh reality. The imagined world serves as an indispensable way for not losing his mind. As psychiatrist R.D. Laing explains:

> When a person goes mad, a profound transposition of his condition in relation to all domains of being occurs. His centre of experience moves from ego to Self. Mundane time becomes merely anecdotal, only the eternal matters. The madman is however confused. He muddles ego with self, inner with outer, natural with supernatural. (qtd. in Pine 161)

It seems that Friel benefits much from the secure escape of this kind of illusion in his plays. Especially in the plays I analyse in this study, he presents us substantial examples of the illusions. In *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* for example, he allows Gar to fall into illusions so that he can survive. In *Translations*, too, Jimmy Jack is living in a totally illusionary world, in the world of Greek gods, and thus he can tolerate the destructive outcomes of the colonists and the desperate situation of the Irish. This is an escape Friel reveals to paint on the canvas of the suppression and desolation of the Irish people. This suppression is transmitted from a genuine native Irish as Friel did not become an expatriate descendant of his nation unlike other highly distinguished literary figures of Ireland like Samuel Beckett, William Butler Yeats, James Joyce, John Millington Synge, who migrated to America and some other countries to escape from the unfavourable conditions of the country. Though their period coincides with an earlier time period, about 50 years earlier, Friel did favour his hometown to settle and go on his career there. These successful Irish writers have influences on Friel in his pen. Supporting that, McGrath suggests that as Irish predecessors "Wilde, Yeats and Synge reject realism over Romanticism. But Joyce rejected both in favour of a hybrid of the two" (31), and it is possible to come across with the fusion of both realistic and romantic touches in Friel's art too. The romantic hero of Lombard, Hugh O'Neill of *Making History* from time to time turns out to reflect some realistic

parts of this romantic hero. Owen, in *Translations*, is the realistic character in the colonial process of his country while his brother Manus is bears romantic attitudes.

Friel exceptionally competently curves his characters so as to fit his original goal. Friel has never been an ardent supporter of Irish nationalism. Instead he preferred a more sensible and fruitful path of dealing with only situation Ireland has been in. He is quite well aware of the Irish problem in this sense. Just like another Irish playwright O'Casey, Friel has consistently refused to glorify the violence of the nationalist movement. Casting their characters as sent away exiles is another variation Friel uses as a reflection of the pressure on the characters. The central characters tend to leave their home and become either an exile or an immigrant. *The Enemy Within* (1962) and *The Blind Mice* (1963), introduce such exiles. Also in *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* Gar is about to decide to immigrate to America. But in three of the plays neither character happens to be happy in the end. Similarly, the ultimate disappointment is clearly represented with Cass, in *The Loves of Cass McGuire* (1966), who now seventy-two, returns to Ireland after fifty-two years of working life in America; and hopes to be welcomed by her brother Harry and his family, to whom she has sent ten dollars each month with the gift money for the children at New Year's and birthdays (McGrath 78-9). In Friel's drama, McGrath points out, Cass becomes a sister Gar, "a female Gar" (78) in this sense, but what differs in *Cass* is the explicit foreshadows that trace us to the future of Gar. Despite the money she sends them, Harry and his family reject her and her money and send her to Eden House, a retirement home. The disappointment of Cass is so sharp that Friel creates an illusionary world where she can hide away from and even forget this

harsh reality. Cass is the embodiment of the personified future of Irish émigrés who have left Ireland for America and other countries.

Another Irish prominent figure Friel is suggested to be influenced is John Millington Synge, who "elaborated on the themes of the isolation and simplicity of the islanders' lives" and the chasm between the religion and the traditional beliefs ("J. M. Synge"). Especially, in *The Enemy Within* and *The Blind Mice*, Friel questions the traditionally and religiously set beliefs of the Catholic Church of which he was educated and was going to be a member in his young age. Both the national and divine loneliness is what Friel feels. In *The Blind Mice*, the Catholic community first welcomes their tribesman who has just been released from captivity, but upon learning that he has been set free on condition of his rejection of Catholic belief, they expel him off. However, "I was abandoned! He [God] had forgotten me! Can't you understand? (*Calmer*)..." (qtd. in Murray *Brian Friel: Essays* xiv) is how Friel cries out for their desperate loneliness of the Irish even in divine belief. Again in the former play, Columba is a priest who has been far from Ireland for a long time and he goes through an internal conflict in his conscious which reaches its peak when his townsmen want for him a leader role.

The theme of loneliness and desolation also haunts Friel's short stories. O'Connor argues that "always in the short story there is this sense of outlawed figures wandering about the fringes of society... As a result there is in the short story...an intense awareness of human loneliness" (qtd. in Andrews 9). In his short stories, Friel profoundly reflects the feeling of desolation and alienation of his own community in individual instances (Deane 11). Rather than North-South conflict, his stories present the rural and small town Catholics and the incidents in their lives

among who Friel was brought up. Friel speaks from the point of generally a boy-narrator at the age of 8-10.

For his short stories, "Friel is...harsher on himself than his critics are: he says, 'I've written a lot of short stories that are bad. Very bad. Stories that appeared in the collection *The Saucer of Larks* should never have gone into it. Many of them are not good at all'" (qtd. in McGrath 50). Upon a question inquiring his views on his short stories, he even confesses that "[m]ost of them embrass me" (qtd. in Andrews 3) leaving us half smiling half pondering at the same time.

Friel's sound literary career as a distinguished playwright also bears his radio plays which are, to me, the middle step in-between earlier short stories and subsequent plays. Most critics agree that, initially, Friel's dramatic proficiency considerably owes much to his half-a-year visit to Guthrie Tyrone Theatre in America. At the age of thirty-three with his two children and his wife Friel went to Minneapolis to observe the rehearsals of an Irish friend of his. For this fruitful experience in an interview to John Lahr in 1991, he confesses in detail that:

> Guthrie was a friend of mine. Up to that time, I'd written a few bad plays and had spent ten years teaching secondary and primary school. Guthrie said, 'If you're going to do something in the theatre, you've got to live in it, work in it.' So I moved to Minneapolis. I had no function, no role, and no income. I just sat there. My parents thought I was crazy. My wife's people thought I was crazy. But the time I spent in Minneapolis was some kind of explosion in the head. Had to be. I don't know it was. Guthrie and America released me from the insularity of Ireland. (216)

Guthrie was right and once Friel got back to Ireland, he wrote *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* which became a turning point in Friel's career with a 326 productions as soon as it was released in 1964.

Friel insists that a writer be alertly the spokesperson of his homeland and tribesmen. In his own words in 1972 he philosophises:

> The persistent cry in Ireland at the moment for a more relevant drama...is interesting because it is not a genuine demand for the revelation of a new 'truth' about the country, but for a confirmation of a false assumption. The assumption is that Dublin is a miniature New York, London, Paris, Tokyo, and that it shares with those capitals identical social, economic, moral and cultural problems...But what the critics are not shouting for, and what may well be worth the dramatist's probe, is the deep schizophrenia of that city, because it is there, and only there, that the urban man and the rural man meet and attempt to mingle. (qtd. in Pine 200)

As we see, setting off from a rather limited scope, from rural towns of Ireland, Friel moves towards a fairly wider stance of the contemporary world. That is why now he has a universal acclaim in the world in this sense.

Section 1.2.1: Field Day Theatre Company

The close and intimate relationship between Friel and his other friends who are Seamus Deane; Seamus Heaney, Ireland's most renowned poet; Tom Paulin; the actor Stephen Rea; David Hammon; and Thomas Kilroy, the only southerner member, sufficiently provided them to co-build the Field Day Theatre Company, Friel started in 1980 with Rea. The original aim was to take Irish drama to culturally starved areas of the country. Friel produced plays to be premiered at Field Day, the first one of which was *Translations* in 1980.

Field Day never put forth an intentional motto, but the purpose of these Irish figures was to create a limbo-like place for their countrymen. Lapointe says that Mark Patrick Hederman, co-editor of the journal *The Crane Bag*, coins the term "fifth province" for a neutral place for the Irish (17). And further he quotes Hederman that the concept as "an aesthetic analogy which describes a space which is neither physical, geographical, nor political. It is a place which is beyond or behind the reach of our normal scientific consciousness" (qtd. in Lapointe 17). Ireland is consisted of four provinces, so a fifth one will be taken as an alternative place. However, Lapointe puts forward that in ancient times Ireland was consisted of five provinces (17). For either of the comments, the "fifth province" is important in that it becomes a place for the people to be addressed to and outspeak their problems in a freer way. Perhaps the success of *Translations* was due to this. After the extremely booming production of *Translations*, it was not hard for Seamus Heaney to perceive the importance of what they had accomplished and he persuaded Friel to keep the project on saying that "this was what theatre was supposed to do" (qtd. in Richtarik 65).

In time, both touring and publishing theatre company Field Day, as Friel puts forward in an interview to John Lahr, "has since grown into one of Ireland's most influential arts organizations" (216). Friel started to write plays to be performed at Field Day, which I think, has proved to be the best way for speaking up of a community. Dowling praises that Friel has been "absolutely loyal to Irish theatre: his plays are always given their first productions in Ireland" ("Brian Friel: A Dramatic Life"). Thus fulfilling the core aim of the Field Day, Friel volunteeringly has a grateful perception of the Irish people and land. It is significant that the company was

established in Londonderry, Northern Ireland, as the city witnessed all the tension of The Troubles. Moreover, the western location of Derry and its relationship to Belfast, capital of Northern Ireland's east coast mark another division in Ireland: the rural west and the urban east. Therefore, it becomes an intersection point of the two differing but still its own parts of Ireland.

Field Day's most ambitious project was to publish *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*. This voluminous anthology consisted of "three volumes of poetry, drama and fiction, as well as political, historical, and philosophical articles in Irish and English written between the year 600 and the present day" (Kavanagh 226). Deane was head editor and the other members were contributing to their project too.

In addition to all the efforts of the board members for the company, we should also remember the significance of Friel's visit to Guthrie's theatre. It contributed a lot to his writing and thus Field Day. For the artistic development of himself he says, "I learned about the physical elements of plays, how they are designed, built, landscaped. I learned how actors thought, how they approached a text, their various ways of trying to realize it" (qtd. in Roche 119).

Section 1.3: Friel's Works

As a highly esteemed writer, Friel wrote fifty-nine articles for *The Irish Press*, a Dublin-based newspaper in 1962-3 which "included short stories, political editorials on life in Northern Ireland and Donegal, his travels to Dublin and New York City, and his childhood memories of Derry, Omagh, Belfast, and Donegal" (Boltwood *Ireland* 12).

His first essay appeared in the *Irish Monthly* in 1951-2, and his first short story in *The Bell*. He published many short stories which were later collected in *The Saucer of Larks* (1962) and *The Gold in the Sea* (1966). His first dramatic plays were for the radio, *A Sort of Freedom* (1958) and *To This Hard House* (1958) were produced by Ronald Mason for the BBC Northern Ireland Home Service in the same year. His first stage play was *The Francophile* (1960). However, as it was not a success, it was re-cast for radio with the name *A Doubtful Paradise* and broadcast by BBC Northern Ireland Home Service in 1962.

If we chronically divide Friel's plays into decades, the plays falling into the first group will be those written in 1958-70: *The Francophile* (renamed as *The Doubtful Paradise,* but staged as *A Doubtful Paradise,* his first stage play in 1960); *King's Son of Reddened Valour* (renamed as *The Enemy Within* 1962), *The Blind Mice* (an unpublished play 1963), *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* (1964), *The Founder Members* (an unpublished TV play, 1964), *Three Fathers, Three Sons* (an unpublished TV play, 1964), *The Loves of Cass McGuire* (1966), *Lovers: Winners and Losers* (1967), *Crystal and Fox* (1968), *The Mundy Scheme* (1969).

Friel's second group of plays are the ones written between the years 1970-80: *The Gentle Island* (1971), *The Freedom of the City* (1973), *Volunteers* (1975), *Farewell to Ardstraw* (an unpublished BBC TV play, 1976), *The Next Parish* (an unpublished BBC TV play, 1976), *Living Quarters* (1977), *Faith Healer* (1979), *Aristocrats* (1979), *Translations* (1980).

The third-decade group of plays, are those written 1981-1990: *Three Sisters* (a translation from Anton Chekhov's play of the same name (1900), 1981), *American*

Welcome (7-minute one-act play, 1981), *The Communication Cord* (1982), *Fathers and Sons* (an adaptation from Ivan Turgenev's novel of the same name (1862), 1987), *Making History* (1988), *Dancing at Lughnasa* (1990).

The fourth group of plays are those written between 1991-2000: *The London Vertigo* (an adaptation from Charles Macklin's play *The True Born Irishman* or *The Irish Fine Lady* (1763), 1991), *A Month in the Country* (a Turgenev adaptation of the same name (1872), 1992), *Wonderful Tennessee* (1993), *Molly Sweeney* (1994), *Give Me Your Answer, Do!* (1997), *Uncle Vanya* (Chekhov adaptation, 1998).

The last group of the plays are the last decade we had, that is, 2001-2010: *The Yalta Game* (a one-act adaptation of Chekhov's short story "The Lady with the Dog" (1899), 2001), *The Bear* (one-act adaptation of Chekhov's play with the same name (1888), 2002), *Afterplay* (one-act play, 2002), *Performances* (70-minute one-act play, 2003), *The Home Place* (2005), *Hedda Gabler* (an adaptation of Henrick Ibsen's play with the same name (1890), 2008).

Section 1.4: Political Background in Ireland

The history of Ireland has been on debate since the 12th century and Ireland is the country England first attacked and settled in those times, and since then the native Irish people have rebelled against this forceful settlement. The English landlords were bestowed new lands to settle in Ireland, and thus began English colonisation of Ireland and socio-political conflicts. The situation got worse when Scottish Presbyterians were invited to Ireland, thus a Protestant Reformation was started, but these were totally against the will of the native Irish who did not want such an unfair change (Kaya 2). Catholics are versus the Protestants and the

Unionists are versus the Nationalists. In addition to sectarian and political problems, Ireland has extremely suffered from the famines which caused thousands of them to die and a great part of others immigrate. So, these conflicts along with destitution became a never-ending nightmare of the island.

The turmoil has never ceased in Ireland for centuries. Similarly, in Friel's time too, there emerged disturbances and riots in the country. Seamus Deane accepts that Friel was born in "the depressed and depressing atmosphere of the minority Catholic community (11). For the reasons of the depression at the youth of Friel, Deane gives the high rate of unemployment, "the corrupt electoral system which showed that the North Irelanders are even deprived of power within the limited field of borough politics" (11). Therefore, the oncoming decades of the 1930s through the 1950s were the times tension was high and caused a rather disturbing indifference which brought about the social and political entrapment and uneasiness (Deane 11). Friel was born into such a restless atmosphere where they, as Irish Catholics were living in a rather unfavourably gloomy and deprived condition compared to the English Protestants who settled in Ireland. The jobs the Irish Catholics got, the houses they could rent, the wages they were paid were all far fewer and worse than the Protestants had. Both being Irish and Catholic worsened the condition of Friel's society.

Giving a quite detailed socio-political condition of Ireland, Kaya extensively informs us about how unfairly the Catholic Irish community has suffered from a higher rate of male unemployment which was surprising in a locale densely populated by Catholics (19). Especially, the tension got extremely high when the North became a part of the United Kingdom because the Northern Irish did not want

such dependence. In addition to economic depression, the electoral system did not reflect the local majority of power in borough politics. As we see, naturally enough, intermingling with such problems, colonial intrusion has brought about the failure of the national politics. It was around the 1930s through the 1950s that the riots for Civil Rights frequently took place. It is true that Friel took some part in some of those riots; he was active in nationalist circles. However, as Kavanagh quotes David Hammond, "I don't think Friel is vitally and centrally interested in politics in Northern Ireland;" Kavanagh further continues, between 1987-9 "[h]e was made a senate in Dublin- the equivalent of England's House of Lords-which is unusual for someone who is apolitical. But he [Friel] only went once [to the Irish Parliament] and he didn't speak" (225). His appointment to Seanad Éireann (i.e. the Irish Parliament) is distinctive in that he proved to be an apolitical 'politician.' Kavanagh also states that "[Friel] once declared on television that all politicians were rats" (225). Just like the other dualities in his life that we have mentioned, Friel's mind has the "confusion over [his] relationship to conventional Irishness -nationalist identity and culture-" (Boltwood *Ireland* 2). The combination of social deprivation and political frustration had a strong alienating effect as Friel later recalled, "the sense of frustration which I felt under the tight and immovable Unionist regime became distasteful" (qtd. in Kaya 20).

The Northern Nationalists wanted to be a free state while the south favoured to be dependent on England. All these have added much to the social uproar and commotion that Ireland has had to endure for decades. It is generally accepted that these and earlier colonial incidents along with post-colonial and political factors have

profoundly influenced the writing of Friel and the shape he pictures his protagonists in his plays.

It is widely known that Friel has been a nationalist of his country at first, but he does not have any extreme propagandist views. Boltwood approves this saying that "even in his earliest enthusiasm for Republican nationalism, Friel engaged with the state's ideology not as a presumptive Irish citizen who lived in the North, but as a doubly disenfranchised Northerner: one alienated from both Irish states and unable to identify with either" (*Ireland* 2). This state of in-betweenness is rather disturbing for Friel. In time, by the help of his art, a much more critically sophisticated worldview replaces with this confusion. All Friel concentrated on has been a sensible and middle way for the welfare of the community. Roche pinpoints that "[e]ven before political violence erupted in North Ireland in 1969, Friel's plays centred on an attachment to the local, to the small community, to the marginalized and border regions as opposed to the metropolitan centre; it is one of the important ways in which he has come to be recognized as a postcolonial writer" (2). Thus, we have a writer with an open eye on both his small Catholic community and his colonised Irish people and a following world attention is also drawn. Thus, through such a microcosm Friel finds himself into the realm of a macrocosm and this indeed gives his plays a characteristic tone.

Friel has been consciously aware of the turmoil, estrangement, social destitution and all the other on-going problems that his community has been going through for quite a long time. Few people, I guess, can think of the possibility that Friel has turned a blind eye towards all these upheavals taking place all around him throughout his long life now that he himself confesses the difficulty of isolating

oneself of such a disheartening atmosphere; and he has found it as the best way to write dramas for all these drawbacks in Ireland.

What we are going to examine in this study are the post-colonial and political aspects inherent in Friel's plays. In this regard, basic events that dominantly haunt the plays of Friel are the English colonisation, British Ordnance Survey, The Troubles, Bloody Sunday, and the Easter Risings that gave way to the foundation of the Republic, all of which are either post-colonial or political, ruling problems of Ireland. The plays I am going to study in this scope are *Translations*, *Philadelphia, Here I Come!*, *The Mundy Scheme*, and *The Freedom of the City* which bear both direct and indirect criticism of the post-colonist occupation and the political corruption at the same time.

CHAPTER TWO: (POST) COLONIAL EVALUATION OF BRIAN FRIEL'S PLAYS

In this chapter, we have two plays to be analyzed in the scope of post-colonial perspective. The first play discussed is *Translations* (1980), which has proved to be the one which brought international acclaim to Friel. The second one is *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* (1964) which Friel owes much for the beginning of a shiny future. *Translations* is important in expressing Friel's views on post-colonial problems of his country. Therefore, an extensive analysis of this play will enable us to understand Friel as the moderate nationalist voice of a colonized nation. Friel's position gains much importance as he is a living observer of the post-colonial injustices taken place relatively in a brutal way in the past. With these plays, we will have the chance to elaborate on Friel as an observer of a colonized nation and how he has reacted to such a conquest in his country.

Before moving on the analyses of *Translations* and *Philadelphia, Here I Come!*, the theory of post-colonialism should be grasped fully. We know that Post-colonialism is a term dating back to the middle of the 20th century. As a literary theory "Postcolonialism deals with literature produced in countries that once were colonies of other countries, especially of the European colonial powers Britain, France, and Spain; in some contexts, [and] it includes countries still in colonial arrangements" ("Postcolonialism"). The writings of the citizens of those colonized nations constitute Post-colonial literature. Basicly Post-colonialism both refers to the

colonial time and the period after colonialism. Colonialism, once started, does never end; instead, just like the circles of the waves in a lake, each time it causes bigger and bigger effects with certain and never-ending echoes. Colonising a country brings about the post-colonial effects of the public in the long run. Just like in the case of Ireland, the colonized nation is first deprived of all its culture, traditions, religion, lifestyle and finally its identity, without a plausible reason. And as a second step, the colonial power makes the colonized country need them in every area of their life, varying from language to jobs, from economy to education. These conditions of the colonized nations are best told from the eyes of the native people, and Post-colonial literature captures all these unnatural and unfair situation imposed on the colonized country. It is true that colonizing Ireland, England swept off all its values, and in the end made Ireland a subaltern country that cannot survive on its own. This harsh process of substitution of the old values with the new ones is experienced by the Irish people quite deeply and in agony.

In this chapter, I will try to demonstrate how Friel, as a writer of a colonized nation observes and reflects the post-colonial effects taking place in his country in his works. In this regard, I am going to seek to express the post-colonial impositions, reflections, and touches that shape Friel's plays in this chapter. Though chronically *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* was written before *Translations*, first I study the latter as the setting of it dates back to 1830s, which is far before than the set of the former, in 1960s.

Section 1.1: *Translations*

Translations was the inaugural play of the Field Day Theatre Company. Its premiere was on 23 September in 1980 at the Guildhall, Londonderry, and after that

it was produced both in London and New York. *Translations* became the "central text" (qtd. in Andrews 166) of Field Day with both its scope and performance. As McGrath suggests "it became the instant classic of his [Friel's] oeuvre" and "it is already being anthologized with other canonical texts of the Irish theatre" (177).

The play is set in the small and quiet village of Baile Beag, in County Donegal, Ireland in 1833. The villagers are attending the hedge school, where Latin, Greek, arithmetic and some other disciplines are taught. The English officers appear in the village because they are remapping the places and anglicise all the original Irish place names under the conduct of the British Ordnance Survey. They are accompanied by Owen, who is the son of the master of the hedge school, Hugh. Sarah, Jimmy Jack Cassie, Maire, Doalty and Bridget are the villagers who attend the hedge school of Baile Beag. The other son of Hugh, Manus, teaches at this hedge school. His brother Owen returns home after several years of working abroad and now he works for the British Ordnance Survey as a translator. In the proceeding scenes, Manus loses his fiancée to Lieutenant Yolland. Yolland disappears close to the end of the play, and Captain Lancey, another English officer, blames the villagers for this and threats them to burn down the village if they do not bring Yolland back. And it is only then that the inhabitants begin to understand the severe outcomes of this survey which await them in the near future.

Translations is a many-layered and extremely rich play for its comprehensive subjects: the clash of two cultures, two languages, and the loss of the native culture and identity, colonial imposition, and post-colonial effects of it in the long run. In this respect, it "not only depicts a dying Gaelic civilization under English

colonization but also portrays a hybridized Ireland and adulterated people in the transitional time" (He 128).

Before analysing the play, it will be useful to have a look at the historical background of the play's setting. The British Ordnance Survey of 1830s, and the civil rights movement compose the basic historical background of the play. In the play we have a fusion of Friel's interest in Ireland's colonial and post-colonial history from a moderate nationalist perspective and his concern with the social and political turmoil in Northern Ireland. The play was also inspired out of the political and social struggles that followed the Northern Ireland civil rights movement, which began in Derry in 1968. This movement brought a new political party: Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) arose under the leadership of John Hume (McGrath 178). McGrath pinpoints that after civil rights movement a new nationalism "spread to the Republic and informed the ideology of cultural organisations like *The Crane Bag*," and "this new, moderate bourgeois nationalism inspired the 1984 report of the New Ireland Forum that led to the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985" (178). All these social and political conditions prepare the historical background of *Translations* for Friel.

Translations, for instance for McGrath, intersects with certain texts like Patrick John Dowling's *The Hedge Schools of Ireland* (1935), Colonel Colby's *Memoir of the City of Londonderry* (1837), George Steiner's *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation* (1975) and John Harwood Andrews's *A Paper Landscape* (1975) (180-2). McGrath puts forward that, "if George Steiner's *After Babel* provided a theoretical formulation around which Friel's views of language could coalesce, the historical contingency that motivated that coalescence, that provided

the impulse toward agency, was Friel's colonial and postcolonial experience of both Irish states" (182). This book of Steiner's is "an academic research on language and culture, an account of literary history of translation as a series of attempts to build bridges between different languages" (Kearney 96). The influence of Steiner on Friel also leads us to Bhabha's postcolonial theory in which the concept of translation is also central. For this theory, McGrath says:

> Performative hybrid enunciations from the margins of colonial cultures are acts of translation, particulary translations of a native past into a cosmopolitan present and translations between cultures. Bhabha also recognizes the necessity of translating within cultures and temporalities, and so, like Steiner, acknowledges that any act of communication involves translation. In addition, Bhabha theorizes the inevitability of intranslatable residues. (182-3)

Friel undoubtedtly concentrates on this view of "translation." In addition to *After Babel*, the leading historian of the Ordnance Survey John H. Andrews's *A Paper Landscape* was a recently published history of the Ordnance Survey that Friel again benefited while writing the play. The Ordnance Survey started in the beginning of the 19th century in Ireland. The Survey was conducted by the English government, by the British officers, and the project aimed at collecting all the place names and renaming them with English ones. It was not a naïve intention as the survey actually was for enabling the government to make new maps of the lands with the names that they were familiar with and thus it would be easier to take action and operate in Ireland. Perhaps more important than the military process, such a cultural deletion of the Irish values and language was worthy of notice, as it caused wiping the whole culture and traditional life of the Irish tribesmen out. "The Ordnance Survey enlisted the expertise of eminent Irish scholars, poets and antiquarians of the day- men such

as John O'Donovan, Eugene O'Curry, George Petrie and James Clarence Mangan" (Andrews 167) just like Hugh, who is going to be the master of the British National School, and Owen, who passively serves the English officers during such a colonial invasion. Also, in the play, Yolland and Lancey appear as "their historical antecedents John O'Donovan and T. F. Colby" (qtd. in Boltwood *Ireland* 159). Friel himself for this book says:

> And suddenly here was the confluence-the aggregate-of all those notions that had been visiting me over the previous years: the first half of the nineteenth century; an aspect of colonialism; the death of the Irish language and the acquisition of English. Here were all the elements I had been dallying with, all synthesised in one very comprehensive and precise text. Here was the perfect metaphor to accommodate and realise all those shadowy notions- map-making. (qtd. in McGrath 180)

Just like in the case of Ireland, "Post-colonialism has been liberally applied to the culture and literature of many societies which have been either ideologically dominated or imperialistically oppressed (qtd. in Boltwood *A Despotism* 175). In this play, similarly, the post-colonial suppression on a particular colonized people is quite realistically depicted by Friel. The British Ordnance Survey, which missioned mapping and renaming of the entire country, translating Irish place names into English and bringing an English school system. *Translations*, "a lament for a lost civilization or culture" (Pine 343), has brought great universal reputation not only to the playwright but also to Ireland as it epitomizes a post-colonial situation which is rather similar to that of the other colonized nations in the world. The English set out the Survey to eliminate the Irish language, thereby also destroying the nation's history and culture which means its future as well.

Not only is the arrival of the colonists but also the abolition of the hedge schools, which have been supported by the local people significant. In this scope, the replacement of the hedge school by the new state-run national school in which instruction will be in English gains more importance. The play, the author intended to be "about language and only language" (qtd. in Pine 146) reaches out to a larger sphere in terms of the colonial suppression. In 18th and 19th century Ireland, education was given in hedge schools by Irish peasantry to the local students, and as Ireland had basically rustic features rather than urban characteristics, these schools were called hedge schools ("Hedge Schools"). Although in these schools, primarily, Irish language grammar, English, Latin, Greek, maths and history were taught, however, with the beginning of the 17th century, Irish people realised that the education in these schools was not enough anymore; therefore, the decline of the hedge schools began with the introduction of the National School system by government in the 1830s ("Hedge Schools"). In this regard, hedge schools were eradicated, and as another step, within the scope of the Ordnance Survey, the cultural names of the places were changed into English in the name of being "standardised" (Friel *Translations* 408). In such a cruel case, no such warning about the linguistic change can be of use; as it is inevitable that all their knowledge of the classics and other languages and disciplines is nought in such a colonial pressure.

As the setting of the play, Friel chooses the hedge school where Irish people are being taught not only Gaelic, and dead languages like Greek and Latin but also the basics of reading and writing and arithmetic. The Irish, in the play, both quote Greek and Latin and also use Latin in their everyday life. In *The Cambridge Companion to Brian Friel* Pelletier explains, "hedge-schools were the informal

institutions that many rural Catholics attended, after the Penal Laws deprived them of the right to an education," however, he continues, "this situation was about to change in the 1830s as the British government sought to replace such schools with National Schools, which would use English rather than Irish as the medium of instruction" (66-7). Hedge schools enabled the Irish to reach some level of education despite the severe political and cultural oppression. However, in 1831, the National Education Act declared English as the language of Ireland's first national primary-school system. This new national schools aimed to wipe out the hedge schools, thus the Gaelic Ireland. This legislation also established a system of national schools throughout Britain. According to it, in Ireland, children would not learn Gaelic any more. The political advantage of Britain was to teach the Irish children their history written in English which is also written from the English perspective.

This mission became the most effective political tactic to eradicate Irish language and culture. The tragic reality that the historians agree on is that famine accelerated this change. In addition to post-colonial oppression, "Ireland had to struggle hard against famine many times during the nineteenth century: in 1807, 1817, 1821-22, 1830-4, 1836 and 1839" (Kaya 95). These famines were due to the potato blight spreading all over the country. The blight caused many diseases like "typhus, dysentery, scurvy, hunger oedema, relapsing fever or 'yellow fever,' and Asiatic cholera" (Kaya 95). The poorest parts of the country dramatically faced deaths. Consequently, about "a million people died, and two million emigrated to the united States between 1847 and 1860" (qtd. in Kaya 95). Both the famines and colonial oppression, as the historians also endorse, ended the widespread use of Gaelic; and caused a sharp decrease in Irish-speaking population to a predominantly

English-speaking population between the years 1800-1850 (Kaya 95-6). As Kaya states, "Gaelic which was the language of 4 million people in 1841 came to be spoken only by 1.7 million in 1851 [...] English was spoken [...] so much that, later on, even the rebel proclamation of an Irish republic in 1916 would be printed and published only in English, and the IRA would be given orders in English" (96). Such a colonial imposition ravaged the country slowly but steadily. Colonial power replaces the traditional values with the new, imposed set of rules. Thus, *Translations*' 1833 setting is important in symbolizing the process of loss of Irish language and culture.

An Irish hedge school, which is Friel's decision for his setting leads us to the national significance of it for Ireland. The play is set in an Irish-speaking town of Ballybeg. The special town of Ballybeg (Baile Beag), (meaning the small town in Gaelic) which is "Friel's favoured fictional small town" (Roche 66), again appears as the locale of the play. The play tells us about the hedge school and what happens there when the villagers are subjected to colonial changes. Joanne M. Mathieu agrees, "The characters populating the school are a well-drawn microcosm of Ireland's peasantry, representing the general population" (2). Friel uses the Ordnance Survey to delineate many colonial problems, not just the problem of language. Owen "come[s] back after six years and everything's just as it was! Nothing has changed! Not a thing! Even that smell- that's the same smell this place always had" (Friel *Translations* 402). Owen has been working in Dublin, and everyone is happy to see his return. Owen comes to the hedge school with and introduces "two friends of" (420) his: One of them is "*middle–aged; a small, crisp officer, expert in his field as cartographer but uneasy with people- especially civilians, especially these foreign*

civilians" (404), Captain Lancey, and the other is Lieutenant Yolland, who "*is in his late twenties/early thirties. He is tall and thin and gangling, blond hair, a shy, awkward manner. A soldier by accident*" (404). Owen explains his people that they have come to map the land and rename the landmarks, rivers and towns. In Owen's words, "The captain is the man who actually makes the new map. George's task is to see that the place-names on this map are . . . correct" (407). Upon Manus's question, "You haven't enlisted, have you?" he replies, "Me a soldier? I'm employed as a part-time, under paid, civilian interpreter. My job is to translate the quaint, archaic tongue you people persist in speaking into the King's good English" (404). His interpretation of English as "King's good English gives away some dependable clues about Owen's attitude towards the intrusion.

Yolland, who came from Dublin with Owen, is an orthographer who will decide the correct spelling of the place names. Lancey and Yolland both even transform "Owen" into "Roland" (405) while they speak to him. While renaming the places, Yolland's reluctance to change the name shows Friel's sensible responsibility he has towards the colonizers. No one can deny Yolland's instant and close tie with the Irish. It is recognized that Yolland is the English version of Owen. The two get along well just like two brothers. More than with his own brother Manus, Owen enjoys the company of Yolland.

Friel, for the play, says that "of course, a fundamental irony of this play is that it should have been written in Irish" (qtd. in McGrath 195). In addition, it is generally accepted that "bilingual play would violate the metaphorical integrity of the linguistic device" (McGrath 181). Also the title itself is fraught with irony in that translation occurs on many levels both literal and historical. Influenced by Steiner,

Friel exposes that the language is not to reveal but to conceal, so translation is a version of changing the meaning. Lojek, accordingly, puts forward:

> History, of course, may be the greatest translation of all, for it seeks to translate deed into word. In *After Babel*, Steiner argues that translation is necessary not just horizontally (between languages, between cultures, between individuals), but also vertically (between time periods) and that all history is translation. ("Brian Friel's Plays" 93)

Steiner is undoubtedly the most influential figure in Friel's art. In accordance with Steiner's views, Friel dovetails the two aspects of translation: We witness a kind of verbal translation in languages but also a translation which is not dependent on the time's historical accounts. There are multiple words in different languages in the play; and assuming that the Irish audience knows Latin and Greek, Friel did not bother to translate them into English in the text. However, he gives the translation of these words at the appendix. On the other hand, Friel does not stick to the historical facts as he believes it is nothing but stories, thus, it can be not one, but many. This theory has enabled Friel to philosophise on the historical events as much as he can and has helped him to use them in his art without any restraints.

In the play, Irish characters seem to be unaware of the fact that English intrusion indeed means the eradication of their language and culture. Owen acts like a volunteer to serve the English officers. Maire, "*a strong-minded, strong-bodied woman in her twenties*" (Friel *Translations* 387), who has a love relation with Yolland, wants to learn English as she believes that she will need English when she emigrates to New York; and it will solve the problem of "ten below [her] to be raised and no man in the house" (394). She plans to move to America with Yolland and believes to succeed there thanks to her English. She says, "I don't want Greek. I

don't want Latin. I want English" (400) to Hugh, and at the end of the play, again insistently, to Hugh, she says, "I must learn it [English]. I need to learn it" (446) and Hugh finally yields and says, "We'll begin tomorrow. [...] But don't expect too much" (446). She is very hopeful for the future life she is planning however, with Yolland's disappearance at the end of the play; she loses all hopes and is left all alone. With such plans of emigration, Maire is distanced from her own land, and Yolland's disappearance ensures her upcoming homelessness in her own country. The reconciliation of the two rival cultures becomes impossible in the case of Maire and Yolland. The tragic situation leaves the Irish characters helpless: Manus upon Maire's betrayal makes his mind to move to Inis Meadlon; Jimmy continues to live in his world of imagination and probably will lose the connection with reality more as time passes, and Maire, whose lover is now lost, is now deprived of all her plans for emigration, and now a homeless at home. Thus, we watch a certain part of the colonial collision of the two communities leaving the members of the two in acute despair.

Another irony lying in the play is that the multiplicity of the languages taught at the hedge school ranging from Latin, Gaelic through Greek seems to be inadequate to the native Irish: Maire has already planned to depart from her own community; Owen has long ago begun to earn money in the servitude of the English; and the Donnelly twins have become guerrillas to attack the English forces. The traditional values of Ireland seem to leave them in dark for a bright future. The diverse and sophisticated knowledge of the Irish leads them nowhere. Intellectually the Irish villagers are superior to the imperialistically powerful English officers. Pine states that "the Irish mind is left in Janus-like desolation between the shock of the future

and the emptiness of the past" (165). Despair becomes the inevitable end when one does not know whether their life is a tragedy or a comedy. Hugh is desperate just like the other Irish characters in the play, but compared to them, the younger generation is more desperate than that of Hugh's as they do not even have a past to lean to, so a rather foreign future awaits them. Maire is lost in a future that she is not familiar with at all and where she will always feel as an outsider. But being of the older generation, Hugh and Jimmy seem to be more secure in such a colonial mayhem. They can take shelter in their early deeds, their past values. They remember recruiting for revolution in 1789 and reminisce about their past. But Maire and all the other younger generation are left all alone in front of such a colonial suppression. Hugh reports "Indeed- I encountered Captain Lancey of the Royal Engineers who are engaged in the ordnance survey of this area" (Friel *Translations* 398). He even informs us, "[...] I chanced to meet Mr George Alexander, Justice of the Peace. We discussed the new national school. Mr Alexander invited me to take charge of it when it opens" (400). Hugh has no difficulty in communicating the colonizers. It seems that he has no problem with them. The problems all arise because of and around the young Irish characters. The Donnelly twins who do not appear in the play, Doalty, and Manus are some of the Irish characters that are devastatingly affected by the invasion. Hugh and Jimmy do not face any direct problems as much as the young do. In contrast to Hugh's smooth dialogue with the colonizers, Sarah's direct contact with Lancey, who is one of the representatives of the colonial power, becomes a disaster. As one of the young members of the community, upon Lancey's asking her name, she becomes totally mute. Both Hugh's and Sarah's reaction when encountering the colonial forces differ a lot. One is self-confident enough to even

discuss the new system they will establish, while the other one cannot even say her name. The erosion of their cultural heritage is driving them, especially the inexperienced young peasants into despair. The most important part of their own identity is their language which has been gradually taken away from them. Losing identity with language or through the lack of language is explicit in the play. Supportingly, Pine states:

> Under such conditions, communication, meaning and identity begin to disintegrate, and it becomes increasingly difficult to maintain an equilibrium between the inner and the outer voice. Ways of doing things-responses to the perceptible world-become caricatures: the actual difference between efficient and inefficient ways of measuring, and therefore expressing, the world. The English language becomes subverted by its Irish users. Irish nomenclature is 'bulled' by the Englishman because the ambiguity of sense and meaning is resolved by anglicisation. (164-5)

When the way of thinking and the language of which words you will use differ, the inevitable state of shock hits you. You are stuck in the delirium of the inability of expressing yourself in words. You are pushed into not using the words already existing in your mind, but to use new words that are stranger to your mind. Indeed that is exactly what happens in the case of the Irish. The renaming of the mind cannot occur as fast as it does in the place names. And naturally, an objection is expected in such a situation. Similarly, the two brothers discuss it as in the following dialogue:

> MANUS: ...What's 'incorrect' about the place-names we have here?
> OWEN: Nothing at all. They're just going to be standardised.
> MANUS: You mean changed into English?
> OWEN: Where there is ambiguity, they'll be Anglicised. (Friel *Translations* 408)

As we see, Owen has started to be "anglicised" like one of the Irish place names. The great colonial suppression even achieves to separate the two brothers. One endlessly but fruitlessly defends the national values, while the other is more realistic and does not have any intention of fighting for his country at all. The tragic situation of the Irish becomes more explicit with their confusion about the new names of their old places:

> OWEN: Do you know where the priest lives?
> HUGH: At Lis na Muc, over near...
> OWEN: No he doesn't. Lis na Muc, the fort of the Pigs, has become Swinefort. *(Now turning the pages of the Name-Book- a page per name.)* And to get to Swinefort you pass through Greencastle and Fair Head and Strandhill and Gort and Whiteplains. And the new school isn't at Poll na gCaorach-it's at Sheepsrock.Will you be able to find your way? (418)

Hugh, the experienced, knowledgeable person has nothing to do in front of such oppression. Hugh is torn in between the two sides: His older son Manus teaches at a hedge school while his younger son Owen, after being far away for several years, has just turned up and works for the English military officers. McGrath expresses that "Owen illustrates Steiner's insights about the power of language to conceal. His translations of Lancey's words conceal as much as they reveal from both himself and others, except for his shrewder brother" (185). Lojek explains, "since some of Friel's plays predate *After Babel*, it seems likely that Steiner's work caught Friel's imagination in large part because it explored aspects of language and meaning that had concerned the playwright for some time" ("Brian Friel's Plays" 90). Accordingly, some of Owen's inaccurate translations follow as:

> LANCEY: This enormous task has been embarked on so that the military authorities will be equipped with-up-to-date and

> accurate information on every corner of this part of the Empire.
> OWEN: The job is being done by soldiers because they are skilled in this work.
> LANCEY: And also so that the entire basis of land valuation can be reassessed for purposes of more equitable taxation.
> OWEN: This new map will take the place of the estate agent's map so that from now on you will know what is yours in law. (Friel *Translations* 406)

These mistranslations of Owen become more overt in the last act when Captain Lancey comes to the hedge school searching for Yolland, who has been lost, presumably kidnapped and perhaps assassinated by the Donnelly twins:

> LANCEY: I understood there was a class. Where are the others?
> OWEN: There was to be a but my father-
> LANCEY: This will suffice. I will address them and it will be their responsibility to pass on what I have to say to every family in this section.
> *(LANCEY indicates to OWEN to translate. OWEN hesitates, trying to assess the change in LANCEY's manner and attitude.)*
> I'm in a hurry, O'Donnell.
> OWEN: The captain has an announcement to make.
> LANCEY: Lieutenant Yolland is missing. We are searching for him. If we don't find him, or if we receive no information as to where he is to be found, I will pursue the following course of action. *(He indicates to OWEN to translate.)*
> OWEN: They are searching for George. If they don't find him-
> LANCEY: Commencing twenty-four hours from now we will shoot all the livestock in Ballybeg.
> *(OWEN stares as LANCEY.)*
> At once.
> OWEN: Beginning this time tomorrow they'll kill every animal in Baile Beag- unless they're told where George is.
> LANCEY: If that doesn't bear results, commencing forty-eight hours from now we will embark on a series of evictions and levelling of every abode in the following selected areas-
> OWEN. You're not-!
> LANCEY: Do your job. Translate.
> OWEN: If they still haven't found him in two days time they'll begin evicting and levelling every house starting with these townlands.

> *(LANCEY reads from his list.)*
> LANCEY: Swinefort.
> OWEN: Lis na Muc.
> LANCEY: Burnfoot.
> OWEN: Bun na hAbhann. (439)

As we see, though at first Owen tried to conceal the threatening situation, in the end he has to "do his job" and "translate." Owen's short and abrupt objection of "You're not-!" is so weak that he cannot even finish his sentence and "the change in Lancey's manner and attitude" leaves Owen defenceless now. I believe, it is only after Lancey very seriously throws threats to his people does Owen become aware of the real face of all this Survey. Holstein approves Friel in that it is quite "reasonable to shout" (3) "Visigoths! Huns! Vandals!" (Friel *Translations* 435) as the English ravage the Irish farms and houses searching for Yolland. For the intruding force Holstein continues, "but the occupying army, of course, understands itself to be the true carrier of civilization" (5). And Ngigi wa Thiong'o points out the devastating effects of the invasion in the form of translation:

> The biggest weapon wielded and actually daily unleashed by imperialism against . . . collective defiance is the cultural bomb. The effect of a cultural bomb is to annihilate a people's belief in their names, in their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities and ultimately in themselves. It makes them see their past as one wasteland of non-achievement and it makes them want to identify with that which is furthest removed from themselves, for instance, with other peoples' languages rather than their own. (qtd. in Holstein 5)

However, the outsider, the foreign English plays the key for a promising future. A further implication for the failure of Ireland proves to be the despair of the native Irish. Hugh and Jimmy often recite from the *Aeneid*, speak Latin and give many details on the ancient Greek; but all these seem to be futile as none of these struggles

seem to be a remedy to save their future. The two talk about the old days which enables them to feel secure in the midst of such severe conditions. However, the young Irish nation who has born into the hands of colonial power, in a colonized environment is naturally more vulnerable to colonial impositions in this sense. In search of Yolland, not only the fluent translator, Owen but also the young Irish Sarah is silenced by Lancey:

> LANCEY: *(Pointing to SARAH.)* Who are you? Name! *(SARAH's mouth opens and shuts, opens and shuts. Her face becomes contorted.)*
> What is your name?
> *(Again SARAH tries frantically.)*
> OWEN: Go on Sarah. You can tell him.
> *(But SARAH cannot. And she knows she cannot. She closes her mouth. Her head goes down.)* (440)

Sarah, for Heaney, stands for Ireland; as soon as "she came to the threshold of speech, she is terrorized by Lancey's threat" (McGrath 191). Manus's efforts to teach Sarah, whose "*speech defect is so bad that all her life she has been considered locally to be dumb*" (Friel *Translations* 383), to speak up constitute the beginning of the play and in the end she is shut to silence. "*She has accepted this* [deficiency]*: when she wishes to communicate, she grunts and makes unintelligible nasal sounds*" (383); so her deficiency is like Ireland's loss of its own language and identity. The efforts of Manus to enable Sarah to speak is worthy of praise, however, it turns out to be an attempt in vain as when Captain Lancey destroys all the improvements so far she has accomplished with Manus. Sarah now cannot even say her name and just like Ireland, which cannot save its own language.

Pine conveys that "map of Ballybeg is a portrait of modern society and its precarious lien on the verge of history [...] subject to the eternal quest of individuals

for a homecoming, a way of reaching the hearth, an integration" (2). Mapping the village is the device through which we encompass the impact of colonial presence in this indigenous community. Yolland's admiration for Gaelic language follows, "I understand it's enormously rich and ornate" (Friel *Translations* 418). When Hugh approvingly responds Yolland, Owen interrupts, "Will you stop that nonsense, Father" (418). Ignoring Owen, Hugh addresses to Yolland, "But remember that words are signals, counters. They are not immortal. And it can happen [...] that a civilization can be imprisoned in a linguistic contour which no linger matches the landscape of . . . fact" (419). With these remarks, Hugh echoes Steiner's in *After Babel*: "Instead of acting as a living membrane, grammar and vocabulary becomes a barrier to new feeling. A civilization is imprisoned in a linguistic contour which no longer matches, or matches only at a certain ritual, arbitrary point, the changing landscape of fact" (qtd. in McGrath 190). Pine advocates, "*After Babel* underlies the difficulty of translation between privacies" (152), which is resonated in Hugh's remark to Maire at the end of the play: "I will provide you with the available word and the available grammar. But will that help you to interpret between privacies? I have no idea" (Friel *Translations* 446).

The old, the settled are being replaced with the unknown. It is not hard to detect the clear resemblance of Hugh to Friel; he becomes a personification of Friel in the play. Friel, as a nationalist, does not approve of the colonialism taking place in his country; but with Hugh, Friel shows that there was nothing left to do after their language is replaced with English. As Friel's grandfather was a schoolmaster at a hedge school, it may be more probable that we find more of Friel in Hugh than we do in any other of the characters. Therefore, as a true-to-life character, Hugh requires

some more attention. “Hugh keeps silence,” suggests Pine “just like Joyce, whose strategy in the face of the affective breakdown of Ireland was silence, exile and cunning. The result, in literary terms, was the renewal of myth and metaphor in creation of a new language in *Finnegans Wake*” (166). Similarly, Pine suggests that Friel was quite aware of “a linguistic revolt,” assuring it with his own words, “we have not yet discovered a language appropriate to the theatre in this country- as singularly appropriate as Synge’s invention” (qtd. in 166). In the play, Friel portrays the decline of Irish language and culture and insists that he has “utilised but not restricted by the necessary peculiarities of its historical setting” (qtd. in Peacock 149). The education of the Irish and the un-civilization of the British officers show the huge intellectual gap between the Irish and the English. The Irish peasants are by far linguistically competent than the English officers: Jimmy speaks Greek; Hugh and Manus, as instructors at the hedge school, are masters of Latin, Greek, and English; other Irish characters can speak some of these languages as they have been taught at hedge school (He 128). We have quite many Latin and Greek words in the play as a result of this plurality of languages. As Chu He also claims, “Irish civilization is thus shown to be a conglomeration of foreign and native culture,” and she quotes Boltwood, that “ancient Irish culture [is] overwhelmed by...classical literature” (qtd. in 128). However, Lancey, as a non-Irish person, cannot understand which language Jimmy speaks when Jimmy addresses Lancey in Latin, he replies, “I do not speak Gaelic, sir” (Friel *Translations* 405).

Of course with the loss of language, the Irish lose many things of theirs. As Friel says “We are rapidly losing our identity as a people. . . . We are losing the specific national identity which has not been lost by the Dutch or the Belgians or the

French or Italians. We are no longer even West Britons; we are east Americans" (qtd. in Andrews 3-4). The imposition of a new language is a part of the colonial strategy, but the outcome leaves us with a much tragic picture of a nation's inevitable doomed end. Language which is the ultimate means of communication turns out to be the hindrance for communicating. The Irish who have been denied their own language cannot survive with their own culture any more. The new generation is too far from being educated with their own language. Irish language becomes such an indicator of poverty that even the Irish parents encouraged their children to learn and use English even in their daily life. Thus, their own identity which is to be inherited to their grandparents is not even passed over to their own children as in Chinua Achabe's colonial book *Things Fall Apart* in Irish houses. Quite aware of such an awful end, Friel states:

> For us today the situation is more complex. We are more concerned with defining our Irishness than with pursuing it. We want to know what the word native means, what the word foreign means. We want to know have [sic.] the words any meaning at all. And persistent considerations like these erode old certainties and help clear the building site. (qtd. in Andrews 4)

Boltwood argues that "Friel accomplishes such a negotiation through a rejection of the entire nationalist ideology inherent in the works of Boucicault, Gregory, and his own early career" (*A Despotism* ii). So Friel is not a militant nationalist, he creates a character as Lt. Yolland, the British orthographer who becomes a sympathizer of the Irish. Yolland informs us that he has missed his boat for India and has instead become an orthographer. In the play as we watch the colonizing proceed, we see that Yolland, the representative of colonial power, is indeed sympathetic to the indigenous people of Ireland. He loves the landscape of Ireland and the Gaelic

language; he even has a love relationship with an Irish villager, Maire. He confesses "I fell very foolish to- to- to be working here and not to speak your language...I hope we're not too- too crude an intrusion on your lives (Friel *Translations* 407). Unlike Captain Lancey, Yolland has a sensitive attitude towards the Irish. While renaming the place names with Owen, he shows particular loyalty and fidelity for the original names and their associations. For instance, he favours to leave "Bun na hAbhann" meaning "mouth of the river" (Kearney 95) in Irish unchanged even the Irish Owen suggests to rename it as "Burnfoot." Yolland insists, "Let's leave it alone. There is no English equivalent for a sound like that" (Friel *Translations* 410). Friel portrays Yolland as an outsider who craves for joining the tribe but indeed cannot as he always feels a barrier between himself and the tribe. He himself says "Even if I did speak Irish I'd always be an outsider here, wouldn't I? I may learn the password but the language of the tribe will always elude me, won't it?" (416). I think Friel again emphasises the significance of language for a community. It is ironic that while Yolland favours for the old names of the places, Owen seem to be eager to change them with the new ones. Yolland builds a closer tie with the Irish than the native Irish Owen. Upon the question of Owen: "Do we keep piety with a man long dead, long forgotten, his name 'eroded' beyond recognition, whose trivial little story nobody in the parish remembers?" (420). Yolland tellingly replies, "You remember it" (421).

The conversion of the Irish into an English domain means they will lose their identity along with their language. The psychology of having changed names of their local town must be hard for the Irish. For the colonists, the erosion of the native country is not enough, "they must place the stamp of their own language on the

conquered people" (Mathieu 27), as Bridget says, "'It's easier to stamp out learning than to recall it' (Friel *Translations* 393). So defenceless they are in front of such erosion that when Owen throws the Name-Book down, Hugh, who must have sensed the need to take this compulsory way, indicates that, "We must learn those new names. We must learn where we live. We must learn to make them our own. We must make them our new home" (Friel *Translations* 444).

The translation of the names becomes "a translation of labour" (Kearney 137). Yolland and Owen's collaborative task turns out to drive them into strife though they are meant to work together. Owen is too impatient to change those names and Yolland is too taken away by the beauty of the land. Kearney analyses the twisted roles saying; "the translation of names also involves a translation of namers- the roles of colonizer and the colonized are reversed, as Yolland and Owen undergo an exchange of identity" (137). Yolland's admiration on the name "Termon" (Friel *Translations* 418) meets Hugh's telling response: "You'll find, sir, that certain cultures expend on their vocabularies and syntax acquisitive and ostentations entirely lacking in their material lives" (418). Yolland evidently bears much consideration for Hugh than Owen does both for his father and his townsfolk. Despite Yolland's being an outsider with nothing common between them, Owen cannot reach the philosophical level of such conversation with his father as Yolland achieves with Hugh. From time to time we witness Hugh ignoring Owen just to talk to Yolland, to whom obviously he feels closer. He ignores Owen's question, "will you be able to find your way? (418), and instead he goes on talking to Yolland, "yes, it is a rich language, Lieutenant, full of the mythologies of fancy and hope and self-deception- a syntax opulent with tomorrows. It is our response to mud cabins and a diet of

potatoes; our only method of replying to . . . inevitabilities" (418-9). Owen's assurance of Yolland that "You can learn to decode us" (416) does not actually take place, as Yolland disappears before he has this chance.

Pine quoting Daniel O'Connell's speech of 1835, states, "although the Irish language is connected with many recollections that twine round the hearts if Irishmen, yet the superior utility of the English tongue, as the medium of all modern communication, is so great that I can witness without a sigh the gradual disuse of the Irish" (149). But Friel shows that the modern tongue is not necessary for Maire and Yolland to communicate their love. They share their love in their own way and express it to each other. "Translation of love" (Kearney 139) does not bring the happy end, but instead we are given a violent end of Yolland, who is now missing. I think Yolland's instant disappearance is quite symbolic in that Friel implies that no reconciliation between the English and the Irish is possible now that even love has happened to be not enough to bring the two together. Remembering Jimmy's remarks on *exogamein*, we know that even though they had the chance to come together, neither of the communities would approve of their love. Richtarik posits, "As these two try to establish their doomed courtship without a common language, they somehow convince themselves that they are meeting on common ground. But there is no common ground" (171). As we read the part they come together at night, we perceive the importance of their body language and sound. Some basic words like "earth, water, fire" (Friel *Translations* 427-8) suffice Yolland to get excited and enjoy his love, saying, "Good Lord, Maire, your English is perfect!" (428). Then Maire recites the only English line that her aunt has taught her: "'In Norfolk we besport ourselves around the maypoll'" (428). Then they begin to recite Gaelic place

names. Yolland says, "[...] say anything at all- I love the sound of your speech (427). Lojek asserts that this scene illustrates Steiner's views on "metamorphic repetitions": "The words are the same, but knowledge of the characters reveal the extent to which the meanings vary. [...] Nevertheless, this direct repetition suggests that the heart communicates without language and with a logic all its own so that the lovers do indeed understand, despite the barrier of language" ("Brian Friel's Plays" 85). Silent Sarah sees them embrace and runs crying out for "Manus . . . Manus!" (Friel *Translations* 430). At the end of the scene, the lack of communication becomes apparent:

> MAIRE: Manus'll wonder where I've got to.
> YOLLAND: I wonder did anyone notice us leave.
> (*Pause. Slightly further apart.*)
> MAIRE: The grass must be wet. My feet are soaking.
> YOLLAND: Your feet must be wet. The grass is soaking.
> (Friel *Translations* 426)
> YOLLAND: I'm not going to leave here . . .
> MAIRE: Take me away with you, George. (430)

All these subsequent mismatched sentences show the difficulty of their coming together. Richtarik affirms, "Their linguistic comedy of errors emblematizes the gap that has set even peace-craving British and Irish apart for generations" (171). The following evening of Maire and Yolland's meeting, Yolland is missing. And there is an implication that he has been killed by the Donnelly twins. From Jimmy's perspective, it must be expected as the local code of the community does not approve such a love relation outside the tribe. As members of the tribes folk, the Donnelly twins have done what is expected them to do. And thus, no kind of reconciliation has been achieved. Despite the severe and strict attitude of the British army, Yolland has been the victim of the local codes of the Irish tradition. The attitude of Lancey

towards Owen and the Irish peasants changes harshly upon Yolland's disappearance. This is when the sinister face of the colonial power shows itself and even Owen, who has acted with the colonists as though he were one of them, does nothing but translate Lancey's words. Yolland wishes to be one of the Irish natives and Owen wishes to be one of the colonizers. However, neither can reach their wishes. Thus, the two countries are not meant to be a part of each other. Now Manus moves from his town. Maire wants to believe that Yolland will come. She says, "When he comes back, this is where he'll come to. He told me this is where he was happiest" (Friel *Translations* 446). Jimmy, sits beside her as if giving a lesson to her, says, "Do you know the Greek word *endogamein*? It means to marry within the tribe. And the word *exogamein* means to marry outside the tribe. And you don't cross those borders casually- both sides get very angry" (446). Yolland and Maire's love is not approved by the tribe as he is a man outside the tribe. Just like Jimmy, who has wanted to marry the Greek Athene, which means an *exogamein*. As Athene is a goddess, Jimmy cannot marry her since it is against the local code of the community. Similarly, Yolland cannot, and indeed does not, marry Marie as he is not a tribesman. Moreover, Manus is Maire's suitor and it will be a big problem if she breaks her promise to a tribesman for an outsider. At the end of the play, what we have is quite expected. Like Jimmy, Yolland cannot carry out an *exogamein* marriage, and his end is more tragic than Jimmy's, as Yolland is now missing and assumed to be killed by the Irish. The love relationship of Yolland becomes a problem of the tribe. Manus decides to leave the village for a new teaching post in a new hedge school in a different town, Inis Meadlon.

What colonial imposition causes after some time is the indifference of the colonized nation for the loss of their values. As for the Irish community in the play, we have a similar situation. It is true that Friel depicts a nation which is abandoning its connection to both its traditional and literary values not through a foreign force, but through native indifference. Owen and Maire are examples of such indifference. Both personal and tribal silence of Hugh symbolizes the future of the tribe. As the ancestor of the present generation he becomes the embodiment of a colonized future. Boltwood says that Dantanus simply calls England's colonialism "rape of a country's linguistic and cultural heritage" (qtd. in *A Despotism* 187).

The level of literacy of the Irish community is much far from being enough to outdo the comparatively benighted English officers. Lojek argues that "the dangers of linguistic rigidity resonates against the backdrop of the dead classical languages his [Hugh's] students recite-and against the audience's awareness that the Gaelic Hugh speaks is now virtually as dead a language as Greek" ("Brian Friel's Plays" 84). And like any of the dead languages as Greek and Latin, Gaelic is doomed to be a dead language in the end, with fewer and fewer speakers of it. Hugh and Manus teach these dead languages, which is another irony since Irish itself will soon be dead as well. Although Hugh takes pride in being the head of the hedge school, he looks forward to being the headmaster of the coming national school, planning to teach in the same way he has done for thirty-five years. That only English will be the teaching medium of the national schools is important in that Hugh, who is fluent in both Gaelic and English, will be an indispensable help for the Gaelic speaking Irish children as they will be educated in these schools. Maire tells Hugh, "We should all be learning to speak English. That's what my mother said. That's what I say. That's

what Dan O'Connell said last month in Ennis. He said the sooner we all learn to speak English the better" (399).

Friel's understanding of moderate nationalism is quite reasonable in terms of colonial oppression. In Friel's plays, neither the Irish characters are adroit militants of the Gaelic culture nor are the English characters the brutal representatives of colonialism. The moderate nationalism Friel displays in his plays is a rather rare one that even the colonists cannot restrain themselves from praising. Supportingly, Boltwood states:

> Friel accomplishes what Deane cannot: he offers a definition of Irishness that is securely Irish: predicated neither upon a demonization of an absent English oppressor, nor a reliance upon the Romantic traits associated with Irish nationalism. Moreover, his rejects the nationalist doctrinnaire linkage of Irishness to Catholicism, on the one hand, and to Gaelicism, on the other. [...] Friel attempts to fulfill the goal of the Field Day Company to visualize a "more ecumenical and eirenic" Ireland through the demonstration that "Irishness" does not require the traditional definitions of the Irish nationalist ideology. (*A Despotism* 178)

Hugh and Yolland talk about the Gaelic language and Yolland says, "Some years ago we lived fairly close to a poet- [Wordsworth] well, about three miles away" (Friel *Translations* 417), but "actually I never talked to him. I just saw him out walking- in the distance" (417). Hugh confesses, "Wordsworth? . . . No. I'm afraid we're not familiar with your literature, Lieutenant. We feel closer to the warm Mediterranean. We tend to overlook your island" (417). Upon this response, Yolland jumps: "I'm learning to speak Irish, sir" (418) and he continues, "I mean- I feel so cut off from the people here. And I was trying to explain a few minutes ago how remarkable a community this is. To meet people like yourself and Jimmy who actually converse in Greek and Latin. And your place names- what was the one we came across this

morning?- Termon, from Terminus, the god of boundaries. It- it- it's really astonishing" (418). Symbolically, Yolland's such eager manners for getting to know the Irish culture and language expel Lancey's assumption of them as a benighted community. Friel twists the situation so talentedly that on one side we have a Yolland, who is a distant observer of his own literature as he just sees Worthsworth from a certain distance, and on the other side, we have a Yolland, who is eager to learn everything in Gaelic world. Such a crisscross condition is highly a gesture of Friel's potency in his art. Otherwise, an officer with such a strong sympathy towards the colonized nation would turn out to be dramaturgically and realistically awkward.

Mathieu convincingly suggests that Friel's Irish characters "awaken sympathy and understanding in the audience while providing amusement and delight" (3) as they strive to learn under rather unfavourable conditions. When these conditions of the Irish characters and the prosperous English officers are juxtaposed, we feel their helpless striving to improve themselves under such ill opportunities. But despite all these disadvantages, Friel succeeds to create the most enjoyable and amusing characters among the Irish. For instance, Doalty, who "*is an open-minded, open-hearted, generous and slightly thick young man*" (Friel *Translations* 390), is one of the enjoyable and energetic Irish characters. Jimmy recites from the ancient like Homer and Vergil and tells about his wish to marry Athene. Manus does his best to get to Sarah speak. Maire is also one of the enjoyable characters that we have. Bridget, another student, "*is a plump, fresh young girl, ready to laugh, vain, and with a countrywoman's instinctive cunning*" (390). Even Yolland wishes to be one of these Irish villagers. This kind of achievement of Friel, that is creating sympathy for one side without offending the other is a notably difficult task to manage. It is true

that “On the one hand, Friel destroys both colonialist prejudices and national pieties; on the other, he recovers those ostracized cultures in modern Irish society, which are dismissed as backward, atavistic practices running counter to modernization” (He 26).

Colonizer Yolland’s admiration of the traditional Irish peasant life and land is what bewilders us in the play. His love for Ireland is so great that, to Hugh, he says, “I think your countryside is- is- is very beautiful. I’ve fallen in love with it already. I hope we’re not too- too crude an intrusion on your lives. And I know that I’m going to be happy, very happy, here” (Friel *Translations* 407). Yolland feels so close to this Irish community that he even shares a love with one of the natives. Even Irish school master Manus, is left out by Yolland’s encounter with Maire. But his closeness to the natives was not enough to prevent his disappearance. Such a romantic view of the indigenous people has not meant anything now that he is missing. Lancey, seems to be more secure now for he has kept a distance between himself and the tribe. The manners in keeping a distance between himself and the Irish seem to have saved Lancey from such a catastrophic end like Yolland’s.

While Lancey and Yolland represent the British colonizers of the English conquest, “the Donnelly twins, who have not been seen for days, and Doalty provide the most obvious picture of Irish resistance to British rule and the Ordnance Survey” (Mathieu 3). As counterparts of these colonizers, the Donnelly twins are relatively too unprofessional to cope with such a conquest. In the end of the play, they are presumed murderers of Lt. Yolland. When we compare and contrast two rival cultures, the outstanding imbalance of power is quite obvious. The problem of new school system has started to be talked about. For instance, Maire on the subject of the

hedge-school says, “When it opens, this is finished: nobody’s going to pay to go to a hedge-school” (Friel *Translations* 394). Bridget too, when she enters, comments on the new national school system: “Did you know that you start at the age of six and you have to stick at it until you’re twelve at least- no matter how smart you are or how much you know. [...] And every child from every house has to go all day, every day, summer or winter. That’s the law” (395) and she continues with further details, “And everything’s free in them. You pay for nothing except the books you use. [...] And from the very first day you go, you’ll not hear one word of Irish spoken. You’ll be taught to speak English and every subject will be taught through English [...] (396). What we hear in the speech of Bridget’s is the colonial imposition that awaits the Irish children in these national schools.

Owen is also important in that he not only helps the officers change the place names but also allows them to change his own name. When Lancey calls him “Roland,” (405), he neither corrects him nor seems to mind the error. Moreover, when Manus discusses with him over the mistaken name, Owen says, “Easy man, easy. Owen- Roland- what the hell. It’s only a name. It’s the same me isn’t it?” (408). Manus in a surrendering manner says, “Indeed it is. It’s the same Owen” (408). Yolland too wants to learn his name correctly, and insists on the accurate spelling of Owen’s name: “Spell Owen again, and Owen replies, “I was getting fond of Roland” (421). Yolland, like Manus gives importance to the accuracy of the Gaelic names as though not Owen but he was one of the members of the Irish origin. Manus and Owen’s contrasting reactions towards the British intrusion is easily observed:

MANUS: I’ve been offered a job.

> OWEN: Where? *(Now aware of YOLLAND.)* Come on, man- speak in English.
> MANUS: For the benefit of the colonist?
> OWEN: He's a decent man.
> MANUS: Aren't they all at some level?
> OWEN: Please. (422)

The members of the hedge school are given as the representatives of the Irish peasantry, and Lancey and Yolland are the British figures of the Ordnance Survey. However, Yolland is not harsh to the native people as Lancey is. It is true that Yolland balances the cruel and coarse behaviours of Lancey in the play. I think regarding the year 1980, when the play was produced, Friel must have sought a way to illustrate the sympathy of the English community for his own country. He did not prefer to be harsh on them and in the personification of Yolland he has given a direct and perhaps to some extent a fair voice of the English people. Thus, both the English and Irish communities could grasp some messages from the play at the same time.

Two different languages create confusion when Lancey speaks in English at the hedge school; most of the people of Ballybeg cannot understand him, and nor can Lancey understand them. However, Lancey's preparation for meeting the peasants and his talking to them as if he is talking to infants are quite comical. Lancey assumes that since these people are Irish peasants and do not speak English they must be dull and awkward. He even tries to explain to them what a map is in a funny way: "A map is a representation on paper- a picture- you understand picture? –a paper picture- showing, representing this country- yes-? – showing your country in miniature- a scaled drawing on paper of- of –of-" and Owen helps him saying, "it might be better if you *assume* they understand you- and I'll translate as you go along" (Friel *Translations* 405-6). Jimmy, who does not understand English asks,

"Nonne Latine loquitur?" Does he not speak Latin?" (405), Lancey replies "I do not speak Gaelic, sir" (405) showing his crude incapability of telling apart Latin and Gaelic. The chosen missioner who is supposed to be a qualified person fails in understanding a language and his underestimation of these people due to their peasant life is a double irony Friel lets us recognize. There have been many critiques on these exchanges, and Pine argues:

> Possibly the most serious of Friel's subversions is to deny the English sappers in *Translations* a capacity to discuss in Latin, presumably in order to suggest that the otherwise inferior society of Ballybeg might have some cultural values unavailable to the colonists. It has caused an English drama critic to call the play 'a vigorous example of corrective propoganda: immensely enjoyable as theatre if, like much else in Ireland, gleaming tendentious.' (154)

Only Owen and Manus are aware of the inaccuracy of Owen's translation of Lancey's words. And Manus warns Owen saying:

> MANUS: What sort of translation was that, Owen?
> OWEN: Did I make a mess of it?
> MANUS: You weren't saying what Lancey was saying!
> OWEN: 'Uncertainty in meaning is incipient poetry'- who said that?
> MANUS: There was nothing uncertain about what Lancey said: it's a bloody military operation, Owen! [...] (Friel *Translations* 408)

As we see Manus is quite aware of what is happening around. However, Owen is seeing the reality that they are being change into something they are not familiar with and they cannot stand against it. This reality makes Owen to walk into the sphere of the colonizers.

Section 1.2: *Philadelphia, Here I Come!*

Philadelphia, Here I Come! became Friel's first hit in September 1964. It was first produced at the Gaiety Theatre, Dublin Theatre Festival and "then transferred to New York in 1966 where it became the longest-running Irish play on Broadway" (qtd. in Pilkington *Theatre and The State* 161) with "326 performances" (Burke 122) for nine months. Thus, Friel's "*Philadelphia, Here I Come!* announced his entry onto the international scene" (McGrath 68).

The play centres on a young Irishman, Gar O'Donnell, on the eve of his departure for Philadelphia. Gar is presented to us with two individual characters, played by two different actors. Gar lives with his father S.B. O'Donnell, who has a small shop in Ballybeg. S.B. is a County Councillor and has brought up Gar after the death of his wife. Both his father's reserved attitudes towards Gar and the monotonous life in Ballybeg encourage him to move to his Aunt Lizzy Sweeney's, who lives in Philadelphia with her husband Con Sweeney. The Sweeneys have visited the O'Donnells in Ballybeg with an American friend of theirs, Ben Burton; and Aunt Lizzy has invited Gar to the States during this visit. Though Gar is bound for Philadelphia, he is still hesitant about leaving. His girlfriend Kate Doogan and Madge Mulhern are two important people in his life. Just like S.B., Kate's father, Senator Doogan does not care about Gar. Some nights Canon Mick O'Byrne visits S.B. to play some board games with him. On the last night of his leaving, Master Boyle, who is Gar's former school teacher and Gar's girlfriend Kate, and friends Ned, Tom, and Joe visit Gar to say goodbye. None of these friends of him are happy living in Ballybeg and have a job.

"*Philadelphia, Here I Come!* is rich in social, political and moral concerns, and is multidimensional" (qtd. in Kaya 27). The setting time of the play, 1964 is a period when the Irish people have gone through many post-colonial, sectarian, social and economic problems. Therefore, *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* is the play which reflects some inner self of the worn psychology of the Irish, especially "dealing with the predominantly Catholic middle and lower classes" (Kimmer 196). The protagonist, Gareth O'Donnell becomes the voice of the colonized and thus doomed to be the lost generation of Ireland. His split character on stage is both a reflection of his ancestors' colonial history and also the unpromising Irish future awaiting them. In this part, I will analyse *Philadelphia* in a post-colonial perspective, and study these harsh drawbacks caused by the colonial forces in the long run, and elaborate on the outcomes of the colonial occupation on Irish life. Through a detailed study of the protagonist, we catch the negative effects of the post-colonial history of Ireland both on the psyche and the traditional lifestyle of the native Irish. The "theme of exile in *Philadelphia*, and Gar's torn self" (Deane 13) pushes us into the bewilderment of the discrepancy of the protagonist as an Irishman. The play opens with the last night of Gar, who is set to leave for Philadelphia to live with his maternal Aunt Lizzy and her husband Uncle Con Sweeney, and through flashbacks and especially the experimental device of the split character, Public Gar and Private Gar, the huge difference between his two selves is quite talentedly and cleverly portrayed.

Richard Pine labels *Philadelphia* "as the start of contemporary Irish drama" (qtd. in Llewellyn-Jones 122) for its experimental creativity. Gareth O'Donnell, the protagonist is a twenty-five-year old Irishman, of whom the audience learns through a series of flashbacks, conversations, and fantasies. Bound for Philadelphia, Gar is

"about to flee the emotional vacuum of his home, a vacuum created by his strained relationship with his pragmatic father and his failed relationship with Kate Doogan" (Bass 335). In the rural town of Ballybeg, he lives with his father Sean B. O'Donnell and works as an assistant of him at the shop. The play "revolves around a father and son's inability to communicate" (Szasz 56), and "highlights the absurdity of its protagonist's striving to achieve the American Dream's promises of financial success" (56).

Lojek affirms that "*Philadelphia* is serious, and angry, about the restrictions of Gar's world, about the failures of his religion and his education, about the limitations of his parents. And it is serious about the difficulties of growing, anywhere, from a boy into a man" ("Brian Friel's Sense of Place" 179). When we look at the setting time of the play, it is obvious that Friel has been much influenced by the immigration from Ireland to America at that time. Szasz confirms that "emigration continued to be a major factor in Irish life through the 1950s, the decade directly preceding *Philadelphia*" (61). However, we know that the beginning of immigration to America dates further back, to the 1840s, during the Great Famine (1845-1851), when the United States became "a chimerical promised land" (qtd. in Szasz 61) for the Irish people. Thus, "emigration is the subject of [...] *Philadelphia*, the haemorrhage of people from Ireland which had continued to depopulate the country since the time of the Famine" (Grene 199). Regarding the hardships of "famine, poverty, rural depression or diseases of the affection, failures of affiliation" (qtd. in Szasz 61), the land of America became the land of bright future for the Irish. An escape from all those traditional problems to the "golden land of opportunity" (Szasz 61) was the only choice they had to cling on. Thus, America seemed to be the

only solution for the suffering Irish people, and "by 1900, four million Irish had immigrated to America" (61). Giving further details on the history of immigration in Ireland, Szasz quotes historian Charles Townshend who:

> [E]xplains that four out of five children born in the Republic in the 1930s left their country as young people in the 1950s. In 1951, Ireland's population was almost three million, but the 1956 census showed that nearly 200,000 Irish men and women left their homeland between 1951-1956. By 1961, the country had shrunk to 2.8 million. (qtd. in 62)

But the following decade, the 1960s emigration slowed down though it did not cease. "Historians agree that this decade included a heavy infiltration of foreign influences, especially British and American culture" (Szasz 63). Friel was quite aware of these hard processes faced by the Irish. Accordingly, Brown argues, "Friel's theatre in its social dimension is a theatre of societal transformations, of transitions. But it is also a theatre in which the individual characters are beset by manifold difficulties when they seek to define themselves as anything other than members of a family or of a markedly local community" (241-2), this is actually what takes place in the split character of Gar. Therefore, concentrating on this on-going immigration, Friel wrote this play which centres on an Irish man immigrating to America.

Grene suggests that the historical background of the play has concerned Friel a lot during the writing of *Philadelphia*, and he continues:

> In the early 1960s, at the point when in fact that demographic pattern was about to change and Ireland's population began to grow again, [...] Friel dramatised the community which drives [his] young male protagonist to leave. The emphasis [in the play] is on deprivation, on the economic, cultural, and spiritual poverty of the Irish small-town experience. The strongly held control of a puritanical Catholic church associated sexual repressiveness with the authoritarian family ethos of home, sexual liberation with fantasies of escape. Class distinctions were the more rigidly enforced in a poor

> society where only fine shadings of power and position distinguished haves from have-nots. (199)

This is the world Friel satirically scrutinises in *Philadelphia*. Gar O'Donnell stands in for any number of such "retarded adolescents, underpaid and undereducated, frustrated and impotent," and the play "probes the social causes of their situation" (Grene 199). As we see from his oeuvre, Friel is a writer speaking for society. And Palmer notes that "Said salutes writers like Friel who 'can truly read the great colonial masterpieces' and write back. But it is not enough just to read the 'colonial masterpieces': the 'minorpieces' of the colonised also must be read" (5). *Philadelphia*, just like any other work of Friel, shows that Friel does this quite talentedly and consciously.

After the historical background of the play, it will be useful to give some details on Friel's visit to the British director Tyrone Guthrie, "whose family roots were in Co. Monaghan close to Friel's home" (Lojek "Brian Friel's Sense of Place" 178). Friel traveled to America in 1963, and he spent six months working with him at Tyrone Guthrie Theatre. Lojek too agrees with Friel that "the play was an immediate result of" (qtd. in 178) this visit to the Tyrone Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis. Friel got the chance to watch the rehersals, and he describes witnessing the "'performing side of the art of theatre' and the 'inspired coordination' of Guthrie's direction as like 'an explosion in the head'" (qtd. in Lojek "Brian Friel's Sense of Place" 178). This visit was also "an eye-opening experience to Friel, for he learned many dramatic skills and devices from Guthrie, a creative, experimental artist" (He 101). Moreover, it gave Friel a fresh view of Ireland to produce something new within the old traditions. In this regard, "Friel's only lengthy stay outside Ireland seems also to have

sharpened his perspective on home. It yielded a sea-change in his skill and confidence as a writer, and *Philadelphia* became the first Ballybeg play and the first Friel classic" (Lojek "Brian Friel's Sense of Place" 178). His perception of himself as an Irish person in an American community is worthy of notice in *Philadelphia*. He began to think locally and internationally at the same time. Not few critics take Gar as Friel. They have too many similarities to miss: they are both Irish, in search of something new in their lives, become the representatives of the silenced voice in their community with their individual efforts, and do not want to be limited within the insularity and on-going problems of Ireland.

For sure "its [*Philadelphia*'s] actability marked a considerable advance in Friel's stagecraft" (McGrath 69). Not only the theme of emigration but also the experimental devices Friel makes use of are significant. "*Philadelphia, Here I Come!* has two components, both of which concern us here- the splitting of the protagonist into two characters played by two different actors and the illusions of memory that highlight the conflict between father and son" (McGrath 69). Having two contrasting Gars on stage is what shocks the audience immediately. Public Gar is obedient, silent, passive Gar; whereas, Private Gar is the raucous, active and cynical Gar. Therefore, it is true that "for a sense of the dislocation between public definitions of the self, of personhood, of citizenship, and the actual life of the affections is something which is present [...] in Friel's dramatic stratagem of Private Gar and Public Gar in *Philadelphia*" (Brown 240-1). This split identity of Gar "epitomises the dilemma of the emigrant, who for personal and economic reasons does want to go to America, and yet fears in leaving his home community he will lose some intrinsic aspect of his identity and culture in the impermanence and anonymity he partly

desires" (Llewellyn-Jones 122). Gar ceaselessly tries to convince himself that he hates his hometown, but at the same time he struggles ineffectively to validate his childhood memories with his father of rowing on the Lough.

"*Philadelphia, Here I Come!*'s wrenching schizophrenia" (Kimmer 195) is staged by use of two different actors for split character of Gar. And for Lojek, "they are always together and parts of a whole" (178). In this regard, He explains:

> Two actors give the same substance and weight to Gar's inner and outer self and thus show them to be equally real and true as performance. In this way, Friel not only dismantles the conventional distinction between seeming and being, appearance and reality, but also actualizes two levels of reality- outside and inside, physical and psychological, objective and subjective. (102)

And through such a device, Friel emphasises the public roles besides private roles. Therefore, "Private Gar is a device to dismantle the 'real' [...] Through Private, Friel seeks to make the heart's darkness visible, its silence articulate" (Andrews 85). Also this convention of having two actors helps to psychologise Gar's mind more realistically. The audience is given the bitter realities and differences Gar bears in his mind. Pine suggests that such a division of Gar also displays:

> The division between hope and disappointment [which] lies in the imagined life that awaits him in Philadelphia, in contrast to the silent war between himself and his father in Ballybeg. This stepping out towards an expectation, or vision, is the religion of ecstasy as opposed to that of control, the placing of one's faith on the edge of the known world. (77)

Friel's detailed description of the split character of Gar follows as:

> The two Gars, PUBLIC GAR and PRIVATE GAR, are two views of the one man. PUBLIC GAR is the Gar that people see, talk to, talk about. PRIVATE GAR is the unseen man, the man within, the conscience, the *alter ego*, the secret

> thoughts, the id. PRIVATE GAR, the spirit, is invisible to everybody, always. Nobody except PUBLIC GAR hears him talk. But even PUBLIC GAR, although he talks to PRIVATE GAR occasionally, never sees him and *never looks at him*. One cannot look at one's *alter ego*. (Friel *Philadelphia* 27; Friel's emphases)

The use of such a device of two Gars receives praise from many critics. There are two Gars: "One which utters what is acceptable and the other which utters one would really like to say if one were not so inhibited" (McGrath 69). The play reflects the confused and indecisive mind of Gar. According to Andrews, "the stage on which the action takes place is the stage of the protagonist's mind" (85). Through Private Gar, we are given away all the feelings and thoughts Gar bears in his mind. Pine points out that "there is a gap between private, inner questioning and the ambivalent qualities of the public world; one which leaves the identity of the exile positioned in a liminal state" (qtd. in Llewellyn-Jones 123). Gar's actual presence is wondering in this gap without belonging to either side. As Llewellyn-Jones approves "all the other real sites that can be found in a culture, are simultaneously represented, contested and inverted" (qtd. in 123) in the image of Gar. Grene defends that "it also adds the potential for a wonderfully playful counterpoint to the drab outer surfaces of Ballybeg social behaviour" (202). Gar's father, S.B. O'Donnell's coming from the shop, taking his apron off, having a tea, talking about mechanical things like about rats in the shop are all clues of a rather monotonous life in Ballybeg. As a grocer's assistant Gar is dependent on his father, who is also his employer. Just like his ill-paid job, Gar can get nowhere in his love affair with a girl of rather better family than himself, and this frustration along with all the other constrictions of his small-town life are forcing him to leave. The play:

> [O]ffers a social anatomy of the life-denying features of the Irish provincial scene: late and loveless marriages, frustrated sexuality, a petit-bourgeois economic situation just above poverty, an unenlightened controlling Church, a meanly conservative social hierarchy, a cultural wasteland. This was a familiarly bleak view of Ireland by the 1960s, familiar from the critical realist traditions of Irish fiction and poetry as well as drama. (Grene 202)

Gar feels distanced to such a country and now seeks for a new place to take shelter in, thus, I believe his mind has already emigrated before him, and only a physical emigration is due now.

Many Irish writers have elaborated on this emigration issue in their works. Unsurprisingly, Friel too, as observed in *Philadelphia*, which "deals with emigration from the peripheral north-western county of Donegal in the 1960s" (Pilkington "Reading History in the Plays of Brian Friel" 499) focuses on this great social process taking place in his country. Brown approvingly pinpoints "the force field of post-colonial interpretations of Ireland's experience can, of course, generate compelling readings of the past and present, especially when it affects the mind of a major writer" (12). As one of the literary figures of the colonized Ireland, Friel deeply felt the responsibility to reflect this bitter reality of immigration of the Irish.

The play is set in 1960s of Bellybeg, which is a quite small town in Co. Donegal. Gar cannot live the life he desires in his country. The land which has proved to be the downfall of all the other Irish citizens is not a source of hope for Gar either. Gar is not happy at home and ponders on leaving for a new place. His departure is "like so many real Irish youths of that time" (Lojek 178) who followed after their hopes that were not promised by their homeland but by totally foreign lands. Just like the other Irish emigrants, Gar is forced to think about emigrating as

"Ballybeg proves too parochial, too lacking in opportunities for its young people" (Bertha 159). The use of double Gars corresponds to what Anthony Roche identifies as the "anti-hierarchical nature of a postcolonial Irish drama," where the lead role is divided between two equally important characters so "every pronouncement by the one is likely to be countered or questioned by the other" (qtd. in Bertha 159). This division of Gar's self-shows the "fatal lack of integrity in the silenced native who is able to express himself only within himself" (Bertha 159). About the language issue of Ireland in general, Seamus Deane writes, "the language of the real, in all its rigour, is Irish – and that emerges as silence; and the language of the possible is English – and that emerges in eloquence. [. . .] The condition of dumbness, aphasia, or silence is the repressed condition of non-modernity" (qtd. in Bertha 159). Gar's silence in the public world exemplifies this thought of Deane very well. Gar's articulateness is never visible in his Public voice, instead it is Private Gar that balances the two sides of him.

Ballybeg is "a place short of material and spiritual life, and routines monopolize people's lives" (He 104). Gar is a young Irishman bored of the old land of Ireland. Thus, it is not hard to find the opposing sides of Private Gar with this small town which has a highly conventionalised social order. Andrews notes that Friel's drama has the "central position occupied by the representatives of the Law" (85). For instance, in *Phialdelphia*, we have a Senator, a Master, a Canon and a County Councillor. However, none seem to be ideal figures for Gar. Senator is a class-conscious man, Master Boyle is an alienated person in his life, Canon is paying visits to S.B. and plays board games with him, and S.B., the County Councillor is a rather reticent man. None of the characters in the play seem to be living a happy life,

even Madge Mulhern, the "mothering housekeeper" (Lojek "Brian Friel's Sense of Place" 179) of the O'Donnells, has a kind of disappointment. Also her newly-born grandniece does not become a hope for them, rather causing Madge to be "tired, son. Very tired" (Friel *Philadelphia* 98). On Sunday after the last Mass, the baby will be christened, and named after Madge, which foreshadows the vicious circle of the Irish life. In this regard, Lojek emphasizes:

> *Philadelphia* is a careful study of small-town, mid-century western Ireland: jobs are scarce; the parish priest fails to make sense of life; the pompous, pub-bound schoolmaster has a mind gone to waste in a stultifying atmosphere; harsh economics make May–December unions common; returning Irish-Americans are sentimental about a world which never was. The emotions which animate these characters, though, are hardly limited to the play's time and place, and Philadelphia is not local-colour drama. ("Brian Friel's Sense of Place" 179)

With the microcosm of Ballybeg, Friel moves into the international arena of the condition of a subaltern people. A suppressed nation is not free or powerful enough to make its own decisions, like Gar in *Philadelphia*. Pilkington, regarding the modern capital pressure on the subaltern people attests:

> *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* [...] returns again and again to Friel's view of the destructive relationship between traditional features of an Irish nationalist identity and the homogenizing effects of an all-pervasive multinational capitalism. Portrayed throughout as a matter of tragic or farcical inevitability, every attempt to maintain an insular or nationalist independence is shown to lead directly to its opposite: either the anonymity of emigration or an exacerbation of economic dependency. An acceptance of the unstoppable nature of Ireland's modernization is coupled to a nostalgia for a pre-modern Ireland of the past. This was an extremely successful formula. (*Theatre and the State* 161)

Emphasizing the need for home, particularly in Northern Ireland, in 1982, Friel says, "We aspire to a home condition in some way. [. . .] And what's constantly being offered to us, particularly in the North, [is] the English home and we have been pigmented by an English home" (qtd. in Bertha 156). In *Philadelphia*, Friel creates an Irish home for most of his characters, "the fictitious village of Baile Beag that, due to British colonization, becomes Ballybeg – a metonym for, or a microcosm of, Ireland" (Bertha 156). Ballybeg becomes the physical and spiritual home of the community Friel creates. Friel masterfully connects these Irish characters's public life with the private lives, "with the plight of the whole culture" (157). Bertha also notes that "Friel makes Ballybeg correspond to the postcolonial situation and consciousness that are positioned on the fault lines between cultures, a space which is at one and the same time centre and marginality, authenticity and change" (157). Friel perhaps is seeking for contact points between authenticity and contemporary life, and dramatizes that "[o]ne can never go back to the old culture, but it could extend to the present day" (qtd. in Bertha 157). Gar's present life is a replica of his ancestors who faced colonial suppression. And Gar performs every duty he is expected to; he works at his father's store, every night he prays, tries to get married and he respects the elder people. However, social norms are all shattered with Private Gar who is a defiant character of Public Gar. He does not pray, or work, and he mocks, even swears his father. Private Gar is cynical about his father's worn-out lifestyle, rails against religion, and defies all the social norms. Andrews states that Gar dreams himself to be a pilot, a soloist, a soccer star, conductor, a footballer and even US president, and that his "fantasies are all fantasies of expertise and control" (88), which enable Public Gar grow into a more potent and important person. Thus,

Private Gar compensates for his condemned and pacified Public side. The obvious discrepancy between each of the two selves releases the proof of entirely divided mind of Gar. Upon the appearance of his father, Private Gar says, "And here comes your pleasure, your little ray of sunshine. Ladies and Gentlemen, I give you – the one and only – the inimitable – the irrepressible – the irresistible – County Councillor – S – B – O'Donnell! (Friel *Philadelphia* 47), which openly conveys these divided doubleness in his mind.

Gar's father is important in that his excessive reticence constitutes a reason for Gar's obedient and weak character. They cannot even discuss or argue over something as they do not speak enough. Considering the colonial past of Ireland, S.B. cannot be an ideal father as he bears the negative effects of it within himself. It is also significant that S.B. is the initials of Gar's father. Thus, just like his lack in having a full name, he is also denied a fully real presence and a developed character not only in Gar's life but also in the play. Accordingly, Roche declares that "it is in this political context that the re-emergence of the theme of father-son relationships in Friel's drama needs to be evaluated" (43). As the male power of the family, and of the country in a broader sense, Irish men's desperately pacified condition is exemplified by S.B. in *Philadelphia*. Roche approvingly communicates:

> In an important essay "Fathers and Sons: Irish-Style," Declan Kiberd has written of the position of fathers in a society where a colonial regime, while on the wane, still operates. The "unsuccessful" father occupies an abject role in the household, unemployed and alcoholic. The "successful" father scarcely has it any better, living "out his life in a posture of provincial dependency, as a policeman or bureaucrat or petty official in an oppressive or despised colonial administration. (43)

It is hard to disagree with Kiberd on his comments of the father image in *Philadelphia*. Gar is an obedient son to his father. However, they do not share any intimate communication; instead both are distanced and formal to each other. Even Master Boyle has more chats with Gar than S.B. does with him. They are so formal to each other that Private is afraid that they will "embarrass one another" (Friel *Philadelphia* 49). The excessive suppression S.B. launches on his son is so great that Gar cannot decide even on the small details in the store, let alone deciding to get married on his own. He cannot freely earn his life and consequently, he and Kate break up. Gar never openly challenges his father's authority, but they do not come closer to each other either. The long and cold silence between them intensifies the possibility of the growth of such a divided self of Gar. They both suffer from a mutual struggle.

Gar, "on the one hand, is bound by traditional value which, however, unsatisfactory, still constitutes a safe, known world, and, on the other hand, he is attracted by the adventure excitement which the modern world promises" (McGrath 86-7). Gar is not content with Ireland saying, "This place would drive anybody crazy! Look around you, for God's sake! Look at Master Boyle! Look at my father! Look at the Canon! Look at the boys! Asylum cases, the whole bloody lot of them!" (Friel *Philadelphia* 79), and so bored of Ballybeg, he continues:

> Listen, if someone were to come along to me tonight and say, 'Ballybeg's yours- lock, stock, and barrel,' it wouldn't make that (*Cracks his fingers*) much difference to me. If you're not happy and content in a place- then-then-then you're not happy and content in a place! It's as simple as that. I've stuck around this hole far too long. I'm telling you: it's a bloody quagmire, a backwater, a dead-end! And everybody in it goes crazy sooner or later! Everybody!" (79)

And each time Private Gar tries to silence him, instead he ceaselessly goes on, "There's nothing about Ballybeg that I don't know already. I hate the place, and every stone, and every rock, and every piece heather around it! Hate it! And the sooner that plane whips me away, the better I'll like it!" (79). Public Gar's boredom for his homeland takes him to keep complaining about it, "All this bloody yap about father and son and all this sentimental rubbish about 'homeland' and 'birthplace'- yap! Bloody yap! Impermanence- anonymity- that's what I'm looking for; a vast restless place that doesn't give a damn about the past. To hell with Ballybeg, that's what I say!" (79). Such words full of hatred and arrogance are echoes of Gar's, that is, Ireland's past which strangles him. He "doesn't give a damn about the past" (79) as he is not content with his past which is full of colonial sufferings. The hate Gar feels is not only to Ireland but also their impotent situation which deprives them of even hoping or dreaming. The problems they have undergone are not over, and now it is too late for a full social recovery from the colonial disease. Gar is not and will not be happy in Ballybeg, as his father is not happy now. S.B. can be taken as an early version of Gar who traces us to the kind of life that awaits Gar. I assume it should be noted that S.B. is the victim of the past of Ireland. He is the embodiment of the colonized nation and so left impotent in the end. He cannot communicate with his son and cannot even try to persuade him not to leave Ireland. But perhaps S.B. too is aware of the fact that Ireland will not bring anything good for their lives. Friel with the help of two Gars, shows that "torn between society and self, the character still suffers from an inner split and an either-or choice" (He 100). Friel portrays the torn mind between the past and future. Gar has to leave all his past behind and move forward in order to make a new start. However, for achieving it, he has to give up his

own self, which is his identity. Pilkington states that "The tragic irony of the play [...] is that the changes necessary for personal fulfilment (in this case, emigration) entail a fundamental loss of plenitude. Identity can be realized only through its loss. This point is further illustrated by the play's portrayal of rural Ireland" (*Theatre and the State* 62). For a hopeful future, Gar has to make a complete submission to this new opportunity in America.

As Seamus Deane points out, *Philadelphia* "was a virtuoso performance of the kind of Irish eloquence which had some to be expected from Irish playwrights" (qtd. in McGrath 71). Ireland is not a place of hopes but rather the land of grief and sufferings for ages. Friel is very much conscious of the on-going colonial problems. The land is not a free place, and expectedly, nor are the inhabitants of it. Pine asserts that *Philadelphia* "explains the sense of loss which has fractured a people's history and the hope of reparation or restoration which gives them a sense of their future. Friel has taken this tension and this dichotomy and made them his personal style" (17). Each character Friel creates has the inner conflict with the public world. Gar is not a success, neither are his friends in Ireland. Just like the fishing memory of his childhood which is not remembered by his father in the way Gar does, Ireland's history does not bring them together either.

Having lost his mother when he was three days old, Gar was brought up by his father. Perhaps lacking a mother has worsened the ill communication of them. Gar's uncommunicative father, happens to, directly or indirectly, let him escape such a boring life similar to that of him. Friel creates a Gar who has been grown into an indecisive and obedient man. Public Gar cannot even utter his complaints openly to others, and instead Private Gar does this but he is not seen or heard by anybody but

Public Gar. It is only by the remarks of Private Gar that we are informed about his real situation; his thoughts and feelings especially in the presence of his father. Addressing S.B., Private Gar says, "I'm twenty-five, and you treat me as if I were five- I can't order even a dozen loaves without getting your permission. [...] You pay me less than you pay Madge" (Friel *Philadelphia* 49). Gar does not have a permanent job of himself; he earns less than their housekeeper. Commenting on the situation Gar is in, Lojek writes:

> Gar is eager to escape the limitations of life in Ireland: the taciturn father who cannot show affection, the girl who married another, the friends caught in a state of perpetual adolescence, the job with little present and no future. The United States represents the proverbial land of opportunity for Gar, but in order to pursue that opportunity he will have to leave the father and the country he – however they madden him – loves deeply. ("Brian Friel's Sense of Place" 178)

This is actually where Gar's in-between self emerges. He indeed neither wants to leave his home nor wants to stay there for his entire life. Gar is not a self-determinant person to make his own decisions, and he does not lead a life of his own in any way. He cannot even ask for Kate's hand from her parents no matter how insistently she tries to persuade him to say "that you want their permission to marry me next week" (Friel *Philadelphia* 41). Private Gar too encouragingly tries to urge him to do it, saying, "Mr Doogan – Senator Doogan – I want to ask your permission . . . O my God . . ." (42). However, unfortunately, Gar lacks the nerve to speak to Kate's father, and so loses her to an older man, Francis King. Instead of objecting to Senator Doogan's remarks on marrying Kate to Francis, Gar remains silent and does not fight for his love. It is obvious that Gar is over dependent on his father in many cases in

the play. Kate warns him that "£3 15s" is not enough to marry, and foreshadowingly saying to him, "we could never live on that" (40).

Gar's emigration to the States is of the same importance, most probably of more, as his marriage. He does not have a close relationship with anyone to share his anxieties and doubts. Only Madge talks to Gar with some intimate words. Critics mostly accept Madge as a substitute for Gar's mother; for instance, she secretly puts some money into Gar's pocket like a mother, warns him to dry his clothes in fresh air and discusses Gar about his father's relation with him. Thus, she is indeed more than a housekeeper both for S.B. and Gar. Referring to S.B. and Gar's silence, Madge ironically says, "The chatting in this place would deafen a body. Won't the house be quiet soon enough- long enough? [...] A body couldn't get a word in edgeways with you two!" (50). She also consolidates Gar for his father, saying, "Just because he doesn't say much doesn't mean that he doesn't have feelings like the rest of us. [...] He said nothing either when your mother died. It must have been near daybreak when he got to sleep last night. I could hear his bed creaking" (33). Like a mother, she does not want Gar to leave, and meaning S.B. she says, "He's losing a treasure, indeed!" (30). But her efforts are all futile now that Gar is bound for the plane early in the morning. Madge is aware of the cold relation between Gar and his father and quite often acts as a mediator between the two. Private Gar openly addresses S.B.:

> That's what we were waiting for; complete informality; total relaxation between intimates. Now we can carry on. Screwballs. (*Pause*) I'm addressing you, Screwballs. [...] Screwballs, we've eaten together like this for the past twenty-odd years, and never once in all that time have made as much as one unpredictable remark. Now, even though you refuse to acknowledge the fact, Screwballs, I'm leaving you forever. I'm going to Philadelphia, to work in an hotel. [...] I want you to make one unpredictable remark, and even though I'll still be on that plane tomorrow morning, I'll have doubts: maybe I

> should have stuck it out; maybe the old codger did have feelings; maybe I have maligned the old bastard. So now, Screwballs, say . . . (*Thinks*) . . . 'Once upon a time a rainbow ended in our garden' . . . say, 'I like to walk across the White Strand when there's a misty rain falling' . . . say, 'Gar, son-' say, Gar, you bugger you, why don't you stick it out here with me for it's not such a bad aul bugger of a place.' Go on. Say it! Say it! Say it! (48-9)

However, S.B. does not say anything in response as he does not hear these words. And Private Gar shouts at S.B, "to hell with all strong silent men!" (89). We see that Private is openly expressing himself to his father, and Friel effectively only allows the audience to hear over these complaints. As a descendant of a colonized nation, Gar now does not know what to do. I believe that he neither feels belonging to the traditional Irish nation nor to the modernization of the time. Lojek accepts that "the play catches Gar at the moment of absolute and irreversible transition from one life to another, and he is intelligent enough to sense what that transition will mean" ("Brian Friel's Sense of Place" 178). He is caught in between two sides: one is his homeland which has not promised any hopes for his future and the other is a land with which he is not familiar in any way. Lojek emphasises the importance of the setting as Friel creates a division of two spaces: the kitchen and the bedroom, and Friel uses the kitchen serving as the public space and Gar's bedroom for the private space of him (178). Kitchen is the place where Gar is in company of the others, whereas, bedroom is the place where he is seen individually and privately. Just like the split character device, division on the stage strengthens Gar's divided self. Lojek confirms that "quiet, polite, ordinary Gar Public is balanced by his alter ego, the sardonic, flip, irreverent Gar Private, who first reveals himself in the privacy of the bedroom but later wanders at will, since only Gar Public is able to see him" (178).

Gar's life is chained by his deep Irish roots of colonization. His ancestral background bears the colonial reality, and his impotence in his life carries basic relations with this past. S.B. is not a communicative father, but this is not because he does not love Gar, just like Madge points out, but his competence and strength have all been taken away from him as a descendant of a colonized nation. Like his ancestors, S.B. does not have any power or capacity to live as he wishes. And as a successor of him, Gar is worse than him in leading the life he wishes for. S.B. is always reluctant to talk. Gar is left with no option but to emigrate because Donegal and Ireland are "unable to provide any viable alternative to multinational capitalism. And yet emigration – as this play keeps plangently reminding us" (Pilkington "The Abbey Theatre and the Irish State" 240-1). Gar predicts to survive in a foreign land, among foreigners. But it is true that he cannot survive among his own people at home; and he has to leave everything behind to sail away from all the gloomy calamities the Irish have suffered from so far. The tragic reality of Gar and S.B.'s situation is overtly presented that just like their citizens; they are the victims under the spell of a colonial background. Accordingly McGrath declares:

> The irony is that the connection fails in part because Gar is much like his father- an emotional cripple incapable of intimacy. This is typically Irish disability born perhaps of generations of colonial servitude in which fathers, deprived of self-respect and self-confidence, were particularly inept or inhibited in providing a role model for their sons and all the intimacy that would entail. Even some Irish-American father-son relationships have inherited this disability. (70)

Gar is not a self-confident son which must be because S.B. has not been able to set an ideal example for him. The power struggle between the colonial forces and the indigenous people can explain the situation of Gar and his father. Gar, now that, does

not realize his wishes, aspirations, he has to move away to a much more promising place no matter how unfamiliar it is. Home is not a protecting or saving place for Gar. He feels stuck with everything around him. Therefore, a totally foreign land is not so horrifying for Gar. "In Public Gar's rapid-fire exchanges with his alter ego, Friel cleverly draws his portrait of America as the land of possibilities, laden with outlandish opportunities for success" (Szasz 61). However, his move to America, which promises to change Gar's life completely, will not. Lojek underlines that, "Madge, wise in the ways of the O'Donnells, believes Gar will end up just like his father (as Kate's marriage repeats the pattern of Gar's mother's marriage)" ("Brian Friel's Sense of Place" 179). Friel's "reliance on fantasy, memory and flashback" (Szasz 56) is significant in the play. Gar dreams of having sexual intercourse, taking various high positions in the States, and becoming rich in future. The fishing memory of Gar and S.B.'s detailed description of his school-age in a sailor suit are again very practical in making a journey into Gar's mind as a split character. Friel also employs flashbacks in a quite creative way: as soon as Gar remembers memories, they are acted out on the stage: his inability to ask Mr. Doogan permission to marry his daughter Kate, and the visit of his Irish-American relatives, Aunt Lizzy and Uncle Con, who offer him a new home and job in America are all staged while Gar's mind visualizes these scenes. Providing the audience with such a masterfully crafted technique, Friel again displays his artistically experimental creativity.

Gar's former schoolmaster Boyle, who is a man "*around sixty, white-haired, handsome, defiant* [and] *shabbily dressed*" (Friel *Philadelphia* 51), is more communicative than S.B., and he has more profound words to say about America than Gar. He advises Gar to "Be one hundred per cent American" (53). And he

supports Gar saying “You’re doing the right thing, of course. You’ll never regret it. I gather it’s a vast restless place that doesn’t give a curse about the past; and that’s the way things should be. Impermanence and anonymity- it offers great attractions” (52). As another Irish character, Master Boyle does not lead a life he has dreamed of either. And encouragingly tells Gar, “You’ll do all right. You’re young and strong and of average intelligence. [...] I would suggest that you strike out on your own as soon as you find your feet out there. Don’t keep looking back over your shoulder” (52-3). Just like Master Boyle, none of the Irish characters achieve happiness nor success in the play: Kate is getting married to a man just because of financial reasons, Gar’s friends are all hanging around the hotels, and streets, doing nothing but wasting their life away dreaming about having sexual affairs with girls. However, despite their excessive derives for sex, including Gar, they are still all virgins. We see that the new generation of the Irish community is impotent and leads a sterile life. They are supposed to be the powerful members of the community because of their age and gender. But they end in constant failures which capture all of their lives. Conscious of that, when Ned and Tom, who are friends of Gar, are gone, Gar says to Joe, who is another friend, that, “sure you know yourself they’ll hang about the gable of the hotel and chat and do nothing,” and then adds that “lucky bloody man. I wish I was you.” (76). I think as the offsprings of Ireland, these boys are deprived of a national welfare and for perhaps escaping from this harsh reality of theirs and their country, they survive only through the fantasies about girls. Perhaps Friel uses the images of the fantasies of these young men just to show that they cannot even have a sexual life. As we see, Friel creates a microcosm of Ireland’s future. Gar’s friends will stay in Ireland and do nothing but dream about such

fantasies, and Gar is leaving home. Ireland becomes the land of curses for its people. With the members of a generation which either waste their lives away or leave home, Ireland is doomed to fall apart. After Gar's friends leave him alone, Private talks to Public: "Just the memory of it – that's all you have now – just the memory; and even now, even so soon, it is being distilled of all its coarseness; and what's left is going to be precious, precious gold" (77). But Private does not allow him to fall into the trap of the past, and repeating Boyle's words, immediately warns Gar, "-a little something to remind you of your old teacher- don't keep looking back over your shoulder, be one hundred per cent American" (80).

Gar is not offered a plausible job or life he could live happily in Ballybeg. However, we have Aunt Lizzy and Uncle Con who represent the migrated citizens of Ireland. But it seems that America has caused a crucial change in many facilities and a cultural distance at the same time. For persuading Gar, Aunt Lizzy says, "We have this ground-floor apartment, see, and a car that's air-conditioned, and colour TV, and this big collection of all the Irish records you ever heard, and fifteen thousand bucks in Federal Bonds-" (65). All these materialistic opportunities make Gar feel excited about America. But emphasizing the lack of a common culture in America, Aunt Lizzy in the end adds "and it's all so Gawd-awful because we have no one to share it with us . . . (65). Gar has to forget his past to start a new life in America. Otherwise, with a constantly haunting past, he will always feel the loneliness and alienation he feels now at home. Friel's home community is the place they are all tied to. In this sense, Boltwood notes that "even within his home community, Friel's fictional self emerges as a contradictory and paralyzed character alternating between bold

nationalism and intimidated inadequacy, prone to the same self-doubts that undermine his identity in Donegal" (*Ireland* 32).

In *Philadelphia*, Friel "tests the confinement of Ballybeg by bringing outsiders into it" (Lojek "Brian Friel's Sense of Place" 188). Aunt Lizzy and Uncle Con's American friend Ben Burton are all in Ballybeg. Upon giving too much importance to the new life in America, Ben Burton subjectively says, "it's just another place to live, Elise: Ireland- America- what's the difference?" (Friel *Philadelphia* 64). Ireland's problems are not familiar to or known by Ben, and Aunt Lizzy approvingly says to him that, "Don't you start telling me nothing about my own country, Ben. You got your own problems to look after. Just you leave me to manage this place, okay?" (62), and these words make Ben apologize Lizzy. It is quite natural that Ben does not internalize with the reasons of emigration of the Irish. He is not an Irishman so cannot be able to grasp the conditions the Irish are in. Gar is "chained irrevocably to the earth, to the green wooded earth of Ireland" (Friel *Enemy Within* 21) even though he leaves for America. Cave realizes that "Gar has not yet left Ballybeg for America, but already his psyche is setting up the conditions for homesickness" (133). At the end of the play, the two Gars watch Madge, and Private says:

> Watch her carefully, every movement, every gesture, every little peculiarity: keep the camera whirring; for this is a film you'll run over and over again- Madge Going to Bed On My Last Night At Home . . . Madge . . . (PUBLIC *and* PRIVATE *go into bedroom*.) God, Boy, why do you have to leave? Why? Why?" (Friel *Philadelphia* 99)

With these lines, Friel prepares the audience for the final lines of Public as a stuttered reply, "I don't know. I- I- I- don't know" (99). Even from these last words of two

Gars we can see how irrevocable his divided self has turned out to be because of the both public and private conflict he is experiencing at the prospect of leaving.

CHAPTER THREE: POLITICAL EVALUATION OF BRIAN FRIEL'S PLAYS

In this third chapter, I will be studying the drama of Brian Friel within a political scope. It is true that, just like any other literary figures of Northern Ireland, Friel too has been rather involved in those political matters of his country. Perhaps such a responsibility is what has drawn him to feel the urge to write on all the political corruption and crises taking place in Northern Ireland. The playwright's instinctive drive to point at the wrongs in the society, again just for the society's welfare, constitutes the core of the theatre. In this sense, Friel makes most of his pen to draw attention to such ill conditions in Ireland like the Troubles.

A few words about the Troubles will be useful for a full understanding of the political mayhem in Ireland. We know that centuries ago, when Ireland came under the control of England, many English and Scottish settlers came to the north of Ireland. However, these settlers were Protestants, and the native Irish people were Catholics. Thus, in time the discrimination against the Catholics began in many ways as the government is Protestant: the Catholics lived in the poorest and worst places, were paid the lowest wages in worst jobs, denied their rights to vote and rule, etc. In 1960s, such unfair treatments to the Catholics gradually drove them to the brink of chaos and the social frustrations began to take place then. However, the state responded to this civil disobedience with brutal force with British army and police. This civil rights movement is called the Troubles. The bloodshed was really great.

For decades, Ireland had to suffer from this social nausea, and many Catholic people were killed in bloodshed. Many lost their lives, families; many got injured; many were sent to prison, and many more were traumatized by the violence.

Friel is automatically involved into all these political conflicts by birth. In other words, he could not restrain from writing on the political conditions Ireland was in just like the other Irish literary figures. All these political conditions of Ireland have contributed immensely to his creation of works like *The Mundy Scheme* (1969) and *The Freedom of the City* (1973).

In these plays, Friel presents the political corruption and the social riots which have brought about many sufferings of the Irish citizens. First, I am going to analyse *The Mundy Scheme* in terms of political corruption taking place in Ireland, and then *The Freedom of the City* comes as a too-real embodiment of the atrocities taken place during the Troubles.

Section 1.1: *The Mundy Scheme*

The Mundy Scheme (1969) was first "turned down by the Abbey Theatre on the grounds that it was too controversial, but it was produced at the Olympia Theatre, Dublin, in 1969" (Andrews 118) and "when Clive Barnes panned it in *The New York Times*, it folded on Broadway after four performances" (Ferris 122) at the Royal Theatre, New York in the same year.

In *The Mundy Scheme*, the Taoiseach (Prime Minister) F.X. Ryan is at home suffering from the panic attacks. Ryan lives with his mother Mrs. Ryan, who is not happy with Ryan's converted office at home and who does not like the personnel of Ryan, especially Sally, the typist and receptionist. Ryan's Minister for Finance,

Neil Boyle returns from Switzerland empty handed, the country is falling asunder and his Minister for External Affairs Michael Moloney, who has started life as a clerk, returns with the scheme to save Ireland, which is offered by an Irish-American investigator Homer Mundy. The scheme is simple: valuable urban lands of Europe and America are occupied by useless graves. So, Mr. Mundy makes an offer of $100 per acre for the lots of non-urban land in the West of Ireland to be rented for the dead bodies of the world. In his office at home, Ryan discusses this issue with his ministers. Minister for Development Dan Mahon is a blunt and untutored man in his early sixties. Minister for Commerce Charles Hogan is in his seventies and close to go senile; and no longer able of follow a discussion, and is almost always found asleep at the meetings. Ryan and all these four ministers gather and discuss the Mundy Scheme for long hours at his office. Several times their meetings are interrupted by Mrs. Ryan who is a daft and too-much-protecting mother for Ryan. After they decide on accepting the scheme, Ryan appears at a TV programme so as to introduce the scheme to the people. The programme crew are invited to Ryan's home office. The young crew are as follows: TV producer Miss Pat Toye, TV cameraman Sean O'Grady, TV lighting man Tony Hanlan, and sound man Owen. Ryan and Moloney spy to get some personal benefit from the scheme after the other ministers are gone; and Ryan's private secretary Roger Nash overhears the two talk about their dirty plot, and blackmail Ryan to get his share in the scheme. However, Ryan has Roger arrested in a conspiracy and leaves out the chances to be caught.

Mundy Scheme is an important critique in that it serves as Friel's political satire in which we are given a clear and full picture of "the corruption of southern Irish politics" (O'Toole 202). In this part, I study Friel's political critiques of the

Republic in *The Mundy Scheme*, and try to give a meticulous analysis of the play in that how the corruption and duplicity in Irish politicians and government have been portrayed by Friel, and we will try to see the intrigues and machinations of the politicians from a playwright's perspective who is also an Irishman. More importantly, we will see the failure of a nation's establishing an ideal state of itself after being colonized for centuries. In this sense, Friel satirizes the Republic saying that Ireland is "at the point of some kind of cataclysm" (qtd. in Quilligan 193).

To begin with, the setting time of *The Mundy Scheme* was a time of "rapid change in Irish economic and social structures, when the foundations of Ireland's dependence on foreign, especially American, investment were laid" (McMullan 142). Friel realizes that the idealistic views on Republic are not alive any more now that the plots and intrigues take place in the country. McMullan mentions that "The Friel Papers in the National Library of Ireland include notes in which Friel observes that 'the new Irish' are concerned primarily with the 'pursuit of material things and the treadmill of the social ladder'" (143).

Friel gives an alternative title for this satiric play: *or May We Write Your Epitaph Now, Mr. Emmet?*, which alludes to the famous speech of Robert Emmet, the leader of the 1803 rising: "When my country takes her place among the nations of the earth, then and not till then, let my epitaph be written" ("Robert Emmet"). Robert Emmet was an Irish nationalist and Republican, orator and rebel leader, who led an abortive rebellion against British rule in 1803 and was captured, tried and executed for high treason" ("Robert Emmet"). Emmet's family was a wealthy Protestant family who sympathised with Irish Catholics; thus they were concerned with the lack of fair representation in Parliament for the Catholics ("Robert Emmet").

While Emmet took the foundation of an independent nation as the ultimate goal of revolution, in the play Friel presents that indeed that is not enough for achieving a total revolution. He argues that becoming a nation-state doesn't automatically solve Irish problems, and building a new Republic is actually a more burdensome task. In the play, there are many corollaries and subsidiary questions as such:

> What happens when a small nation that has been manipulated and abused by a huge colonial power for hundreds of years wrests its freedom by blood and anguish? What happens to an emerging country after it has emerged? Does the transition from dependence to independence induce a fatigue, a mediocrity, an ennui? Or does the clean spirit of idealism that fired the people to freedom augment itself, grow bolder, more revolutionary, more generous? (Friel *Mundy* 157)

These questions are posed by an impersonal voice at the beginning of the play. With them, Friel addresses to the audience as a result of innate suspicion of the government and politicians. It is true that "by showing the current social, political, and economic crisis in the Republic and those hypocritical politicians who are driven by self-profit only, Friel demonstrates the bankruptcy of those ideals and demythologizes the myth of a new-state" (He 269-70). In this sense, He cites McGrath that *The Mundy Scheme* is a "satire on how the post-colonial Republic has realized the ideals of its 1916 martyrs" (qtd. in 270). Moreover, for Pine the questions Friel asks in the play are all "concerned with the rite of passage from provincial colonialism to sovereign state, and the psychic and cultural adjustments that take place in transition and transformation" (5). It is true that Ireland, though having established the Republic, cannot be free from imperial influences. As Friel says "In Interview with Des Hickey and Gus Smith":

> Ireland is becoming a shabby imitation of a third-rate American state. This is what *The Mundy Scheme* is about. [...] And because of this that special quality an Irish writer should have will be lost. A writer is the voice of his people and if the people are no longer individuals I cannot see that the writer will have much currency. [...] A writer cannot exist financially in Ireland unless his work is read or performed in Europe or America. An Irish writer can, of course, write serials for television or radio, but I think we would be as well off working in a solicitor's office. (49)

To refer to these problems, Friel "ridicules Irish bourgeois nationalists' eagerness to modernize the State, mocks their blind following of the trend of globalization, and warns people against an Americanized, materialistic Republic" (He 270). Also McGuinness claims that "in writing that epitaph with this play, Friel is consumed with an outright contempt for Irish government and politicians unmatched in its utter ferocity since it was first staged at Dublin's Olympia Theatre" (23).

In the satire *The Mundy Scheme*, Friel criticises a morally corrupt Irish political establishment which is ready to turn the west of Ireland into a graveyard for money. Thus, the play is ironic in that Friel was nominated "to the Irish Senate in 1987," (Andrews 119) though he focuses on the dishonest politicians in Ireland. The Taoiseach, F. X. Ryan, and his ministers prove to be full of intrigues and it causes disbelief in the government. As Andrews notices, "Friel protests against the lack of integrity in public life, highlighting the gap between inner reality and outer appearance" (119). F. X. Ryan publicly seems to be a powerful man, but in private, he cannot leave his "mammie" (Friel *Mundy* 316), and he even works in her house which is another clue of his excessive dependence on his mother. I believe, through such a contradiction of the character's inner and outer selves, Friel unmasks the disguise of these politicians. So in this sense, Bertha names Friel as a writer with:

> Feeling in his nerves the responsibility for the community he comes from, and worrying about the survival not only of individual but also of cultural values in the value-free modern/postmodern world, Friel continually faces the consequences of colonization, the experience that so deeply determined the formation of modern Irish history, society and identity. (154)

In this play, Friel focuses on a national crisis which requires immediate solutions. The country is going through financially bad times and the government is seeking for any kind of solution. As Andrews puts forward "the country's present condition is a demoralising disappointment in light of the dreams of 1916" (119) as the Easter Rising is crucially important for the Republicans for marking their independence. It was "an insurrection staged in Ireland during Easter Week, 1916" and "was mounted by Irish republicans with the aims of ending British rule in Ireland and establishing the Irish Republic at a time when the British Empire was heavily engaged in the First World War" ("Easter Rising"). Thus, of course after many violently bloody disputes, "in January 1919, the elected members of Sinn Féin, which was the party representing republicans, convened the First Dáil and established the Irish Republic" ("Easter Rising"). Friel very well knows the significance of the Rising for the republicans, and what he criticises is that now the republicans at rule have lost all their stimulus and impulse in conducting their ideals which have been the drives for their gaining independence. And now the corruption in governing of the Republic brings all those ideals of 1916 for the Republic into disrepute.

As the play reads, we see that "Friel's satire does not stop at the commercialization of Ireland but extends to Irish politicians for they decide Ireland's present and future" (He 271). Friel creates politicians with treachery for their country. Ryan accepts the Mundy scheme which means "to sell the country" (He

271). He makes a public speech on TV and thus tries to have the public consent for the scheme. However, the scheme is full of machinations, and Friel shows the conspiracies the Irish politicians set for the country. In this sense, Andrews states that "what quickly becomes clear is that the new, post-colonial order is not any more satisfactory" (119). In this way, the "myth of an independent, free, self-reliant nation-state goes bankrupt in Friel's play" (He 273) *The Mundy Scheme*.

Having failed to either receive loan extensions from international creditors or create internal revenue through domestic programs, Ryan and his ministers decide to adopt the Mundy Scheme. Such a weird offer reminds us of Jonathan Swift's "A Modest Proposal," and the play has a kind of "spirit of Swift touches" (McGuinness 23) of which focus is the social criticism too. And in this regard, "Friel's satiric whip is directed against those who would do anything for power and money, even sell their inheritance" (Andrews 120). Thus, we are clued that the play is "concerned not with the struggle against power, but with the struggle for power" (Ferris 121). Ryan and the other ministers, even the private secretary of Ryan are all after a profit in this scheme.

Also the plan is not free from the Irish background: As the Minister of Finance, Neil Boyle communicates:

> We are addicted to death as it is. A lot of our literature, our music, our legends, the whole emphasis of our religion- all revolve around death and the dead. And, I warn you, if you adopt this plan, you will push us further into this morass. And I promise you, F. X., I solemnly promise you, you will end up with a nation of chronic necrophiliacs. (Friel *Mundy* 220)

However, the ministers adopt the plan as they believe it will be the only solution to Ireland's ills. Friel also brilliantly reminds the audience of the historical background of the Irish in the play: Ireland is the country which:

> For seven hundred years [...] was occupied and oppressed by the English who treated the natives as serfs and who even tried to supplant the Catholic religion [...] Many times the people rose up against their overlords but each time they were beaten down and reduced to even greater serfdom. Eventually, however, in the year 1916, led by a handful of idealists they rose again and this time they overthrew the English. (158)

Of course, Moloney and Ryan succeed in obtaining support for the preposterous plan by emphasising what each member of the Cabinet stands to gain personally from its implementation. Ryan, trying to cover up the inadaptability of the scheme, says,

> No country can live in isolation. We are all interdependent. Commerce, trade, and business have made us all brothers. Let me put it to you this way: we do not refuse industrial machinery because it is made in Germany; nor do we turn away tourists from England and France and America just because they are English and French and American. (272)

Apart from its financially profitable hopes, the Mundy scheme, as Ryan claims in a television programme, is regarded as "an opportunity for the Church to show that Irish Christianity once more leads the world in ecumenism and charity" (273). And further, his total support for the scheme urges him to say, "opportunity for our gray past and celebrate the new dawn with happy panegyric and joyful dirge and wholesome, hearty plays. Opportunity for all of us to create the Ireland the idealists of 1916 gave their lives for. And God has given us strength and courage, and counsel. May he give us victory" (273). As we clearly see, "Ryan's public language, formal and archaic, with its religious colouring and rational tone, masks voracious

greed and the basest treachery" (Andrews 120). Understanding that the government will adopt the plan, Ryan rushes to buy lands to make high profits during reselling them to higher prices for the graves. Ryan's duplicity can also be observed in other cases: when his private secretary, Roger Nash threatens those plans of him, he simply has him arrested for drug dealing. Moreover, rather than sharing his profits from the land profits with his old friend and inciter of the scheme Moloney, he ends up with removing him off the plan, and scandalises that he has an affair with the Albanian Ambassador's wife.

Though Friel now dismisses the play *The Mundy Scheme* as "bad just because it wasn't half good enough" (qtd. in Boland 57), the play succeeds presenting the Irish Republican problems in a dramatic sphere. In this regard, O'Brien puts forward, "*The Mundy Scheme* initiates the confrontation of public issues and historical and cultural themes in Friel's work" (175). As an embodiment of the political characters, Friel considers Ryan and his ministers as the deceitful embodiments of the politicians of the Irish Republic. The machinations they have been weaving are too overt to be missed or overlooked. Thus, the play "as at best ridiculous and at worst viciously corrupt" (O'Toole 208) fundamentally shows the disappointment of the ideals of the Irish heroic patriots like Emmet. For this play, McGrath names "the character of politicians, the perennial economic problems of the West of Ireland, and, perhaps more importantly, the myths deployed by government officials to mask the crass commercialism and corruption of their enterprises" (75) as the satirical targets of Friel. We should note that Friel tries to show the "collapse of the public world through corruption" (Pine 189).

For the treachery of Ryan, Chu He explains that "such double-dealing is carried further into Ryan's personal life. His public abuse of his mother and secret dependence on her echo his two-faced performance towards America, which seems to have replaced Britain and become Ireland's new mother country" (271-2). In this regard, Ryan's mother's taking all the control of her son into her hands is quite obvious even in that she keeps the medicine of Ryan and he can only get it only in her power. In this light, Ryan's medicine stands for the Mundy Scheme which seems to be the cure for Irish problems (He 272). Ryan suffers from labyrinthitis, which is the "sudden bouts of dizziness and nausea" (Friel *Mundy* 160), and which is an "inner-ear trouble- i.e. because he lacks balance" (Ferris 121). So both practically and symbolically, Ryan is not balanced to stand on neither as the head of the country nor as a grownup man. It is also important to pen that in *The Mundy Scheme*, Friel's mother image for Ryan is unique in his oeuvre. Chu He, at this point, draws a parallelism between Ryan's attitude towards his mother and America, and she also puts forward that:

> Ryan's mother can be regarded as a manipulative, self-serving version of Kathleen Ni Houlihan, who, instead of calling her son to sacrifice himself for his country, protects him as her property and takes pride in his self-dealings. In this way, Friel shows that the republic has lost not only its agency but also its ideals, for as an effeminate, controlled child, Ryan evokes the feminized image of a colonized Ireland subjugated to western imperialism, and as a sheltered, selfish child, Ryan also represents a corrupted Ireland where the ideal of self-sacrifice has long been abandoned. (272)

The double-facedness of Ryan is also seen in regard to his mother to whom he is too dependent in private, but in public he always humiliates and shouts at her. It does not take us long to learn that "*he is secretly devoted to his mother*" (Friel

Mundy 162). She is not happy with Ryan's converted-office at home and indeed very rude to his colleagues. She is described as ''*very old, very tiny, and lean as a whippet*" (181), and Friel goes on with the details of the mother-son relationship in these words: "*She was always a virago and now she is doting as well. Her son and herself have a peculiar relationship. When other people are present, he addresses her as crudely and insultingly as his vocabulary allows. She ignores this and treats him like a child. When they are alone together, his dependence on her is obvious and total*" (181). Friel creates a feminine Ryan who even masks his real relationship with his mother. Such dishonesty should also be noted for creating a treacherous politician. Boltwood diagnoses that her primary function is to "encourage a suspicion that Ryan is underdeveloped both sexually and psychologically" (*Ireland* 92). Being a bachelor at the age of fifty (Friel *Mundy* 162), he is too passive in front of his mother. Many interpretations can be made for the significance of Mrs Ryan. For instance, "Ryan's dependence upon his mother betrays his constituent underdevelopment" (Boltwood 93). Despite his age, he does not show any indications of a grownup man when he is alone with his mother. Boltwood states that "Ryan's mother embodies the Phallic Mother, symbolizing not attainable desire, but the "demand" that cannot be satisfied: that Other to be situated some way short of any needs which it might gratify" (qtd. in *Ireland* 93). She has a dominant presence in Ryan's life, and she even hides his medication so she can find it and increase his dependence on her and when he has a crisis, she rushes to give it. Such an odd situation could be too brutal for the audience but it is seen that Ryan is pacified by his mother's dominancy. This kind of treatment of Ryan has caused Ryan's poorly-developed character. She even at night-time "makes marmalade to feed her boy as if

she could smear it on him and stick even more tightly to him" (McGuinness 24). McGuinness claims that "while Ryan can display the hardness of a leader, he is essentially a Napoleon in nappies, ultimately reduced to the whims of his mother's will" (24). Thus, such a weird situation prepares us for the failure of Ryan's governing the state.

In the play, each politician is given with a deliberate or failing attitude towards the public welfare: Ryan and Moloney are directly scheming against the country's future; Dan Mahon, the Minister of Development, who is in his early sixties, though at first objects to the scheme, saying, "I think it's the maddest, most ridiculous, most outrageous scheme I've ever heard. And when word gets out that we actually sat up half the bloody night discussing it, we'll be the laughing stock of the world- that's what we'll be" (Friel *Mundy* 214), he later resents to the adoption of the plan in the end. He even further questions, "But if most of the west is covered with headstones, F. X., surely to God this will destroy our tourist industry there" (234). Friel tells of him that "*his mind is blunt, tenacious, and untutored*. [...] *He is a thick*" (209). Another minister, Boyle, who is presumably more knowledgeable than the rest and who even, wants to be the Minister of Culture is aware of the weird condition of the state. However, he cannot resist and finally accepts the scheme. Charles Hogan, the Minister of Commerce is "*in his seventies and almost on the brink of senility. He is no longer capable of following a discussion of any intricacy but has occasional reflexive illuminations when certain words like "God" or "womenfolk" or "vote" crop up"* (209). He is indifferent to what has been going on, and only deals with the chat about women and drinks heavily. We hardly find him awake and actively joining the discussion of the scheme. As we see, none of the politicians cares about

Ireland's critical situation in the real sense they should. They drink and have daily chats while discussing about the critical issue. And in the end, deciding on conducting the scheme, without sparing for the national inheritance of Ireland, Friel's suspicion of these characters is ensured. In this sense, both for the play and Friel, Boltwood argues that: "the play presents a particularly focused critique of contemporary politicized life in Ireland. For those who view Friel's nationalism as purely cultural, this dramatization of public society may seem an uncharacteristic detour from his ostensible avoidance of such topics" (*Ireland* 78). Moreover, Boltwood further claims, "As if benefiting from the greater freedom of living in the Republic, the play centers on the state for its social milieu: how it functions and its potential to devastate the lives of its citizens. Therefore, the accelerating and interconnected crises in the Republic become the overt subject of *The Mundy Scheme*" (79). And Boltwood is right in that Friel's evolving critique of the politics of the Republic is clearly drawn in *The Mundy Scheme*.

The corruption excoriated in *The Mundy Scheme* must be recognized instantly. In this regard, Boltwood cites Fanon, who argues that "'the army . . . becomes the arbiter' of power, guaranteeing a corrupt regime's survival despite 'discontent among the mass of the people'" (qtd. in *Ireland* 90). Similarly, the dockworkers and students are frightened off forcefully, thus Friel shows that people are suppressed through authoritative force. It is obvious that no kind of permanent solutions are found or conducted for any of the problems. Ryan's such pressure for the civilians is quite important for understanding his attitude toward his people. The destitution the Irish are suffering from is just handled by menace and intimidation by their own rulers. Such outcries of the people due to the social and economic

problems in the Republic do not raise any sympathy as a social problem of the country, but rather as a threat for the Taoiseach Ryan, who worries more about his personal benefits than the country's future. The measures for suppressing these citizens are too cruel and do not bear any condolence for them. Especially the harsh silencing of the students should have more significance in resonating the little secure of the government. We know that the "new national government inherits a country largely devoid of industry, because most forms of economic colonization were structured to facilitate the extraction of minerals and agricultural products rather than the construction of an industrial infrastructure" (Boltwood *Ireland* 90). Thus, the ministers believe that the people will also have various jobs with the conduction of this plan as the scheme requires many people to work in.

For sure, Irish politicians are wrongdoers in selling out their national lands. However, we need to talk about the historical past of Ireland to shed some light to the case the Irish are facing in the play. It goes without doubt that the poverty and dramatic level of unemployment of the Irish have many reasons behind, the most important of which happens to be having a colonial background. As a result of:

> The mixture of inexperience and insecurity of the government, the new government relies upon and reinforces the inefficient agricultural structures constructed by the colonizer rather than embarking on a program of even moderate reform or industrialization; thus, the former colony continues either to export its raw materials or "go on being Europe's small farmers." (Boltwood *Ireland* 90)

In this sense, being the successors of such a colonized nation, the government ministers are positioned around such a peculiar and indeed tragic formulation. Boltwood quotes Foster, who emphasises that Irish Republic has been a nation who

is dependent on the British market (90), thus it cannot be a totally independent country so easily. The politicians in the play are drawn too impotent even to find a solution for the economic and social troubles the country faces. It is also again pathetic that the scheme that these governmental figures accept as the best solution is made up not by them, but a person living far in America. I believe such an improper and unprofessional style of dealing with the national problems is what Friel criticises in the play, and what catches the audience's attention at once. All these outcomes show that Irish government fails in ruling the country and treating the people in the way they are expected to.

The Mundy Scheme excellently "magnifies and specifies the political cynicism manifest" (97). Friel's portrayal of this appalling political condition of Ireland can be seen as the "nasty taste in the public mouth" (qtd. in 99) regarding the lack of discernment for the problems of the society. The play's portrayal of detention should also be seen as a warning for the "creeping authoritarianism of the Irish Republic" (99). The government keeps out the strikes that ravage the country and does not have the stimulus to come up with a permanent solution for the poverty-stricken country.

Mostly, it is accepted that *The Mundy Scheme* is not embellished with many dramatic experimental techniques. Instead, it is rather accepted as a facile satire full of Friel's pannings. The characters are not developed, we have not grey characters, instead an array of pure black and white characters; that is, the audience enjoys the "limitations and predictability of one-dimensional character types" (McGuinness 23). McGuinness pursues that "that sense of detachment increases in *The Mundy Scheme* because one factor is undeniable: Friel hates everyone in the

play. [...] It is not a smell but a stench of corruption that permeates each and every corner of this world" (23-4). Corruption is indeed the subject of this extreme theatre. The actual Mundy scheme itself which is, for McGuinness, the "brainchild of Irish-American multimillionaire Homer Mundy, centres on death, the body's corruption and decay, the necessity to hide it, to bury it" (24).

As we have mentioned before, Friel does not leave anyone out in this mock. Approvingly, McGuinness puts it, "this nauseous mockery, played three years after the 1966 commemorations, is explosive stuff. Friel spares neither fatherland nor faith. He is hellbent on giving maximum offense" (24). I agree that Friel refuses to cast a positive stance for the characters. The duplicity, blackmailing and all the intrigues in the government are enough to set a treacherous roguery of these politicians, and it will not raise disputes to claim that "their greed is their definition. They worship money and more money" (24). The play, peopled by such dishonest politicians is significant for creating the atmosphere of satire. Therefore, even Nash is cast with greed wishes to cash in on the scheme. After Ryan on the phone tells his nephew, Declan to buy large lands, the telephone is left on. And thus Nash overhears Ryan and Moloney's crafty deal on it. Nash thinks he can blackmail Ryan over this. But Nash is outdone by Ryan at this instance, as his "*mind is quick and enormously cunning*" (Friel *Mundy* 162). In addition, Ryan is a hard rival for Nash to beat over as Friel explains of him that, "*with no effort at all he can assume anger, frustration, delight, simplicity, honesty, fury, and a dozen other faces: and once he has put on a particular face, his emotions invariably and obligingly support it so that he is never conscious of putting on a performance*" (162). Thus, immediately Ryan sets him up as a drug dealer in the shady confines of the Imperial Hotel (265). There, at the

Taoiseach's request, the Commissioner McLaughlin will pick him up and "chastise him for being a bold boy" (282). Friel's portrayal of the double-dealing politicians is thus double-emphasized with such a craftiness of Ryan. I should state that Friel's intentions are clear in the play for the audience.

Section 1.2: *The Freedom of the City*

The Freedom of the City (1973) was first produced at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, on 20 February 1973. A week later its English production was given at the Royal Court Theatre, London. The play is "clearly based on the events of the Bloody Sunday, 1972, when British troops killed 13 unarmed civil rights marchers in Derry, and a fourteenth died later in hospital" (Lojek "Troubling Perspectives: Northern Ireland, the 'Troubles' and Drama" 330).

The Freedom of the City is based on events that occurred during Roman Catholic civil rights protests in Londonderry ("Derry"), Northern Ireland, in the late 1960s and early 1970s. As the curtain rises, the corpses of the three main characters, Lily (Elizabeth Doherty), Skinner (Adrian Casimir Fitzgerald), and Michael (Joseph Hegarty), are lying on a darkened street. The corpses are visited first by a photographer and then by a priest, who carries out the last rites. The Irish balladeer and friends are lamenting for the three citizens. Lights illuminate an English judge taking testimony from an Irish constable as he seeks for the truth for the trio. During the meeting the three protesters happen to enter the Guildhall to escape from the rubber bullets and CS gas. Through the help of the flashbacks, we watch the three enter the Guildhall till they are shot to death. Skinner, who is the cynical one of the three, finds out that they are in the Guildhall. The poor three are stunned at the

richness and luxury of the place and begin to compare their poverty to all that luxury. Though neither of them intends to hurt anyone, they are taken as the potential threats for the government and the people; just like in the real case taken place in 1972 in the Bloody Sunday. The American sociologist Dr. Dodds is releasing a research on the culture of poverty and the dead bodies of the three protesters seem to be helpful for his study, as all the three are poverty-stricken people. Professor Cuppley, the pathologist is giving a testimony on whether the three have had guns and fired before they have died. Dr Winbourne is the forensic expert, who is trying to figure out whether it has been the army officers or the three protesters who fired first. All these and Brigadier Johnson-Hansbury are testified to find out the truth of the trio. Radio Telefís Éireann commentator Liam O'Kelly and Army Press Officer report the contradictory details of the case to the country. Finally, after such a long and dubious investigation, the judge finds the three marchers guilty in the end, which means exoneration of the army.

The Freedom of the City is a very significant play as it presents the tyranny exercised over civilians during the Bloody Sunday at Troubles in the Northern Ireland. Friel provides us a great picture from these harsh events with this play. In this part, I analyse the harsh realities of the Bloody Sunday which have contributed a lot to the creation of *The Freedom of the City* and present how Friel, as an Irishman has worked over this critical issue in a dramatic sphere. Through the analysis, the background of the period the play is set in, the social and political perspectives are crucially highlighted and Northern Ireland's difficult conditions are extensively studied. Thus, we will see how Friel has created a political work without propagating against the established authority or idealizing the Irish deeds.

The Troubles were responded by many plays from Northern Ireland, as they were deeply concerned about the disturbing riots in the society and sought a way to speak out this uneasiness. In this regard, Deane, one of Friel's writer friends, the poet and professor of English, addressed the problem of being a dramatist of the Troubles in the following terms: "Northern Ireland has never been either State or nation, nor has it ever had any consciousness of itself that has not been fundamentally beleaguered by the contrary consciousness that each of the different sects there know the other to possess" (qtd. in Pine 108). Of course, it has been a difficult period for Friel too, as he puts in "In Interview with Eavan Boland (1973)" that "as a person, naturally enough, he is as bewildered as anyone by the continuing horror of the situation in the city where he was born and in which he grew up" (59).

In Ireland, "1968 marked the beginning of the Troubles, which generated a significant number of strikingly powerful plays like Friel's *The Freedom of the City* being one of the most notable examples" (Pattie 387). We know that Friel is Catholic with roots in Derry and County Donegal (just across the border in the Republic), and this enables him to know a lot about the turmoil at that period. He first "emerged as a political playwright in the 1970s and has written almost exclusively about and for Ireland" (Wagner 185). Moreover, for the personal experiences of the playwright, Brown communicates that "grim events across the Donegal border with County Derry and Northern Ireland gave him ample opportunity to dramatize a society in flux by focusing on the inhabitants of a particular district, the Bogside in Derry city, as its inhabitants were caught up in the waves of a violent political crisis" (240). As an Irishman, Friel has always been in the middle of such political turmoil and riots, which have almost been identified with Ireland. Moreover, Friel as a Catholic has

experienced much suppression in his life, as the treatment of the minority Catholic population of Northern Ireland is rather important for the high tension of the country. In this sense, Friel himself later notes that his situation as a member of the Northern Irish minority influences everything he writes; and in a 1982 BBC Northern Ireland Radio interview, he discussed the way in which the Northern situation influences the lives of the Catholic minority there and how it influences his own work:

> Well, of course, the Northern situation is basic to everything, I think, that one does here. And if you are, as I was, a member of what is known as the Northern minority, I think you're conditioned, almost from birth. Of course, it's bound to filter into and pigment everything you write. Now I've tackled it only once, directly, in a play called *The Freedom of the City*, a play that I'm not particularly happy with now. But I still think that it's true of all the northern writers, if it's not handled directly, it certainly, informs everything they write, and it informs all their attitudes. (qtd. in Russell 61)

Certainly, one event the Northerners suffered during the Troubles was the Bloody Sunday, in which we have the shooting dead of thirteen unarmed civilians by British paratroopers on 30 January 1972. I think it will be useful to give some details of the incident for a full understanding of the situation: "It took place when British soldiers attempted to disperse an illegal civil rights demonstration which had been held to protest against the Stormont government's introduction of internment in August 1971. Although the Unionist government had banned the demonstration, 20,000 people were nonetheless in attendance" (Pilkington *Theatre and the State* 195). Of course many towns and cities across the state popularly reacted to these killings on Bloody Sunday. Later on, the nationalist outrage was "directed at the official British government tribunal of inquiry conducted by Lord Widgery and then at Widgery's published conclusions" (195). However, these conclusive findings, surprisingly

enough, exculpated the "British Army by claiming that several of the dead civilians may have been carrying weapons, and by arguing that ultimate responsibility for the killings lay not with the soldiers, but with the organizers of the illegal protest march" (qtd. in 195). And it is very telling that, Pilkington suggests, the Widgery's findings contradicted by a group of international lawyers associated to the United Nations marks that the "widespread nationalist view that the Widgery tribunal of inquiry was an elaborate cover-up" (195).

As we read the play, we see that Friel has taken much from the Widgery Report and the horrific plot of the Bloody Sunday. In this regard, commenting on the role of the writer in the face of the particular condition of Ireland and civil rights disturbances, Friel says, "I know of no Irish writer who is not passionately engaged in our current problems. But he must maintain a perspective as a writer, and- equally important- he will write about the situation in terms that not relate even remotely to the squalor of here and now" (qtd. in McGrath 97-8). He is well aware of what has been politically taking place in Ireland and what all these mean for the dramatists and theatre. Emphasising the importance of the theatre for the society, Friel states that he "recognized then that the theatre was an important social element that not only reflected but shaped the society it served; that dramatists were revolutionary in the broadest sense of that world" (qtd. in 98). These statements are significant as Friel is taking stage for the deliberately distorted conclusions of the official institutions. For the political plays, Friel notes:

> There are continuing obsessions, like the political thing is a continuing obsession, and I've written two or three demonstrably political plays. And I keep saying to myself I'm never going to write another political play because it's too transient and because I'm confused about it myself, but I

> know damn well and I'm sure I'll have another shot at it again sometime. (qtd. in 99)

In addition to these statements, in "Brian Friel: Derry's Playwright", an interview he had with Boland, Friel explains that he "had been working for eighteen months on a play called *John Butt's Bothy*, which was set in the eighteenth century, that eventually became *The Freedom of the City*" (113), and he adds, "though the plot and place have disappeared, Friel still regards his new play, like its embryo, as being a study of poverty" (113), and he also confesses that the original play "never could find its foundations" (113) until the Bloody Sunday in Derry.

The Freedom of the City, for Brown, is "Friel's most damning indictment of contemporary society" (240). I think Brown is right as the play casts three innocent marchers take refuge from CS gas and rubber bullets in the Mayor's parlour when the soldiers broke up a civil rights march but confronted by violent political repression and denied any social significance, and even exercised control over their rights to live. Brown further explains that the play's "stark theme does in fact alert us to a dominant feature of his [Friel's] work as a whole– that is the inability of his characters to express themselves as social beings in any context other than the family or the local community" (240). To exemplify that, in *The Freedom of the City*, we see indeed the local, distinctive identities of three Derry citizens, who as such might be expected to "enjoy the rights of civic space, denied any mode of self-expression in a political system which finally takes their lives, reputation and very individuality" (Brown 240). They are even denied the right to speak out for themselves, and at the end of the play, the Judge approvingly announces, "I must accept the evidence of eye-witnesses and various technical witnesses that the three deceased were armed

when they emerged from the Guildhall, and that two of them at least– Hegarty and the woman Doherty– used their arms" (Friel *Freedom* 168). It is bitter that they are not given any other chance other than being shot. They are ordered to surrender and they do obey this call, however, they are not treated as they have been supposed to be. The Judge tells the Brigadier that "the suggestion is that no attempt was made to arrest these people as they emerged, but they were dealt with 'punitively', as it has been phrased, 'to teach the ghettos a lesson'" (134), and the Brigadier's response is significant for showing the inaccurate testimonies, "My lord, they emerged firing from the Guildhall. There was no possibility of whatsoever affecting an arrest operation. And at that point we understood they were the advance group of a much larger force" (134). As we see even a chance of arrest is not the case for the trio, and they are accused of being a part of a "larger force." For all these misdoings of the official institutions, society's anger and grief are outspoken in the play. In this regard, the Judge also consistently has assumed that the three victims were armed terrorists who planned to occupy the Guildhall by force (148-9). Whether the military forces or the trio are the ones who fired first becomes a conflicting dispute for the Judge. However, the fact is that the three demonstrators bear no arms, which tells us that the Judge has been conducting a wrong inquiry. The Priest, the photographic journalists have not seen any weapons in the hands of the three victims. In contrast, the army officers and the police claim that they have been fired first by the trio, and again quite ironically, none of the security officers has been shot or injured. And what the Judge has to consult with is the forensic expert Dr Winbourne in the end, who explains the presence of the gunpowder particles on the skin and clothing may indicate that the person has fired a gun. However, the expert testifies that this is not

enough as the particles could be passed on by the soldiers who have shot them as they carry the bodies. Despite such conflicting testimonies and the lack of evidence, the judge exonerates the army though they are the ones all to blame.

Although the play is set in 1970, Friel has "drawn much from the characteristics of the period from 1968 through 1972, a period that included civil rights demonstrations, the introduction of British troops, the internment controversy, and the introduction of tanks and heavy weapons, as well as Bloody Sunday" (McGrath 100). Set in 1970 in Derry City, play "exists only superficially as a satire of the British government's official exoneration of the soldiers who shot 13 civilians dead," (Pilkington "Reading History in the Plays of Brian Friel" 500) seven of whom were less than seventeen years old in Derry. Its more profound concern is what it regards as the "tragic gap between the plenitude of individual experience and what is seen as the distorting effects of representing that experience in language" (500). The Troubles the Irish suffered were extremely suppressive and the events caused bloodshed and tyranny which were deeply felt all across the country. For Friel, it must have been highly emotive to write on the Bloody Sunday as he was present in the riot during the Bloody Sunday and ten years after the event, Friel confesses:

> It was really a shattering experience that the British Army, this disciplined instrument, would go in as they did that time and shoot thirteen people. To be there on that occasion and- I didn't actually see people get shot- but I mean, to have to throw yourself on the ground because people are firing at you is a very terrifying experience. Then the whole cover-up afterwards was shattering too. We still have some kind of belief that the law is above reproach. We still believe that the academy is above reproach in some way, don't we? (qtd. in McGrath 99)

Although Friel carefully dates the play in 1970, before Bloody Sunday, the play is generally accepted and "referred to as 'Friel's Bloody Sunday play'" (qtd. in Lojek "Troubling Perspectives: Northern Ireland, the 'Troubles' and Drama" 330) and powered by the outrage of the Bloody Sunday. Either consciously or not, Friel reflects the political turmoil of the Bloody Sunday in his play. In 1973 "In An Interview with Eavan Boland" Friel noted: "this play raises the old problem of writing about events which are still happening . . . because we're all involved in the present situation people are going to say 'this is a very unfair play'" (58). And Lojek mentions that a decade later Friel described *The Freedom of the City* as 'a reckless play'" and a much more ill-considered play because it was written out of the kind of anger at the Bloody Sunday events in Derry ("Troubling Perspectives: Northern Ireland, the 'Troubles' and Drama 330). Moreover, in 1986, "In an Interview with Laurence Finnegan" Friel says, "I don't say I regret it but I certainly wouldn't do it now" (125). We see that Friel, naturally, was quite influenced by the conditions the society was in. The unfair killings of these Derry civilians of course raised a lot of pity in the community and many tried to seek for justice. As a man of letters in the society, Friel without any prejudices presents the actual situation of those civilians in this play.

The Freedom of the City, one of the "doom-ridden" (Andrews 184) plays by Friel, opens with the dead bodies of the three central characters; Michael Joseph Hegarty (22), Elizabeth Doherty (Lily) (43), and Adrian Casimir Fitzgerald (Skinner) (21) lying "*grotesquely across the front of the stage which is lit in cold blue*" (Friel *Freedom* 107). For the first image of the play, Boltwood states, "the bodies of Lily, Michael, and Skinner being photographed and provided last rites, moments after their

murders by the British army, and the play recreates their last hours of life in a tale whose emotive power is barely allayed by this initial revelation that announces the disruption of both chronological and naturalistic mimesis" (*Ireland* 102). The end of the play is known from the beginning: that is, the opening scene with the three dead bodies thrown on the stage, photographed, and then receiving some rites from a priest "*holding a white handkerchief above his head*" (Friel *Freedom* 107) are all conducted after their deaths. With the detail of the Priest's handkerchief, Russell mentions "one of the best known media images of that day [which] was the photograph of a priest, Father Edward Daley engaging in the same activity as he administered last rites to some of the victims" (46-7). Of the photograph, Pilkington reminds us that, Father Daley holds "a white handkerchief while attending to the wounded and dying" (*Theatre and the State* 197), which is an important detail Friel uses in the play. But of course Friel's emphasis is more on an "investigation of the manner of representation" (197) than on the narrative of the events. Through "a cinematic structure of flashbacks and cross-cutting" (Andrews 60), the play revolves around the time before and after the murders of this trio. The play shows these three street demonstrators who escape from CS gas and rubber bullets, find themselves accidentally in the Mayor's parlour and are taken for a "terrorist occupation and gunned down when they come out" (Grene 165-6). And Grene notes that the play "met a hostile press reaction in Britain where it was viewed as nationalist agit-prop" (166). But Friel is fair enough to remain objective and the play achieves to create a tribunal like the actual Widgery which investigates the deaths with obvious prejudice, to satirise equally the "spurious uses made of the event from the

nationalist side, the romantic Republican ballads turning the victims into martyrs, the political capital made from their deaths in the media" (166).

It is easily observed that *The Freedom of the City* "addresses contemporary Irish politics more directly than any other Friel play, and Irish discussions of the relationship of art and politics invariably bring mention of *Freedom*" (Lojek "Brian Friel's Sense of Place" 180). What most critics like Lojek admire Friel for is the extremely professional use of the different stories and bleakly unreliable discourses which become the reason for these three Derry citizens being killed. Those authorities, who exercise control over the society, are represented by an English Judge, an American Sociologist, an Irish Priest, a Dublin Television Commentator, an Irish Balladeer and a British Soldier. Though they are to stand for the welfare of the citizens, they provide contradicting versions of events, all of which "contrast sharply with the less shaped, less articulate voices of those who died" (Lojek "Troubling Perspectives: Northern Ireland, the 'Troubles' and Drama" 331). Many of the details evoke the events of the Bloody Sunday. Moreover, the play quotes directly from the British government's subsequent and now widely discredited official inquiry, the Widgery Report. The trio's, however, accidental occupation of the Guildhall causes the authorities to make up exaggerated and subverted rumours. In this sense McGrath summarizes the poignantly subverted conclusions: "the military forces perceive themselves opposed by forty gunmen and have acted accordingly; the Judge sees the three armed terrorists, the Priest three martyrs, and the Balladeer three Irish heroes" (121). In addition to them, the play writes of Liam O'Kelly, a RadioTelefís Éireann journalist, who cites "unconfirmed reports . . . of about fifty armed gunmen," a nationalist balladeer alludes to "a hundred Irish

heroes" (Friel *Freedom* 118), and a British army press officer makes reference to "a band of terrorists . . . [of] up to forty persons" (126). It is astonishing that none of these reports prove to reflect the real number of the three protestors. As we have analysed, Friel creates national, religious and journalistic discourses which either by word or gesture contribute to the tragedy of the trio.

The play takes us before the killings of the trio and re-creates them which is one of the most successful experimental devices by Friel in the play. Lily, Michael and Skinner are surrounded by an array of army and police, and are largely oblivious to what is taking place outside. The Brigadier orders the three to surrender, however, when they believe them and appear at the entrance of the parlour with their hands above their heads," (167) they are shot to death at once. We have a sequence of flashbacks in the play, and back and forth visits of Friel shed more light on the injustice the trio has to face. The Widgery-like Judge and the flashbacks are juxtaposed for casting the distortions of the reality. Friel ends the play with the speech of the Judge which exculpates the army and suggests that the three protesters may have emerged firing from the Guildhall. It is important that these civilians take refuge at the Guildhall, which is the "symbol of Protestant power and authority for Catholic and Protestant alike" (Boltwood *Ireland* 102). Even Skinner jeers at their accidental occupation of the Guildhall saying, "This is theirs, boy, and your very presence here is a sacrilege" (Friel *Freedom* 140), which again shows their risky condition.

McGrath states that Friel gives the events on two registers: one is the "register with literary realism of the protagonists," and the other is the "public discourse register which is represented in the forms of a judge, soldiers, a constable, a general,

a military officer, a forensic expert, a pathologist, a priest, a balladeer, a TV news commentator, and a sociologist" (101). The two clashing sides, one the three victims and the other the formal authorities, are presented to the audience as if the audience is the jury to decide on the right side. Similarly, Pilkington suggests that the "audience is cast in the role of adjudicator and is encouraged to compare what can be seen and heard to take place in the mayor's parlour with many verbal commentaries and assessments that are made from the outside" ("Reading History in the Plays of Brian Friel" 503). It is true that the Guildhall is accidentally occupied by the three, none of them bears any arms; but these facts can only be seen by the audience. It is only the spectator that sees and knows that the trio is far from being a threat to the military forces. Skinner asks Lily, "Do you know where you are, Missus?" (Friel *Freedom* 116), and neither Lily nor Michael know that they "Are. Inside. The Guildhall" (116). They even cannot believe it, and in a pure shock she replies, "We are not! [...] You're a liar!" (116). The tragically unfair end of the trio is obvious even from the opening lines of the Judge:

> Our only function is to form an objective view of the events which occured in the City of Londonderry, Northern Ireland, on the tenth day of February 1970, when after a civil rights meeting British troops opened fire and three civilians lost their lives. It is essentially a fact-finding exercise; and our concern and our only concern is with that period of time when these three people came together, seized possession of a civic building, and openly defied the security forces. The facts we garner over the coming days may indicate that the deceased were callous terrorists who had planned to seize the Guildhall weeks before the events of February 10th; or the facts may indicate that the misguided scheme occurred to them on that very day while they listened to revolutionary speeches. But whatever conclusion may seem to emerge, it must be understood that it is none of our function to make moral judgements, and I would ask the media to bear this in mind. (109-10)

These very sentences of Friel's fictional Judge "bear an uncanny and disturbing resemblance to Lord Widgery's announcement at the preliminary hearing on February 14, 1972 about the Inquiry's supposedly objective concerns" (Russell 48) which describe his procedures as 'fact-finding' and 'objective,' which state his determination to adhere only to the immediate facts, and refuse to take into consideration the social circumstances of the three, saying, "we are not conducting a social survey" (Friel *Freedom* 108). But objectivity, in this case, conceals his willing acceptance of the way things are from the point of view of the authorities, allowing, for example, the "flagrant lie of the British Commanding Officer" (Pilkington *Theatre and the State* 197) "My lord, they emerged firing from the Guildhall" (Friel *Freedom* 134) to pass without question as if they were terrorists. Thus, the corruption of the state can be seen when the judicial authorities do not function as fair and are despotic to the three civilians. Judge is due to be seeking for justice, however what we have is only a Judge siding with the state and security officers through exonerating them and calling the trio "callous terrorists" (109) and participants of a "misguided scheme" (110), and after the Judge's inextricable distorted conclusions of the events which are supposed to be in line with "law and order," the shooting take place. Friel is also very successful in creating the double meaning of the Judge's opening remarks in the play that the inquiry is in no sense a conduction of justice, and the tribunal does not serve the justice, rather it subverts the reality.

Without any propagandist drives, Friel excellently displays the situation of the Irish people at the time. With three central characters, all of whom "come from the oppressed Catholic community of Derry" (McGrath 101), Friel catches the genuine injustice the citizens of the country have had to cope with. For instance,

Michael is a twenty-two years old man, engaged to Norah and now unemployed. Lily is a forty-three years old woman with eleven children and a disabled husband, and lives with her family "in a two-roomed flat" with "no toilet, no running water" (Friel *Freedom* 137). Lily herself of her house says "it's a converted warehouse" (153). She works as a charwoman, and does not earn enough money for her family, and just like Michael and Skinner suffers from poverty. However, Lily's burden is much greater than those of the other two as she has the responsibility for eleven children and a husband. She says that her son has Down sydrome and all the ill conditions of her life is outspoken by her (155). Skinner, the most cynical and witty one of the three, is twenty-one years old, and of his working life, says he "worked for a while when I was at grammar school- before they kicked me out," and adds, "three years ago I did some potato picking" and "last August I was a conductor on the buses" (131). But now he is unemployed, and does not have a regular place to live in either.

Through these poverty-engraved portraits by Friel, we are presented the social conditions of the citizens of Ireland. Friel says *The Freedom of the City* is a play only about poverty, and this must be because originally he had started to write a play about poverty but later when the Bloody Sunday occurred, he changed it. Therefore, it is quite normal to see touches on poverty in the play. For Friel, poverty is significant as these protagonists are joining the civil rights marches because they do not live a prosperous life as they are all unemployed and unhappy with their living standards. Friel gives an American sociologist, Philip Alexander Dodds as an expert who specializes in the "subculture of poverty" (110), and speculates on the three victims' motives, most often incorrectly. He asserts that the poor are "provincial and locally orientated" with "very little sense of history" (111); their culture aids them in

adapting to “their marginal position in a society which is capitalistic” (110); and, given to feelings of inferiority, they are “present-time orientated and seldom defer gratification, never plan for the future, and endures his here and now with resignation and frustration” (133). However, his analyses prove to be incorrect when Michael tells about his plans for his education as he is “doing economics and business administration and computer science” (122). Contrary to the explanation of Dr. Dodds, neither of these characters bears the psychological symptoms of poverty. Michael does not show any complexities of inferiority, in contrast he has a high esteem of himself. He does not speak much, trusts the state’s authorities, and disdains the violent disobedience of the Irish citizens. He even calls Skinner “a vandal! He’s a bloody vandal!” (138) and “a trouble-maker” (132), and as a pacifist, Michael cannot stand Skinner and regards him as a “hooligan” (147). Unlike Skinner, he believes in the state’s power and becomes an obediently faithful citizen of his country. In the first act, he is prepared to walk outside, but he is scared enough to stay inside the Guildhall. When they are ordered to surrender, Michael blamingly utters:

> Some bastard must have done something to rattle them, shouted something, thrown a stone, burned something- some bloody hooligan! Someone like you, Skinner! For its bastards like you, bloody vandals, that’s keeping us all on our bloody knees. (147)

It is obvious that he does not approve of Skinner’s daring and disrespectful behaviours in the mayor’s parlour where “Lily and Skinner momentarily achieve a powerful communion through their dressing up and play-acting, their drinking and laughter” (Andrews 133), and Michael keeps away from them in reticence and for this irreverent attitude of Skinner and Lily in the parlour, he says, “It’s not ours and

we weren't invited here" (Friel *Freedom* 121). Upon this warning, Lily defendingly replies, "Lookat, young fella: since it was the British troops driv me off my own streets and deprived me of my sight and vision for a good quarter of an hour, the least the corporation can do is placate me with one wee drink (121). And as the play proceeds, he again notes, "I want the two of you to know I object to this carry-on" (146). He does not want to drink the alcoholic drinks when Skinner offers him and says, "You're behaving exactly as they think we behave. [...] And even if you have no sense of decency, at least you should know that that's stealing unless you're going to leave the money" (146). Moreover, he tries to stop Skinner using the telephone and all the other belongings of the Mayor. Although he objects their use of the things in the parlour, with the insistence of Lily and Skinner, he takes a glass of drink, and when they are about to surrender, he tosses money to Skinner as the charge of the drink he has had. Michael is a character with such a deep belief in the state that he discusses with Skinner over the trustworthiness of the state authorities:

> SKINNER: Do you trust them?
> MICHAEL: Do you not?
> SKINNER: No.
> MICHAEL: Do you trust anybody?
> SKINNER: I don't trust them.
> MICHAEL: Do you think they'll beat you up, Skinner?
> SKINNER: Maybe.
> MICHAEL: Or shoot you?
> SKINNER: Maybe.
> MICHAEL: You really think they'd shoot you! You really do!
> SKINNER: Yes. They're stupid enough. But as long as they've only got people like you to handle, they can afford to be. (165-6).

Elmer Andrews notes that "Michael does not want to change the system at all, only his place within it" (130). With an optimistic view of the state, "he has all the

respectable middle-class susceptibilities, including an exaggerated respect for authority" (Andrews 130). He is quite careful with his words and does not think ill of the institutions. He has been on every civil rights march since 1968. He is opposing the "social injustices of the society, and "identifies with the prevailing middle-class values about property, respectability, and the good intentions of government officials" (McGrath 101). For instance, for the march he says: "It was a good, disciplined, responsible march. And that's what we must show them- that we're responsible and respectable; and they'll come to respect what we've campaigning for" (Friel *Freedom* 128-9). It is easily seen that Michael's thoughts about the march are not like Skinner or Lily's. He objects to Skinner's disrespect for the property of the others and tells that he marches because:

> We want fair play, too, so that no matter what our religion is, no matter what our politics is, we have the same chances and the same opportunities as the next fella. It's not very much, Skinner, and we'll get it, believe me, we'll get it, because it's something every man's entitled to and nothing can stop us getting what we're entitled to. (161)

As it is clear from the words of him, Michael "wants the same opportunity for a decent job and a decent home enjoyed by his Protestant counterparts" (McGrath 102). Michael is unemployed and he wants to become a productive member of his society. Most critics do not recognize the naïvety of Michael in his trust in established authority. Perhaps it is due to such ideas of him that his conscience makes him believe in that he has nothing to fear from and be ashamed of, unlike Skinner and Lily. In fact, Michael "trusts and identifies with established authority more than he does with Skinner and Lily" (McGrath 102), who he thinks discredit "dignified, peaceful protest" (Friel *Freedom* 128-9). He says, "What I want, Skinner,

what the vast majority of the people out there want, is something that a bum like you wouldn't understand: a decent job, a decent place to live, a decent town to bring up our children in- that's what we want" (160). He calls Skinner "vandal" and "hooligan" which are the terms used by the authorities for the protesters; and it is as if Michael has taken the place of these authorities that suppress the marchers through blaming them. His bourgeois attitude towards his fellows, however, does not make him of the class which he aspires for, and nor is he happy with the class into which he was born. The situation of Michael is the most incurable one for this reason. On one side, he is unhappy with his own people, and on the other, by blood he is distanced from the class he craves for. It is again ironic that Michael and his father have lost their jobs, and he does not have a place to live in when he marries to his fiancée. He has a kind of genuine trust in the state and says "as long as we don't react violently, as long as we don't allow ourselves to be provoked, ultimately we must win" (140), but Skinner rightfully mocks at Michael's groundless belief saying, "Mr Hegarty is of the belief that if five thousand of us are demonstrating peacefully and they come along and shoot us down, then automatically we . . . we . . ." (141), and Skinner again is right in his suspect of the established authority. Ironically enough, Michael is the most state-loving one of the trio in the play, and he is decided to have fired a weapon at the end of the play. This unfair treatment of Michael is significant for the audience to make a true verdict of the official victimization of the trio.

The other victim, Skinner is a jobless, aimless young Irishman with a far more insight than Michael and Lily. He is distinguished in that he is the most cynical and disrespectful of the trio. He has fun at the parlour while he smokes the cigars of the Mayor, wears his robes, uses his phone to place bets, and destroys a portrait on

the wall with a ceremonial sword. At the opening of the play, he is soaked with the water cannon and when Lily makes him to take off his shirt and shoes to get dry, we see that he wears neither an undershirt nor socks. He is the first to realize that the building they have entered is the Guildhall, and he is the most able one to use all the devices like record player, radio and cocktail cabinet which are also first recognized by him at the parlour, and his "irreverent parlour-games" (Andrews 71) are significant for creating an audacious and humorous hand in the play. Skinner is "identified as a prerequisite of any meaningful opposition to the forces of imperialism" (205). Skinner's socialist rhetoric is the most eloquent and convincing which is evident in these words: "It's about us – the poor – the majority stirring in our sleep" (Friel *Freedom* 154). Unlike Michael, who is a quite serious person, Skinner is cynical about many things like the system, the official treatment of the civil marchers and all the other misdeeds of the official forces. Compared to Michael and Lily, he is again the most realistic and wise one and through the end of the play, he concretely confesses, "a short time after I realized we were in the Mayor's parlour I knew that a price would be exacted. And when they ordered us a second time to lay down our arms I began to suspect what that price would be because they leave nothing to chance and because the poor are always overcharged" (150). Through these outspoken thoughts of Skinner, Friel shows the audience that the ill-treatment of the civilians is foreshadowed by the victims just before their murders. Skinner continues:

> And as we stood on the Guildhall steps, two thoughts raced through my mind: how seriously they took us and how unpardonably casual as we were about them; and that to march their seriousness would demand a total dedication, a solemnity as formal as theirs. And then everything melted and fused in a great roaring heat. And my last thought was: if

> you're going to decide to take them on, Adrian Casimir, you've got to mend your ways. So I died, as I lived, in defensive flippancy. (150)

We see that Skinner is aware of what is happening, but as Andrews suggests he "represents eloquence without power" (131). It is true that Skinner lacks the discipline and commitment for a true revolutionary, and for Andrews, he "retreats behind a mask of 'defensive flippancy'" (131). However, it seems that Skinner is very much aware that a single person alone cannot change the unjust situation of the citizens.

The most personal marcher of the trio, Lily is the only woman of the three protagonists. Ironically, Lily's name is Protestant (Russell 50), and she is the one fraught with domestic problems and tells about her economic situation, her neighbours and children, which prove her to be a non-political marcher trapped in the Guildhall. The grinding poverty has driven her into a hard life with her family, and she is not even aware of what she has been marching for. She is "irrepressible, instinctual and her inchoate, potentially subversive, vital female energy declares itself within and against the imposed (male) ideological and linguistic structures symbolised by Derry's Guildhall" (Andrews 225). When Skinner insistently asks Lily about the reason she is marching for, she idly says "Wan man- wan vote- that's what I want. You know- wan man- wan vote" (Friel *Freedom* 154); and Skinner reminds her of that she "got that six months ago" (154). Skinner sees that she is totally unaware what has been taking place around. And we then learn that Lily is marching for her mongol son, Declan and says, "It's for him I go on all the civil rights marches. Isn't that stupid? You and him (MICHAEL) and everybody else marching and protesting about sensible things like politics and stuff and me in the

middle of you all, marching for Declan" (155) and she emphasises her husband's disapproval of her participating the march; "the stupidest thing her husband has ever heard of – That's what the chairman said when I- you know- when I tried to tell him what I was thinking. He never talks about him" (155). It is true that Lily is an uneducated woman, but she is quite experienced and speaks sensibly about the world, "I'll tell you something, Skinner: it's a very unfair world" (141) and when she talks about working, she says, "I'll tell you something- you never had to study glibness. Oh, nothing sharpens the wits like idleness. (*To* MICHAEL.) You stick to your books, son. That's what I say to our boys" (132). With Skinner they enjoy the limited opportunities in that limited time just before their death, and most probably this is the first time they have had such a luxurious enjoyment in their entire lives. And in the end, she feels regrets over her life as she thinks she has eluded the life, and "her good instincts [...] could not save her from dying of grief" (McGrath 103).

These three Derry citizens are presenting joyously vivid and sparkling moments of life when they are at the parlour. The theatre spectator "may be cast in the role of jury or congregation, but most will yearn to be inside the Guildhall, where three random strangers are having fun building a community and defying the forces which have previously dominated them" (Lojek "Brian Friel's Sense of Place" 182). While we read the play, it is seen that the trio is using all the royal stuff in the parlour, and Lojek suggests that all these and that they "sign the Distinguished Visitors' Book" (Friel *Freedom* 120) are all significant as they "provide the entry into the world of people typically excluded from the pages of history" ("Brian Friel's Sense of Place" 182). Pilkington speaks about the "political formulations" (*Theatre and the State* 200) Friel creates in this play; and in Michael's case, civil rights

idealism masks his desire for middle-class respectability: “All those people marching along in silence, rich and poor, high and low, doctors, accountants, plumbers, teachers, bricklayers – all shoulder to shoulder” (Friel *Freedom* 129). Even Skinner, who is presented as the most politically astute of the three and whose “perspective most resembles that of well-known Derry-based political activists such as Devlin and McCann, has a tendency to subvert his formulations with facetiousness, as if sensing that there is something about them that is not quite right” (Pilkington *Theatre and the State* 200).

We have a carnival of the state officers in the play. In this regard, “an array of Judges, Birigadiers, Professors, Constables and Priests, all seeking to establish their particular version of events” (Andrews 85) are given presence representing their uniforms. The distorted testimonies of these official forces are indeed of great importance for the victimization of the central trio. Approvingly, in this sense, Andews indicates that “language is not a personal illusion but of public misrepresentation of the facts” (134), and he adds, “the language of institutions, like the language of individuals displays a similar fictive tendency. Moreover, he claims that Friel delineates the “relationship between meaning and power: the control of meanings- of democracy, freedom, justice, etc.- is political power. Language is not only the means of constructing ‘reality,’ but an instrument of oppression or containment within society” (134). In the play, Friel allows these institutional powers to be in charge and be suppressive as much as they can. None of these institutions exculpates these victims; therefore, the tragically unfair end is doomed. Pre-judgments are all scattered every here and there through the entire play. Friel artistically achieves to present the innocent trio in a rather alienated atmosphere for

the audience. It is mostly agreed that there is an efficient use of the Brechtian A-effect in this sense. We, as the spectators, are shocked into the bitter reality without intruding into the play's proceeding. The disappointment is that these official institutions are the ones which are obviously the prejudiced and the wrongdoer. The Bloody Sunday had a Widgery Tribunal, which cleared the British soldiers of blame for the shooting of thirteen unarmed civil rights marchers and Friel satirically uses the same kind of inquiry in the play. The language of the public officials proves to be fraught with lies and "serve the interests of class or ideological domination by propagating a false consciousness of historical reality. The language of politics becomes synonymous with lies, manipulation and indiscriminate force" (Andrews 134). It is true that Friel takes much of the "Judge's orientation and even some specifics of his language from the Widgery Report, the actual tribunal that investigated the Bloody Sunday incident," (McGrath 106) which conceals the reality behind a sinister mask. Friel knows that the victims are unfairly killed and the bitterest thing is that the Widgery Report does exculpate "the 1st Battalion Parachute Regiment from its killing of thirteen unarmed civilians" (Russell 47) who have shot them and who are indeed the lawbreakers. Just like Friel's Judge, Lord Widgery claimed that his tribunal was "essentially a fact finding exercise" and "not concerned with making moral judgements" (qtd. in McGrath 106). Similarly, Friel successfully reflects these incidents in the play. Moreover, they decide that all the three are armed and at least two of them, Michael and Lily have fired a weapon.

Despite the play bears many prints of the Bloody Sunday, it enjoys all the dramatic artistry. Supporting that, Russell puts forward:

> The play is saved from its moments of documentary immediacy and from being nationalist propaganda by its

> suggestion that both the British Army and the nationalist community distort the diverse humanity of the three civilians who are murdered after leaving the Guildhall. (47)

However, Friel seems concerned mostly with "critiquing official British government response to the violence and the unofficial, folkloric response on the part of Northern Irish nationalists" (Russell 47). In this regard, the Judge who must stand for the justice and equality no matter what becomes a total failure in the play. He does not speak the truth in any sense, and ironically his repeated remarks that "it is essentially a fact-finding exercise" (Friel *Freedom* 109) happens to be a fake assurance of the society. The Brigadier upon Judge's question that, "And had you known, as you learned later, Brigadier, that there were only three terrorists involved, would you have acted differently?" solemnly replies, "My orders would have been the same, my lord" (134). As it is understood, they do not even know that there are only three people inside the Guildhall when they open fire to them. It is also quite pathetic that they call them "terrorists" for justifying the institutions.

It is also worth to touch upon the names of these institutions. Instead of the full names of the officers like the judge, constable and priest, Friel presents all these voices in their own offices, instead of using their own names, therefore, the governmental titles gain more importance as they stand for the institutions they represent. Only the characters with a more social office free from the boundary of the state are given their names, like the American sociologist Dr Philip Alexander Dodds, the forensic expert Dr Winbourne, the pathologist Professor Cuppley and Radio Telefís Éireann news commentator Liam O'Kelly. The judge, the priest, the balladeer, the police constable, the brigadier, press photographer, soldiers, army press officer are all called with their official titles rather than their own full names.

Friel also satirizes the traditional Irish nationality through the nationalist Balladeer, the Catholic Priest and the Pressman who are no more interested in what really happened than any of the others. Elmer Andrews believes that the Balladeer's primary concern is with "elaborating and perpetuating a myth of heroic rebellion and martyrdom" (135). He is reciting for the dead now and their names lost their importance for the Balladeer, and "the situation in the Guildhall is an excuse for alternately belligerent and maudlin versions of a populist Irish nationalism" (Pilkington *Theatre and the State* 198). Friel centrally experiences the confrontation of the ideals with the reality in Balladeer's words:

> A hundred Irish heroes one February day
> Took over Derry's Guildhall, beside old Derry's quay.
> They defied the British army, they defied the RUC.
> They showed the crumbling empire what good Irishmen
> could be. (Friel *Freedom* 118)

In this sense, he disapproves of the blindfold idealisation of the three as the Balladeer does as the representative of the Irish traditional myths. The Radio Telefís Éireann journalist, O'Kelly from Dublin misreads Skinner's name while reporting the news. He also points out that the "Guildhall is a symbol of Unionist domination and that if it falls into the hands of terrorists, the government will be embarrassed" (McGrath 109). The priest says, "as you are probably aware, I had the privilege of administering the last rites to them and the knowledge that they didn't go unfortified before their Maker is a consolation to all of us" (Friel *Freedom* 124-5).

In the play, we have a plenitude of the circulation of the distortions of the dead bodies, and in this case, this jeopardises three innocent lives. The rhetoric each official authority uses becomes a direct subversion of the truth. Even Dr Dodds and the pathologist Professor Cuppley, who are academicians and thus supposed to be

neutral, do distance us from the brutal reality. The three protestors are seen as armed terrorists who are potentially threats for the state, so the military operation to retreat the trio is unsurprisingly exaggerated. However, Friel does not make it up all, as Pilkington sufficiently informs us about the military operation that:

> With the exception of the use of tanks (not used in Northern Ireland until 'Operation Motorman' and the ending of the 'no-go' areas of 'Free Derry' and 'Free Belfast' in July 1972) and Friel's inclusion of the '8th Infantry Brigade' the military operation as it is described in *The Freedom of the City* bears close similarity to the military operation of Bloody Sunday. (*Theatre and the State* 196-7)

Therefore, such a detail helps the audience to determine on the ruthless and oppressive treatment of the state forces to the three civilians. For the writing of the play, McGrath claims that "unlike classic tragic protagonists, these three characters contribute nothing to advance the plot and provide no motive from which the tragic actions proceed" (103). In a sense, what we have on stage are three ghosts which help to find their murderers. Friel's portrayal of this trio is like a re-filming of the events before their deaths. Also "this movement implies that they have been sacrificed for the causes of the opposing sides" (Russell 56). The play is "a play of voices- a clamant, confusing babel of voices, none of which can offer an adequate or reliable account of the story" (Andrews 135) of the trio. The Judges, Press Officers, Policemen, Priests, Balladeers and Professors are all "remote and dehumanised, bereft of any of the compelling human characteristics so sensitively and lovingly delineated in the central trio" (136).

Just like the other plays of Friel of 1970s, in *The Freedom of the City*, too, which is the product of the contemporary culture for overtly political plays like it" (Boltwood *Ireland* 5), Friel is "more interested in exploring the conditions of 'truth'

than in propagating any particular 'truth.' [...] He refuses single meaning which means refusing conformity and seeks to encourage complex seeing in the audience" (Andrews 123). In this sense, the main technique of *The Freedom of the City* is significant in serving Friel's purpose of foregrounding a particular way of viewing history. Andrews suggests that Friel shows us that "History is no longer an open-ended process of transformation: action must always ultimately conform to the terms established by the foundational act or 'curse'" (137). And through the plurality of the voices in the play, Friel achieves his aim. The powerlessness of the three victims is too overt to be compared to that of the official forces. The play starts with the images of the dead bodies so horrifically familiar from the Bloody Sunday killings, and Grene draws attention to the "three representative urban figures whose lives are sacrificed and traduced by the need of the contending political forces to believe in their own false melodramas" (Grene 166). In this sense, Friel creates a hopeless trap-like situation for the three protagonists. However, the powerful are again quite able to redirect the society and exculpate the state forces for killing the three. The biased production of the history is what Friel warns us against. The death of the victims is not an end for Friel, and with the trio alive standing "*as before, staring out, their hands above their heads*" (Friel *Freedom* 169), and perhaps with such a blood-and-flesh re-creation of the trio at the end of the play, Friel shows a gleam of optimism for the future with their alive bodies; and perhaps it just becomes his wish of the future to be free of political injustices and tyranny. I agree with Andrews in that "instead of consigning the story of Lily, Skinner and Michael to the realm of the eternal and the timeless, Friel suggests the possibility of breaking with established patterns, of reinterpreting and thereby taking control of a changing world" (138). The

authoritarian control over the victims is deeply felt in the play, as Friel says, "I can't keep silent, because I have lived it" (qtd. in McGrath 43), and he gives the plurality of these institutional voices, but "neither submits to the tyranny of a sequential and chronological structure" (Andrews 190). With such a use of the cross-cut technique, Friel provides us with a vital image of the subverted events. He is "recentring the concrete, individual reality that tends to be written out of the hagiography or the public record" (191-2).

For Friel, the play is an "immediate angry reaction to the Bloody Sunday" (Grene 165) therefore, contemporary activism and militancy is extensively notable in the play. The playwright also exhibits the desperate situation of the Irish citizens in the final scene when the three protagonists appear at the gate of the Guildhall with their hands above their heads, in total submission. The audience are now stared directly out at the hall by the three, which, I think, creates a restless and alienated condition for them. The audience are not siding with the trio nor do they sympathise with the other side. However, Friel pushes the audience into a disturbing situation. Close to the end of the play, in Act II Friel creates a neo-Brechtian scene in which Lily, Michael and Skinner address the audience directly and describe the final moments before they are killed (Friel *Freedom* 149-50). Each of the characters' final perceptions is marked by a realization that their previous way of representing things was inadequate. It is just a short time before their killings that they realize to see things accurately. Michael insistently says, "I knew a terrible mistake had been made" (149); Lily says, "the moment we stepped outside the front door I knew I was going to die, instinctively, the way an animal knows;" and lastly, Skinner says "I knew that a price would be extracted" (150). The shooting scene of the trio is very

significant, and Pilkington views that "this scene, like the play as a whole, has a dual function: it presents conclusive evidence that the Judge's inquiry is a coverup, and it confronts the audience with its own passivity" ("Reading History in the Plays of Brian Friel" 505). That the shooting comes from the direction to which the trio stares at, that is from the audience, "we the audience are indicted for complicity," and it is seen that "the same objective passivity that is the basis for our empirical conclusion that the three civilians are innocent is here also presented as an emblem of political despair" (505). Nonetheless, such a conclusion can be received as the extension of the "political hopelessness of the play" (505) as the role of the audience is to witness, not change the action on stage.

The title of the play implies a highly ironic situation of the three protagonists and their hometown. Talking about "freedom" is not credible when these innocent civilians are officially victimised. Friel's use of the word "freedom" and "city" together in the same title is quite appropriately well-put and striking at the same time. As Derry has been the central place of the Troubles in Northern Ireland, freedom is what has been longed for for such a long time and thus, what has been unavailable there as well. From a different viewpoint, it can be interpreted that the trio stands for the freedom but their unfair killings upset all the hope for freedom. Russell suggests that "their royal trappings are the closest they will ever get to this honour, for if they somehow were to get out of the situation alive, they would never even be allowed to set foot in the mayor's parlour, much less awarded the freedom of the city" (53). I agree with Russell that they have been "trapped their whole lives by their poverty; now they are cornered by the British army, which was brought into the province originally to protect the Catholics from the Protestants" (53-4). The lives of the three

in destitution are intensely underlined when they “ironically discuss their lives of abject poverty surrounded by the opulence of the Guildhall” (54). It is again fairly noteworthy to realize that these “poverty-stricken citizens are now being evicted from the Guildhall by the local government who helped consign them to such penurious conditions by denying Catholics decent housing for so long” (54). They are denied the freedom to live and exonerating themselves. The freedom cannot be possessed by these civilians as the city, just like the Guildhall, does not belong to them either.

All in all, Friel’s reality-based play is a well-written play in terms of reflecting the political turmoil of the time it is set, and with the fusion of Friel’s dramatic artistry, the incidents are viewed from an artistically different perspective. We neither have a kind of propagation against the official forces nor an idealization of the Irish nationalist views. As an artist, I believe, Friel takes his right stand in critiquing all the wrongs of the society sparing for no one in this regard.

CONCLUSION

My dissertation has set out to look into Brian Friel's plays within a post-colonial and political context with the examples of plays: *Translations*, *Philadelphia, Here I Come!*, *The Mundy Scheme*, *The Freedom of the City*. Friel has been a highly influential playwright of our contemporary world not only for the Irish but also for the world literature.

With *Translations* and *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* we have analysed the deep effects of post-colonial oppression on a colonized nation Friel points at. The chaotic new-world that has been built by the English colonialism for the Irish people causes the downfall of all the traditional, economic, social and cultural tunes the Irish have had through their past. Suffering from a split and denied existence of the Irish people, the torn identity crisis are nationally critical points the writer has felt the urge to focus on. It is true that "the future has neither a welcome nor even an accommodation for them" (He 339) any more. As a man who bears a national responsibility for his countrymen, Friel could not turn a blind eye upon this seriously unjust English occupation of his country. Moreover, as an Irish person, either individually or as a family experiencing the harsh reality of the English colonialism, he makes great points in his works quite realistically. The background Friel has plays a great role in his creation of works in this sense.

We have also studied the political problems that Ireland has had, with *The Mundy Scheme* and *The Freedom of the City*. Friel demonstrates his upset conscience

for the Rebublic as it has been corrupted by politicians full of duplicity, and reminding us the idealism and nationalism of the Easter Risings in 1916, which caused many cruel deaths of the Nationalists, Friel shows the disappointment of the ideals of these nationalists in this case. In the end, what we have is an upside down of all the national ideals of the Easter Risings. Also as a man of society, he sees that the civilians have been unfairly and brutally treated at the Bloody Sunday during the Troubles. In the sense of reflecting the voice of the society, Friel excels in his pen. He concentrates on what the country is restless or unhappy about. We know that theatre is crucial for reflecting the misdeeds, wrongs and problems that take place in a community. Similarly, Friel inimitably utilise from his art for the society. His intention was not to be a purely political dramatist, however, the post-colonial and political conditions that ravaged the country have made Friel write the sufferings of the oppressed, the discriminated and persecuted subaltern people of Ireland.

Read in this light, Friel can be taken as a local man in Irish literature as he is mostly engaged with the Irish problems in his plays. However, if colonialism that has has ravaged the entire world is taken into consideration, it can be easily understood that Friel is indeed not a usual local playwright. On the contrary, through the example of Ireland, we are enabled to make a general assessment of the colonies in the world. And of course, this very fact has earned him an international success and fame for decades. In this sense, it will not meet many objections if we accept Friel's Irishness as an international one, and give him a universal citizenship of the world.

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ÖZET

İrlanda uzun yıllardır birçok sömürge ve sömürgeden kaynaklanan problemler yaşayan bir ülke olmuştur. İngiliz sömürgesiyle başlayan endişe, İttifakçı-Milliyetçi, Katolik-Protestan, Kuzey-Güney çatışmalarıyla en üst seviyelere ulaşmış ve tüm bunlar beraberinde, ülkede uzun süren çeşitli isyan ve kargaşalara yol açmıştır.

Kuzey İrlanda'da doğup büyüyen Brian Friel tüm bu yüksek gerilimi birebir yaşadı. Diğer tüm İrlandalılarla paylaştığı sömürge geçmişi oyunlarında bu problemleri kaleme almasında ciddi derecede önemli olmuştur. Bununla beraber, bir Katolik olan Friel'in hassasiyeti İrlandalı Katolikler iki kat daha fazla baskı altında oldukları için gerçekten büyük olmuştur. Böyle bir geçmişin yansıması olarak da Friel, oyunlarında toplumun acı çektiği sömürü ve sömürü sonrası sorunları ile siyasi sorunları etraflıca inceliyor. Bunların ışığında, bu çalışma Friel dramasını toplumun içinde bulunduğu duruma hem bir karşılık hem de onun dolaysız bir yansıması olduğunu keşfetmeyi amaçlıyor.

İlk bölümde, Friel'in yaşam öyküsünü, edebi kariyerini ve eserlerini inceledim. Bu bölümde ayrıca Friel'in kurduğu Field Day Tiyatrosu ve Irlanda'nın siyasi geçmişini de sundum. Sonraki bölümde, *Translations* (1980) (*Çevirilier*) ve *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* (1964) (*Ver Elini Yeni Dünya!*) oyunları sömürü sonrası ve sömürü noktalarında çalışılmıştır. Son bölümdeyse, diger iki oyun, *The Mundy Scheme* (1969) *(Mundy Planı*) ve *The Freedom of the City* (1973) (*Şehrin*

Özgürlüğü) siyasi açıdan değerlendirilmiştir. Seçtiğim bu oyunlar Friel'in kendine özgü yazınının birer örnekleridir. Bununla beraber, daha kapsamlı ve detaylı bir inceleme için tüm eserleri tek tek incelenebilir.

ABSTRACT

Ireland has been a country which has had colonial problems and many others rising from colonialism for ages. The uneasiness which started with English colonialism, reached its peak with the conflicts between the Unionists and Republicans, the Catholics and Protestants, the North and the South, and these all have created many riots and disturbances in the country till 21st century.

Born and grown up in Northern Ireland, Brian Friel has been able to experience this high tension in the country. Colonial background that he shares with all the other Irishmen is crucially important as it has taken him to write about the problems in his plays. However, being a Catholic, Friel's sensitivity has been really high, as the Irish Catholics have been double-suppressed. As a reflection of such background, in his plays Friel extensively examines the post-colonial and political problems the society suffers from. In accordance with these, this study aims to explore Friel's drama both as a response and a direct reflection of his society's condition at the same time.

In the first chapter, I have studied the biography, literary career and the works of Friel. I have also presented Field Day Theatre, which was established by Friel, and political background of Ireland in this chapter. In the next chapter, *Translations* (1980) and *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* (1964) are studied within the scope of a post-colonial analysis. In the last chapter, two other plays, *The Mundy Scheme* (1969) and *The Freedom of the City* (1973) are evaluated from a political perspective. These plays I have studied are examples of Friel's distinctive oeuvre, but for a whole and extensive research, all of his plays can be studied separately.