

THE DOUBLE FIGURE AS A METAPHOR OF EMOTIONAL DICHOTOMY IN BRIAN FRIEL'S PHILADELPHIA HERE I COME!

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to trace the concept of emotional dichotomy in Brian Friel's Philadelphia Here I Come!. The character of Gar with its double figure of Private and Public is a supra-realistic trick that Friel invents to dramatize the love/hatred dichotomy inside the protagonist who is suffering from a state of indecision and hesitation between staying in his homeland and emigrating to America. Friel manages craftily to fuse the different elements of the drama including characterization, structure and language to incarnate that sense of self-division in Gar O'Donnell. The study shows that for Friel, content-and-form harmony is the criteria for a successful play. Philadelphia Here I Come! also addresses the social, economic and emotional plight that face the Irish youth, and reflects at the same time, many influences including Expressionism, Miller, O'Neill, Brecht and Eliot.

Key Words: Brian Friel, Double Identity, Irish Immigration, Expressionism.

INTRODUCTION

Fintan O'Toole writes: "if there is a characteristic image of Irish theatre in the last three decades, it is the image of the split personality" (1991). In spite of the fact that politics is not the main concern of the play, it remains lurking in the idea of youth emigration that represents the main subject of the play. For many Irish young men, it was the only outlet to escape many economic and social predicaments that face them in their homeland. The Irish political dilemma continued to cast a shadow almost all Friel's dramatic output with themes like alienation, displacement, emigration, economic failure, frustrated hopes, depression and lack of love and communication in family relations. Moreover, almost entirely all his plays are located in an Irish setting and plays like *The Freedom of the City*, *Volunteers*, *The Mundy Scheme*, and *Translations* deal conspicuously with political and Irish subjects.

Philadelphia Here I Come! (1964) is unanimously regarded among critics as the first convincing sign that Friel's career as an innovative leading dramatist in contemporary Ireland, was inaugurated. It manifests his capacity for vivid imagination and technical novelty. Before Philadelphia, he wrote radio drama and a one-act play, *The Enemy Within* (1962) yet, all that he wrote lack the technical assurance of Philadelphia. The play was the immediate consequence of Friel's fruitful experience in America. With its humor, wit, irony, comic and tragic turns, and its technical novelty; the play was a beautiful piece that attracted critics' attention and gained a wide popular and international success. It was premiered at the Gate Theatre and was subsequently produced at the Helen Hayes Theatre, New York; the Lyric Theatre, London's West End Theatre, as well as the Abbey.

Philadelphia Here I Come! shares with many plays written by Friel, or by other authors, the theme of Irish emigration to America and the desire of the Irish youth to escape the economic social and moral desolation of Ireland to more promising vistas for the future. The play revolves around Gar O'Donnell, a 25-year-old young man who is about to leave for Philadelphia to work in a hotel. He has been encouraged to travel by Aunt Lizzy, the childless sister of his mother, who immigrated to America many years ago. Gar's acceptance to travel abroad is urged by his failure to marry his sweetheart Kathy, Senator Doogan's daughter who got married to a rich doctor. He is also driven primarily by a sense of estrangement between him and his father, S.B. O'Donnell, a sixty-year-old merchant. Lack of communication and understanding with his father, the unpromising future in his father's shop (he pays him less than he pays Madge, the housekeeper), and the bitter frustrations of his hopes in love and marriage, are all factors behind his decision to leave Ireland. However, Gar is torn in a severe conflict between all these and his attachment to Ballybeg, his homeland, the unexpressed love for his father and the suppressed love for Kathy. The love / hatred dichotomy runs so deep into his soul that on the Eve of his departure he is mercilessly haunted by past memories of happy moments with his father, his friends and his beloved. Even before leaving to America, he suffers from an aching nostalgia for Ballybeg and its people. The play ends with his question to himself: "God, Boy, why do you have to leave? Why? Why?". The answer is: "I don't know. I.I. I don't know (99).

The most remarkable device in the play is that in which Friel presents Gar's character in a split identity played by two actors: Public Gar and Private Gar. In his stage directions of the play Friel explains:

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 (1996: 27).

Through this genius device, the audience is allowed to overhear what is going on in the mind of Gar, his impressions about and commentaries on the other characters. This leads indeed to funny scenes, which contribute to the hilarious comic effect of the play. This device is necessarily demanded by the theme of the play. Many critics have praised this device as urgently needed by the content of the play. Among them is Walter Kerr who states: "The conceit of the double person was something absolutely demanded by the material, not something ingeniously added to it. The core of the play was rent by contradiction; it had to have twins to plead its case. On top of that the doubleness was true." (1970: 115).

EMOTIONAL DIHOTOMY AS THE MAJOR THEME

The major theme of the play is the emotional dichotomy that an Irish youth faces when he decides to emigrate and leave his family and homeland. Gar is torn between his love of the place and his hatred of the failure that it causes him to face; failure to express love to his father and to achieve mutual understanding with him, failure in love and marriage, and failure to achieve a sense of fulfillment on the economic and social levels. It is only through Private Gar that we can realize the nature of Public's crisis and understand why he wants to leave Ballybeg and also why he cannot do away with his inherent emotional clinging to the place and the people. Philadelphia is highly distinguished by Friel's craft in delineating those themes and in dramatizing the inner thoughts of Gar O'Donnell.

The lack of communication between father and son is cleverly presented through Private's mockery of the same predictable remarks that he hears from his father every night. On the realistic level, very few words are exchanged between Public and S.B. during the whole scene and they are all about monotonous jobs at the shop. If we imagine that the character of Private is excluded, there will be an entirely silent scene being occasionally interrupted by few unbrilliant questions and curt answers. Madge, the housekeeper who cannot hear Private, makes an ironical commentary: "The chatting in this place would deafen a body" (50). The poor Gar yearns for a warm father-and-son chat and his Private self helplessly pleads to his father to speak to him in a fatherly tone: "... 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!. During his speech, "all trace of humor fades from Private's voice. He becomes more and more intense and it is with an effort that he keeps his voice under control" (49). At the end of episode two, after Kathy's departure, Gar is fiercely shattered by past memories and all he wants to cancel the Philadelphia project is a word from his father: "(In a whispered shout) Screwballs, say something! Say something father!" (80).

In the farewell scene with Kathy who has become now Mrs. King, Gar says in an aggressive tone:

Public: I hate the place, and every stone and every rock and every piece of heather around it: Hate it! Hate it! And the sooner that plane whips me away, the better I'll like it!... All this bloody yap about father and son and all this sentimental rubbish about "home land" and "birthplace" – yap! Bloody yap! Impermanence – anonymity – that's what I'm looking for ... To hell will Ballybeg, that's what I say! (79).

However after her departure, Public Gar "immediately buries his face in his hands" while his other self is moaning for "Kate ... sweet Kate Doogan ... my darling Kathy". Thus, the love/hatred dichotomy inside Gar is brilliantly dramatized in such a situation. Earlier in the play Public insists on knowing whether Madge will miss him. Private, near the end of Part I of Episode 3 speaks confidentially into the faces of the unhearing father and the neighbor Canon saying: "... tell me boys, strictly between ourselves, will you miss me? You will? You really will? ... Just close your eyes and think of all the truly wonderful times we've had together ..." (88).

Till the very end of the play he still thinks of his father in case something happens to him while he is abroad: "Madge, you'd let me know he got sick or anything?" (98). This ambivalent attitude towards Ballybeg, the love/hatred dichotomy of the land is magnificently described in the conflicting moods that Gar undergoes throughout his last night in Ballybeg.

The theme of the absent role of the church is referred to in Gar's sense of frustration at the Cannon's inaction and idleness. Being a religious leader, he should have helped the youth overcome their problems, a role that he failed to act in Ballybeg. Private addresses Canon saying: "...you could

translate all this loneliness, this groping, this dreadful bloody buffoonery into Christian terms that will make life bearable for us. And you don't say a word. Why Canon? Why arid Canon? (88).

Part II opens in "the small hours of the morning" with the sleepless S.B. and Gar in the kitchen to have a cup of tea. A fatherly touch begins to show itself awkwardly, though ironically, with S.B.'s advice to Gar to sit in the back of the airplane "...if there was an accident or anything ... it's the front gets it hardest - "(94). It serves as a long-sought-for chance for Gar to share a memory from the past with his father. For him, this may be the last chance to take the decision to cancel his journey. Evaluating Friel's view of the past and referring to its dynamic effect on the present, Kitishat A. states that "his plays cannot separate the past historical sense from its present context" (2015: 31). Gar starts to remind his father of the fishing day they once had in a blue boat. For Gar, it is a moment of high intensity and anticipation; Private says to Public: "he might remember - he might. But if he does, my God, laddo-what if he does ?(94). Antony Roche comments: "The play's crisis occurs when Gar tries to share this private recollection, to extend and translate it from the dialogue between his two selves into dialogue with his father...the two Gars are poised equally between hope and fear"(1995: 100). However, Gar's attempt to revive the sense of love between him and his father as they fail to agree on the details of the memory.

THE STRUCTURE AS DIVIDED BETWEEN TWO LEVELS

Typical of expressionistic drama, Philadelphia Here I Come! depends in its structure on no certain narrative line or any usual plot. It is divided between two levels: the realistic and the supra-realistic. On the surface level, the action is confined to a few hours on the eve of Gar's departure for Philadelphia. During this time, four visits by Mr. Boyle, Kathy, Canon O'Byrne and the Boys are paid to bid him farewell. On the supra-realistic level, two long flashbacks are presented out of the limits of time and place. Gar's free fantasies about the various future jobs that he dreams to occupy in USA and his memories of past happy moments break the linear conventional time. The past, the present and the future are blended together in one single moment. The unities of time, place and action are non-existent since Friel's main concern is to depict the workings of Gar's mind.

The play consists of three episodes, the third being divided into two parts. There are no clear divisions of the scenes which are made to dissolve into one another. The play opens with a domestic realistic scene between Public and Madge, the housekeeper. In this scene the rift in the father-son relation is made clear. S.B. in his son's last day in Ballybeg insists on demanding from him the same dreary jobs in the shop, instead of letting him "have the entire day free"(30). The break with realism is immediately presented when Public goes into his bedroom and begins to "(sing) alternate lines of 'Philadelphia' first half with Private off"(31). The off stage "echo-chamber voice" is used by Friel to signal the entrance of Private or Gar's other self. From this moment on, Public and Private indulge in amusing fantasies about the future in which Public plays the roles of a pilot on a war airplane, a clever football player, a clerk in a hotel, a musician conductor and a violinist. All these fantasies are accompanied by mime, dance, music and the sound effects made by Private. The scene is dominated by merry dialogues between Public and Private who may ask the former questions and play with him the counterpart roles of a military figure, the "president of the biggest chains of the biggest hotels in the world"(35), a radio announcer, a football commentator and a Hollywood girl flirting with Public.

A long flashback scene follows when Private reminds Public of Kathy Doogan. Public and Kathy enter the middle part of the stage that is preserved for flashbacks. This scene sheds light on their love relation and how they have prepared for engagement, wedding and having "fourteen children". Then the scene changes into a room in Senator Doogan's house where Gar goes with Kathy to her father to propose for her hand. The scene is followed with Private's ruthless sarcastic remarks about Public's embarrassment and the way he is turned down by Kathy's father. The flashback scene is ended on a bitter note of frustration.

A hilariously comic scene follows when S.B. enters from the shop. While performing the routine gestures of taking off his apron, Private fancies that S.B. is a maniquin called Marie Celeste and comments on his daily routine movements in "the unctuous tone of the commentators at a maniquin parade"(41). The scenes cleverly dramatize Gar's sense of estrangement from his father and the boredom he feels at the same predictable remarks of every night. Roche comments: "... although we only witness one night in the O'Donnell household, the play manages to convey the experience of what it must be like to endure the same verbal round time after time"(1995: 91). All this is expressed by Private's long speeches to the unhearing S.B. and his parodies of real dialogues, with his father and answering imaginary questions. This is interrupted by the arrival of Master Boyle, the local teacher who comes to bid Gar farewell.

The conflict inside Gar between going and staying reaches a height when Master Boyle embraces him, after which he rushes to his bedroom “his hands up to his face”, he struggles with himself to suppress the sentimental attachment to Ballybeg, Master Boyle, and Kathy. The scene ends with Public and Private singing “limply” together: “Philadelphia , Here I Come”(55).

Episode two opens with a farcical scene between Private and Public exchanging silly verbal riddles. A gain, Gar indulges in fantasies about the future and imagines himself as a “US Senate! Senator Gareth O’Donnell, Chairman of the Foreign Aid Committee!”(57), and an officer at the airport checking Public’s documents. While revising his documents he finds a letter from Aunt Lizzy, a device which entails the second flashback in the play. It’s about the day Aunt Lizzy came to Ballybeg with her husband and an American friend to convince Gar to join them in America. The inner struggle within Gar comes to a height when Private ruthlessly mocks the sentimentality of Public who has impetuously decided to travel abroad being tempted by expected love, attention and communication with Aunt Lizzy:

Private: She’ll tuck you into your air-conditioned cot every night ...

And croon, ‘sleep well, my li’l honey child,

(Public whistles determinedly).

She got you soft on the account of the day it was, didn’t she? (Public whistles louder). And because she said you were an O’Donnell-“cold like” ... But of course when she threw her arms around you –well,well,well....Poor little orphan boy !

Public : Shut up! Shut up!

Private: (In child’s voice) Ma-ma ...Ma-ma.

(Public flings open the bedroom door and dashes into the kitchen)(67).

A boisterous scene follows when Gar’s friends or “ the Boys” enter. The main point of the scene is the contrast between reality and illusion or truth and memory. The Boys boast of love affairs and hot courts with girls, while Private tells us that it is all imagination and it has never really happened. The scene presents the vacancy of Irish youth with their trivial concerns (dance, football, and girls). They “give the impression that they are busy, purposeful, randy gents about to embark upon some exciting adventure. But their bluster is not altogether convincing. There is something false about it”(96). The Episode ends with the farewell scene with Kathy whom Public treats in an unwelcoming manner, in spite of his inner attachment to her. The curtain falls on Public being fiercely tormented by Private’s indulgence in romantic remembrances of the past.

However, the details of both Gar and S.B. do not converge; the boat turns out to have been brown instead of blue; S.B. cannot remember that he once put his jacket round Gar’s shoulders and gave him his hat. Even the “Green ColouredRibbono” song turns to have been “The Flower of Sweet Strabane”. The moment of joy is lost in S.B.’s attempt to remember the unimportant details. Private immediately begins to mock: “so now you know: it never happened! Ha-ha-ha-ha-ha “(95).

When Public goes out and Madge enters, S.B. tries to remind her of one day in the past when Gar was still young. That day, Gar refused to go to school and said he wanted to “go into my Daddy’s business”. S.B. is proud that it was he who could convince him to go to school and they went together “the two of us, hand in hand, as happy as larks...”(97). Madge, in turn, denies the details: “he never had a sailor suit”(96). As Christopher Murray puts it, “That play is balanced on a knife-edge of uncertainties.” (1997: 30). When Gar reenters, S.B is already out and any attempt to bring them together is utterly doomed to failure. Roche ironically remarks: "It has taken so long for the two cagey adversaries to get to the negotiating table and attempt to engage in meaningful dialogue, but they don’t sing the same songs and the symbolic emblems don’t match up." (1995: 101) Thus, failure to share happy memories is deftly dramatized by having Gar absent when S.B. at last remembers a joyful day with Gar in the past. The play ends with Gar being still torn between the two opposite wishes: to leave and to stay.

The structure of Philadelphia Here I Come! partakes of expressionistic drama in the episodic structure and the imperceptible dissolve of one scene into another. The structure of the play is built mainly on going back in time through memories and flashbacks. Neil Corcoran states: “Friel’s much-debated structural experimentation may also be read as a formal enactment of the theme of retrospection”(1993: 15). Moreover the flashback technique in the play is always compared to that of Miller’s Death of a Salesman. “The expressionistic techniques of both playwrights,” Elmer Andrews observes, “allow them to interweave fantasy and memory into the present emotional moment in order to widen it and deepen it. Expressionism enables them to take us beyond the banalities of surface reality ”(1995: 85).

THE DIVIDED PROTAGONIST AS A METAPHOR OF SELF-DIVISION

The character of Gar with its double figure of Private and Public is a supra-realistic trick that Friel invents to meet the needs of his subject. The divided protagonist is a metaphor of self-division as a central idea of the play. The dichotomy of place for the Irish youth, with its inevitable consequences on the social, political and religious levels has had its clear stamp on Irish men of letters including Friel. O'Tool mentions the examples of Friel's Public and Private Gar; Hugh Leonard's *Da* where two different actors play the character of Charlie at the age of seventeen and at the age of forty one; and Tom Kilroy's *Double Cross* in which one actor plays two aspects of one personality, Brendan Bracken and his alter ego William Joyce. (1991)

While in expressionistic plays one actor may play many roles, here we have two actors playing one character. However, the expressionistic streak is apparent in the fact that both Private and Public in their fantasies of the future play as various roles as any expressionistic character may be allowed to play. They play the ensemble roles of a football player and a sport commentator, a clerk and a president in a big hotel, a radio announcer, a violinist a musical conductor, a Hollywood girl and a young man, a military chief and a soldier. "In this manner", Claire Gleitman states, "Gar seeks to distance himself from the miserable realities of his daily life and probable future, reconstructing them through energetic nearly desperate play" (1997: 234). Unlike the double protagonist of O'Neill's *Days Without Ends* one feels a close affinity between both Public and Private, they complement each other and even share the same qualities, in spite of the fact that Private enjoys much more freedom of speech than Public does.

In spite of the striking passivity of Public on the realistic level, Private has many functions on the supra-realistic realm. Public is hesitant, shy and dumb while Private is active, daring and talkative. Roche mentions three different functions of Private that are "crucial to the overall effect of the play" (1995: 86). The first of these is that "(Public and Private) encourage and inspire each other to a greater degree of self-expression than is possible in the Public or family domain" (1995: 87). Examples of this are abundant in the play when Gar criticizes the rigidly routine acts and "predictable remarks" of his father, or the absence of the Canon's role as a Christian guide in the society. The second function is "to fill in the gap opened up by the silences between S.B. and Gar Public" (1995: 90). This is achieved in the long silent scene between Gar and S.B. when Private embarks on a parody of a father/son intimate chat. In these scenes Private confides to his unhearing father his secrets, his hopes and his emotional need to communicate with someone. The third dramatic function of Private mentioned by Roche is "to goad Public to remember" (1995: 96). It is made clear in the play that the two flashbacks were presented after Private's insistence to remind Gar of events he would rather avoid remembering: "Remember – that was Katie's tune. You needn't pretend you have forgotten. And it reminds you of the night the two of you made all the plans..." (38). He also reminds him of his aunt's visit in which she convinced him to travel to America, "They arrived in the afternoon; remember? ... so this was your mother's sister – remember?" (60).

To these three functions we may add that Private helps to heighten the conflict within Gar's soul. He encourages him to travel by dandling his imagination with future marvelous outstanding successes, then he forces him to confront inner feelings of attachment to the now married Kathy, of the embarrassing situation with her father Senator Doogan when he "made a right bloody cow's ass of(him)-self." (39). He raised Public's fear that Lizzy will also treat him as a child. Moreover, the comic effect of the play depends almost entirely on the existence of Private. His humorous remarks, ironical parodies, dancing, singing and playing roles endow the play with an amusing flavor.

We may agree with Andrews who observes that "Gar is the same gormless ninny at the end as he was at the beginning – divided, emotionally immature, evasive, incomplete" (1995: 89). Gar is by no means a round character he does not benefit by the review that he made of his life, he is unable to develop a mature, balanced meaningful relationship with those around him especially Kathy and his father. "He is full of fine talk.", Andrews observes, "but it takes him nowhere" (1995: 89). Madge tells us that when S.B. was his age he was just like him and predicts that "when he's (Gar) the age the boss is now, he'll turn out just the same. And although I won't be here to see it you'll find that he's learned nothin' in between times" (98). Dantanus remarks: "Although Friel's divided protagonist may not have been strictly speaking, an innovation, it was a much more successful transposition of the classical idea of the mask into a modern framework." (1988: 93) It is a genius device used by Friel to serve the function of long soliloquies in classical drama, or to compensate for the lack of the narrator or the narrative style in novels and short stories, that enables the writer to dive deeply into the inner thought of his character. No doubt, the seeds of the narrative style in Friel – the short story writer – are still there, but they are replaced here by the funny figure of Private. Moreover, Gar shares with Beckett's Didi and Gogo in *Waiting for Godot*, the sense of imprisonment and inability to take action. Like them he is locked up in

a central situation or dilemma of which he finds no way out – a dilemma that emerges rather from inside him than being imposed on him by outside forces.

Like most expressionistic plays, the other minor characters are only there to highlight the conflict within the soul of the main figure. They all share the sense of estrangement and lack of communication. Each of them is living on a secluded island. S.B. is the most incommunicable figure who helps exacerbate the sense of isolation and exile in his son. Almost all his utterances are reduced to the material practical tasks of the shop. With the exception of the last moments in the play he speaks with Gar about nothing but the coils of barbed wire, the rat-trap and the salted fish. The only occasion that a sense of fatherly warmth is felt in him is when he reminds Madge of Gar as a ten-year-old boy when he used to accompany him to school. Ironically enough, Gar is absent, a device that dramatizes the idea that even if the characters try to come nearer to each other they fail. Gar wonders: “God – maybe – Screwballs – behind those dead eyes and that flat face are there memories of precious moments in the past”(82). A human touch is given to his character only towards the end when he, sleepless at the night of Gar's departure, looks at his son's bedroom, sighs and contemplates his luggage.

Madge is the typical housemaid who – taking over the role of the absent mother – becomes Gar's confidante. She tries to bring Gar and S.B. nearer. She is sometimes the spoilt servant who complains about much work and who bursts out shouting at her master. She serves to provide Gar with information about his dead mother. Canon O'Byrne is another target for Private's bitter irony he does not play the role expected from him as a churchman. The Boys are typical Irish youth who represent Bullybeg's vacant and empty-headed youth. The issue of the contrast between the sordid reality and the idealist memory of past failures as victories is illustrated through their boasting memories of love affairs and victories in football. The rest of the characters are merely types. Master Boyle is a typical Irish man who contradicts himself when he advises Gar to “Forget Ballybeg and Ireland”, then he immediately asks Gar to write him letters: “perhaps you'll write me”(54). In general, all the minor characters are delineated on realistic grounds.

THE SETTING BETWEEN REALITY AND MEMORY.

Philadelphia, Here I Come! has a composite setting. The stage is divided into three portions: the kitchen on the left, Gar's bedroom on the right and they are moved upstage. The remaining part is “fluid” as Friel stipulates in his stage directions. It is reserved for flashbacks, which means that this portion of stage represents the domain of the imagination. However it is made clear early in the play that Gar's bedroom represents a private realm of the free fantasies of the imagined future in U.S.A. The middle part of the stage is used only in Episode One where it represents both the outside of Senator Doogan's house and a room in the same house. Etherton remarks that: “this additional space is used rather timidly, however, and the characters tend to remain in their more naturalistically realized settings”(156).

However, this does not mean that it is the kitchen that is preserved for the realistic realm. The second flashback of Aunt Lizzy's visit takes place in the kitchen, a device that indicates that Gar's imagination is not confined to a certain place. Private is free to move in all parts of the house being by no means limited by the accompaniment of Public. In Part I of Episode three, Public goes to his bedroom while Private remains in the kitchen mocking S.B. and Canon O'Byrne who are playing checkers. Meanwhile, Public is at the bedroom miming the actions of Private. Etherton comments: “This can work both ways: Gar can remember the rooms, continue to feel physically present in them; while the others can appear to be mindless of his ‘continuing presence’”(1989: 156).

Friel uses light and darkness aptly to signal the transition from the realistic realm to the supra-realistic realm of imagination. When the curtain rises it is only the kitchen that is lit. Then, the bedroom is lit when Gar enters his private province where Private's first appearance is presented with the off-stage echo chamber voice. Black-outs are used to signal the end of flashbacks. Patrick Burke significantly observes that lighting is used by Friel to highlight the imaginary (supra-realistic) aspects of the play: “... in the juxta-positioning of private and public spheres, of time free and time dominated, of music and noise ... it is the significance and power of the former which, in each instance, Friel's lighting serves to underline.” (1997: 13).

LANGUAGE AS REFLECTING THE FLUCTUATING MOODS OF THE TWO GARS

Philadelphia Here I Come! reveals Friel's mastery of language. The play roams over a great variety of accents and tones of speech. We have the Anglo-Irish slang spoken sometimes by Private: “An you Jist Keep atalkin' to you'self all the time, Mistah,”(38). There is also the Irish American of Aunt Lizzy and the U.S. accent of the mocking Private: “(In heavy U.S. accent): I'm PartickPalinakis, president of the biggest chain of the biggest hotels in the world. We're glad to have you Mr. O'Donnell”(35).The

accents and tones of language vary with the variation of roles that Private plays with Public .They speak in the reverential tone of prayers and of a radio announcer, in the active enthusiastic tone of a football commentator and the unctuous tone of a fashion parade commentator. The lengthy turns by Private glaringly contrast with the monosyllabic words of the stuttering Public when he speaks with his father: “Aye”, “Two or was it three?” “I earned it”, “More tea?” Throughout the whole play, Private is talkative and dominating, performing the role of a narrator or chorus in the play. Pieces of lyricism are occasionally found to express memories of happy moments in the past. The following passage is one of the few lyrical passages in the play by Private:

"... Once upon a time a boy and his father sat in a blue boat on a lake on an afternoon in May, and on that afternoon a great beauty happened, a beauty that had haunted the boy ever since, because he wonders now did it really take place or did he imagined it (89).

These lyrical pieces contrast, with the following brief staccato telegraphic dialogue between Public and Private on Aunt Lizzy’s offer:

Private : Regrets ?

Public: None.

Private : Uncertainties ?

Public : None

Private : Little tiny niggling reservations?

Public : None

Private : Her grammar ?

Public : Shut up ! (66)

The conversations between Public and Madge are realistic and confidential and in the colloquial Anglo-Irish. In Episode One both Public and Private’s speech is exuberant, vital and youthful with the heavy use of lilt and interjections: “Yip-eeeeee”, “ yahoooo”; “ Righ – too – del –loo- del oo- delooo – del –ah.”

Language is beautifully coupled with non-verbal forms of speech such as winks, dances, mime, “ejiting”, nudging, gyrating, and giggling, with the accompaniment of the music of the record player. The following passage is typical of this:

(Public dances up and down the length of his bedroom. Occasionally he leaps high into the air, or does a neat bit of foot-work. Occasionally he lilt. Occasionally he talks to different people he meets on the dance floor)(38).

Ann Blake comments by stating that critics have described the play as “the most physical play to have emerged in Irish Theatre”(1987:108). Moreover, the use of silence is another successful theatrical device that Friel manipulates. George O’Brien remarks: “The play’s ultimate and most telling expression of distance, however, is silence when words fail Gar, emotional disenfranchisement is the inevitable result”(1990: 53).

The play’s mood varies from the comic to the pathetic in a theatrically effective context. The play depends on the sudden and apt shifts of tone, from the tragic to the comic and from the ironical to the sentimental, but the humorous mood predominates the play and this is perhaps why the play is widely accepted by audiences. “Much of humor in Philadelphia”, K. Ferris observes, “depends upon the discrepancy between what Public Gar says and does and what Private Gar thinks. Through this device Friel exploits the comic elements (and also the pathetic elements) inherent in the plot.” (1997: 128)

The refrain song “Philadelphia here I come right back where I started from” is adapted from a popular song “California, Here I Come”. It is heavily repeated throughout to serve several functions. Among them is the self-assurance of Gar who keeps on referring to it in order to evade all the doubts or the inner attachment to Ballybeg that dishearten him. Roche significantly remarks that the repetition of this refrain "... becomes appropriately a leitmotif that underscores a process of inevitability in the same manner as ‘Let’s go / We can’t / Why not / We’re waiting for Godot’ does in Beckett’s drama”(1995: 88).

Similar in effect is the other refrain from Edmond Burke’s “Reflections on the Revolution in France”: “ It is now sixteen or seventeen years since I saw the queen of France, then the Duphiness at Versailles...” which is repeated recurrently without any relation to the context. Gradually it gains significance with the recurrent relatedness with the memory of his dead mother, with Kathy his beloved, with the memory of Ballybeg and Ireland, and with his efforts to build bridges of communication between him and his father. Friel uses it as a verbal equivalent of Gar’s need for love, compassion, home, and communication. This device reveals influences from T.S. Eliot’s concept of the “objective correlative” in his Waste Land, a device in language in which the author’s personality is disguised in a refrain or a recurrent quotation from other writers to be a verbal equivalent for the emotion he wants to express. Instead of stating his protagonist’s emotions directly, Friel persistently

uses this refrain that seems baffling at the beginning, but gradually gains meaning by repetition. This is what Eliot means in his essay on "Hamlet" where he states that the best way to express a certain emotion is to find "a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events, which (will be) the formula of that particular emotion." (1958: 107) This technique is applied largely to Philadelphia in the fantasies of Public and Private and most remarkably in the divided self of the protagonist, which in itself stands as an objective correlative of self-division between love and hatred, reality and illusion, staying and leaving and all the psychological dualities that torment Gar.

Those devices contribute to the distancing effect that Friel tries to make in the play. Though the subject of the play, by nature, arouses sentimentality and pathos, Friel resorts to many devices including irony, laughter, sarcasm and parodies to achieve the "Alienation effect" that Brecht stipulates for a successful play. Distance is affected in the last few moments of the play when Madge directly addresses the audience, a device that is to be used and emulated – on a much wider ground – in plays to come, as we shall see in *The Loves of Cass Mc Guire*, *Losers*, *Faith Healer*, *Dancing at Laughnasa* and *Molly Sweeney*. Distance is also acquired through Private's final speech to Public in the end of the play: "Watch her (Madge) carefully, every movement, every gesture, every little peculiarity: keep the camera whirring, for this is a film you'll run over and over again..."(99).

Despite the various supra-realistic devices that Friel manipulates, the play's realistic background is undeniable. Although the play borrows heavily from expressionism in terms of structure, characterization, setting and language, Friel never indulges in the baffling mysteries of experimentation that his fellow playwrights may have been attracted to. To mention one example, Denis Johnston's expressionistic plays were not welcome on stage despite their artistic and theatrical values. This is owing to the difficulty of the highly stylized techniques of plays like *The Old Lady Says: No!* (1929) and *A Bride for the Unicorn*(1933). Friel's device of giving a realistic frame to the dramatic presentation of the free imagination, reveries and memories of the central character, is similar to Denis Johnston's device of the romantic playlet that opens *The Old Lady Says:No !*. In this playlet, Robert Emmet, the protagonist is accidentally stunned and consequently, all the events that follow take place in the numbed mind of the unconscious character, in the form of a nightmare about modern Dublin. However, the atmosphere in both plays is totally different. Friel's play does not have the nightmarish, exaggerated and ambiguous images of Johnston's play. While Johnston, like many expressionists aims at shocking his audience into a disillusionment about modern Ireland, Friel depends rather on wit and comedy and the clever blending of the comic and tragic. The realistic frame of his play shows to what extent Friel is anxious to be articulate and comprehensible to his audiences.

CONCLUSION

The significance of *Philadelphia Here I Come!* does not lie merely in its intrinsic technical values. It lies primarily in the fact that it embodies many of Friel's artistic and thematic preoccupations. The question of an appropriate form that kept on worrying Friel whenever he embarked on a new play was not out of a stylization mania or an extravagant show off of artistic capacities. On the contrary, it was out of a genuine wish to be articulate and to choose the most adequate form for his serious themes. For him, content-and-form harmony is the criteria for a successful play that depends, in his view, on "this happy fusion that occurs so seldom between content and form. There is no point in discussing them separately" (1970). Through the double identity of his protagonist, Friel manages to incarnate the state of self-division and emotional dichotomy inside an Irish young man who remains stuck between his attachment to the place and the people and his hatred to all forms of failure he has to suffer because of that attachment. Till the very end of the play, neither Public nor Private manages to overcome this love/hatred dichotomy. Moreover, Friel manages craftily to fuse the different elements of the drama including characterization, structure, setting and language to incarnate that sense of self-division in Gar O'Donnel.

Ann Blake observes: "This is the play which made Friel's name".(1997: 109). *Philadelphia Here I Come!* deserves the rank of a masterpiece because it combines both the appreciation of critics and the admiration of audiences. In 1966, the play ran for 326 performances in New York, being thus, Kathleen Ferris states, "the longest running Irish play on Broadway to date." (1997: 129)The play has its intrinsic literary values and amusing qualities that attract both reader and spectator. It reflects many influences including Miller, O'Neill, Brecht and Eliot. However, it is like a genuine crystal that reflects various colors and yet has its own charm that emerges from the inside.

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