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Speaking the Unspeakable-The Hyphenated in the Irish-Caribbean Dialogue

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ABSTRACT

Speaking the unspeakable is to see how far the creative acts of cultural translation in the conflict between history and memory sharpen a natural native knack to converge in a polyphonic way. I pay special attention to the influence that the archetypal theme of speaking the unspeakable in the novel through the initiation experience of the subaltern develops and exerts in the context of increased intercultural awareness. This awareness of the cultural dilemma seems especially important because, in my observation, there is as much alienation and chaos among individuals in the daily contexts of speech communication as among heroes in the imagined communities of literary texts. The hyphenated Irish-Caribbean dialogue of this article aims to bridge cultures in the literary thought of the many writers. Padraic O Conaire and George Lamming, in the two works of *Exile (E)* and *The Pleasures of Exile (PE)*, respectively, are given as examples of the dialogic interlocution

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1. The Kaleidoscope of Memory

The bond of sympathy uniting Ireland and Britain, and the Caribbean and Britain, as victimized nations of British imperialism, is curiously affirmed by the preponderance of reflections upon cultural identity in the relevant literatures. Among the many issues of identity that Irish and Caribbean texts negotiate, particular concerns emerge within and around what may be termed the exile of modern literature. In approaching the problem of exile, though the hackneyed term may be as the direct effect of emigration in a sojourn to a foreign place, there is a growing recognition that it is a very complex issue that requires to deal with from many different perspectives in order to be able to consider the total exile experience and its consequent effects like the inescapable experience of alienation. Alienation generally means an estrangement from society, isolation, and powerlessness.

This paper is more concerned with the 'memory' and its historical effects; it commemorates the level of unease in the modern mind's memory of the Great Irish Famine of the 1840s as one of the most tragic episodes in Irish history, and its alienating aftermath in the form of countless exiles in many different countries such as Britain, the United States and Australia. When popular music in England was used to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the victims of the famine, this was confronted with an agitated debate in Ireland through *The Irish Times*. This was followed by a letter from Tony Blair, the British Prime Minister, in 1997 that expressed great sorrow at the memory of such a terrible human disaster. Furthermore, Celia Keenan (2003) quotes Blair's courageous sympathetic words of condemnation: "those who governed in London at the time failed their people through standing by while a

crop failure turned into a massive human tragedy" (p. 113). Such famine's commemoration is a motive to identify history with memory, and the truth, as Jacques Le Goff neatly epitomizes (1992) sees the historical 'truth' in history, is that both history and memory nourish one another. It is the fact that "memory is the "raw material of history. Whether mental, oral, or written, it is the living source from which historians draw." For Le Goff (1992), memories motivate historians to remember, and historians should dialectically correct history to make it "knowable" when forgotten moments flash as the unconscious workings of memory: "To privilege memory excessively is to sink into the unconquerable flow of time" (pp. xi-xii).

Doubtless, it is difficult not to believe, on one hand, Mary E. Daly's (1986) thought that the Irish famine "cannot be viewed as an isolated event" (p. 1), that the famine emigrants as "the truly destitute" with inevitable reference to "coffin ships" (p. 107), is difficult not to believe. Irish people were forced to emigrate because of the excessive mortality and it was mandatory for people to pay off the price of their emigrant travel. Emigration is also partly due to the fact that individuals who are living in abject poverty need to get married: "In fact, as on land, dirt appears to have been the major liability" (p. 108). So, individuals dream of going to London to be rich and come back home again. Further, Christine Kinealy (1995) introduces her book *The Great Calamity: The Irish Famine 1845-52* that with a statement of the tragic fact of the Irish Famine of 1845-52:

The Major tragedy of the Irish Famine of 1845-52 marked watershed in modern Irish history. Its occurrence, however, was neither inevitable not unavoidable ... an event which dramatically changed the economic and



social structure of Ireland, and which imprinted a lasting perception on the minds of the Irish people. (p. xv).

On the other, Kennan (2003) argues that it is rare to find only one novel that recounts the woes of Irish immigrants to London, “yet during the period of the Great Famine Britain was the destination of the vast majority of refugees” (p. 115). There is some degree of truth in Kennan’s account, but this does not mean that such woes have not been recorded, at least, in one text. Indeed, if it was intrinsically difficult to tackle this post-famine emigration issue as the aftermath of the Irish famine in narratives, it would be equally hard to measure, and to reflect, the actual mass sufferings by the literary pen. It seems to me, however, that Kenan refers to the period 1847-50, whereas *Exile* is set in the 1910, a masterpiece that remembers probably the past famine when it draws on the post-famine period, especially the woes of the emigrants to London—the City of Darkness.

2. The Hyphenated Dialogue

This kaleidoscope of memory given above seeks to bridge cultures in the literary thought of many writers such as William Shakespeare, Aime Cesaire, George Lamming and Padraic O Conaire, respectively, in works to include: *The Tempest* (TT), *A Tempest* (AT), *The Pleasures of Exile* (PE), and *Exile* (E). Each literary text approaches the memory game with a unique set of advantages in the writing style that impinges upon the background, interests, abilities, and goals of the literary thought. This unique approach demonstrates in certain ways how a writer relates to the facets of national perils of the locale to capture a certain provocative idea and to get it across. But, how deeply compounded are the literary texts, with the lasting impression of the British empire to

colonize other nations, to breathe down the colonial resurgence united in what Lamming has termed this “idea” of England [original emphasis] (PE 25)

The use of paradox is therefore to identify two different ideas in a situation that seems to be quite strange. On the one hand, from one dialogic perspective, the article “Translation as Liberal Arts” (Gewaily 2013) examines whether the acts of translation as recreations of the past that are moving towards the future will provide an urgent, and thus important, effect as it helps to produce anti-colonial arguments that can ultimately do convince. It examines, in detail, the two plays, TT and AT, by two playwrights, the British Shakespeare and the Caribbean Césaire, respectively. It aims at showing whether the new version of Césaire fails or not, and whether Césaire’s method of adaptation and transformation is more or less well documented and culture-specific. In this regard, the message does offer us any very strong sense of how the anti-colonial Caribbean responses may have differed in specific ways from the British colonial sites of exile with the passing of colonies long years ago.

On the other hand, from another dialogic perspective, this present article examines the developments in thought through the paradox of attraction and recoil in the light of the writing back and the points of leverage in the awareness of loss in exile as examined in both E and PE together. O Conaire and Lamming examine the conflict between memory and history, in the view of the ruthless struggle that the voices of Prospero and Caliban, the two identified but dissenting voices, encounter as interlocutors in both the original TT and the updated AT, to nurture other voices to remember the past. Memory is central to the one’s sense of life. This means that the sense of self-identity is



the total composite of one's memories, and this shows up how much significant is memory in real life. In this particular sense of the interlocution of two literary perspectives, the role of the memory with a kaleidoscope of wide events is crucial to our sense of life, especially the sense of one's identity is the total composite of one's memories, and this enthrones the value of history in real life.

Considering the Nicaraguan revolution, in particular, and the universal liberation struggles, in general, Carlos Fuentes, quoted by Barbara Harlow (1987), says that "we must go forward, because the present is unjust and insufferable, but we can not kill the past in doing so, for the past is our identity, and without our identity we are nothing" (p. 82). For O Conaire, the encounter between the Irish and British perceptions of homeland fits much of that national claim because it is essential to the struggle between two memories in the Irish past and present. In an attempt to explore this tension, this leads to the significance of presenting the human experience of the metropolitan London, a useful perspective discussed later in Lamming's PE, which admits the issue of migration and its dynamic aspects in the relationships between Caribbean and British cultural history. In this regard, this article stems from a purpose which is to communicate the graphic images that seem to pass from the energetic memories of writers to the perceptions of readers through a set of comparative perspectives.

This cultural dilemma of the Irish and Caribbean peoples will be discussed first in the relationship of each to the English colonialism. 'Had the English really helped to invent Ireland?' is a central question to imagine the Irish and Caribbean relation around which the work of Padraic O Conaire

(1883-1928) turns. The hyphenated Irish-Caribbean dialogue between the two modern writers of O Conaire and Lamming (1927-) stands for a realistic position in the observation of the material facts of life in the imperial capital of London. Both authors exercised a remarkable ingenuity in the stylistics of exile.

3. Writing Exile

Taken together, O Conaire's *Deoraiocht* (1910), the first originally published in Irish, and much later in English translation (*Exile* 1994), and Lamming's non-fiction book *The Pleasures of Exile* (PE 1960, 1984), provide points of leverage in the rich and growing body of literature that bears the burden of representing exile in London, the center of imperial metropolitan culture of the colonizer, where the exile's sense of poverty is pervasive, and that is often to present critical reflections upon the intercultural awareness of a loss of place in the literal - metaphorical images of exile.

This comparison between OConaire and Lamming is based on the fact that a postcolonial perspective, says C.L. Innes (2000), "can enlarge our understanding" between texts that register the Irish culture and any other text of the culture and narrative of peoples "who experienced colonization" on one hand, and between the same Irish texts and other texts whose narrative originates from England and "marked by England's encounter with Ireland" (p. 29). The styles of the two texts might be different, because Lamming's PE is autobiographical, while the *Exile* by OConaire, who spent his twenties as a civil worker in London, is an invented piece of fiction. However, their message is probably the same: trying to grapple with the major issues of politics, race, and self-worth. This is so, because the problem of cultural identity is almost encountered by everyone



in a colonized society. In this way, I consider both O'Conaire and Lamming as postcolonial writers. Both Lamming and O'Conaire are immigrants who left the Caribbean and Irish regions, in turn, for the metropolis of London- the locale of countless immigrants from Egypt, Nigeria, Lebanon and many other regions of the globe (Ahmed, 2003, p.314). Generally speaking, the view of emigration, in the view of Kleiner, Okeke and Sorensen, in their forward to Migration, Immigration and Emigration to International Perspective, requires readers to “consider the place and influence of macrolevels of analysis (e.g. the structure of the personal social networks), associated symbol systems (e.g. values, motives), and their interactive effects as well” (p. 8). Let us see how the main character of O'Conaire's Exile works in this general context of emigration.

O'Conaire's Exile is essentially a picaresque account of the exiled life of the main character Michael Mullen, who, in series of flashbacks between the city of London and that of Galway, appears to be so sensitive that he rejects an insult and any degrading sense of his humanness. The wanderings of Michael, from Galway city through London and then to Galway and back to London to die there, allow him to compare his brief sojourn of living experiences in London with the living relatives and friends in his hometown. This novel describes, say Roger McHugh and Maurice Harmon (1982), the “urban life convincingly” (p. 299). John Jordan praises this story as one of the best “exquisite” prose written in this century (p.18). Before coming back to London, a short visit to Galway makes Michael able to remember things that have happened in the past. Michael has quite a confusing standpoint when it comes to trying to figure out where

home is. He is Irish, but also trying to be perceived as English. In his introduction to The Oxford Book of Exile, John Simpson (1995) adds to the obvious political and religious exiles other aspects of exile:

I include [...] writers who needed a quieter or a more stimulating atmosphere in which to work [...] people who merely turned in on themselves in order to block out the real world, or who created other and even more real worlds of their own [...] men and women who turned home to their families and friends, or found things were worse at home than they had been in exile, or who never went home at all because they no longer felt the interest [...] Exile can after all be a relief as well as a sadness. (p. vii)

It should be kept in mind that these emphasized sentences in Simpson's version of exile are aspects of exile I expect to trace in my examination of O'Conaire's text E in the light of what Lamming reveals in PE.

4. Writing back to the Metropolis of London

My aim is to demonstrate that Exile, a book condemned by one critic as a betrayal of Irish culture, plays a major role in the birth of a new Irish historiography in its overall feeling and experiences of exile in the exploration of the continuities between the Irish past and present. By way of rejoinder to this objection, and in the light of the encountered Caribbean-British cultures in Lamming's text, O'Conaire's view of the interface between British and Irish cultures is so focused on the conflict generated by the paradox of attraction and recoil in its context of the terror lingering in the streets of London.

The paper traces the question of what the form or approach of writing back to the metropolis of London these worries might be and how they might fit (or misfit) well into this tradition when the issue of memory is a possible avenue to stretch the definition



of exile in London. In order to perceive the possible fitness or not, the alternative suggested by Patrick Colm Hogan (2004) is worth mentioning:

Sometimes postcolonization authors fit well into an indigenous tradition; sometimes they write back to indigenous tradition; sometimes they segment the indigenous or metropolitan tradition and choose a subaltern element; sometimes they accept or even extend colonialist attitudes and ideas—and that is only a fraction of the possibilities. The relations between an individual work and the various disunified traditions that precede and enable it are multiple and variable, and, if we are to understand the new work, it is necessary to understand these relations. (p. 234)

Declan Kiberd's extraordinary book *Inventing Ireland* is a standard definition of the invention of Ireland as a nation, of the elements that make up modern Ireland, and of what we might understand if we know that the life of almost all Irish dwellers is conducted through the medium of English as the standard language. For David Crystal (2003/1997), the necessity to use English is due to two factors: "the expansion of British colonial power, which peaked towards the end of the nineteenth century, and the emergence of the United States as the leading economic power of the twentieth century"(p. 59).

Ireland after the famine of the mid-nineteenth century, says Kiberd (1996), "was nowhere, awaiting for its appropriate images and symbols to be inscribed in it. Its authors had no clear idea of whom they were writing for. Many of the native Irish were caught between two languages ... were, for the most part, painfully imitative of English literary modes, which they practiced with the mind of excess possible only to the insecure (p. 115). Kiberd (1996) discusses one possible way of assimilating new

elements to construct Irish society because "identity is seldom straightforward and given, more often a matter of negotiation and exchange". Another way asserts that the English helped "to invent Ireland" (p. 1) because nations badly needed each other for self-definition (p. 2). The question of "the status and relevance of Gaelic," C. L. Innes (2000) suggests one third way, "as opposed to English-language literature" has been one of the most "heated issues for cultural nationalists" (pp. 25-26). The main thing to remember, says Kiberd (1996), is that the recent movement for national independence claims that "exile is the nursery of nationality," meaning that a faithful belonging to the land evidenced in the writings of those exiles (p. 2).

British imperial policy was not to allow the Irish (the other) to become independent. The argument of J.M. Blant (1993) criticizes the European civilization's belief that all other cultures are inferior to Europe in terms of race, culture, beliefs and history. Because Europe "eternally advances, progresses, modernizes", this belief system makes everyone believe that Europeans are the "makers of history" and this is called "Eurocentric diffusionism" (Blant's emphasis, p. 1). Even more than this is the mistaken tendency of European schools that all non-European peoples like Africa continued to be described "as savages and Oriental societies as decadent and despotic"(p. 4), the current modernization of Europe is a result of "internal qualities", which most modern scholars believe, not of interaction with societies of other cultures (p. 2). Thus, the invention of Ireland, says Kiberd (1996), commits the Irish writer to fight for two kinds of freedom: "the return to a past, pre-colonial Gaelic identity, still yearning for expression if long-denied, or the reconstruction of a national identity,



beginning from first principles all over again” (p. 286). A good criterion of postcolonial writing, Kiberd concludes, is the one written by a native writer whose authorial commitment is “a text committed to cultural resistance” (p. 6). This means that the Irish text in either of its two kinds of free writing should be resisting in nature.

Because O Conaire’s (1994) text deeply presents the condition of exiles in London, the question is how much Kiberd’s (1996) view reflects the visions of the author whose distinguished literary career has been overlooked in Kiberd’s text as it has been by most other critics who pass on O Conaire very swiftly. There are, however, a number of detailed Irish studies on O Conaire who writes in Irish not English such as Tomas de Bhaldraithe, Gearoid Denvir, Seosamh Mac Grianna, Tomas O Broin, and Padraign Riggs.

Most striking about the English critique on this novel is its doubtless main ideas, however specific, as guidelines to any research. There is a small section on this novel by John Jordan in *The Pleasures of Gaelic Literature* (1977). There is also the magisterial study of the Gaelic Revival *The Prose literature of the Gaelic revival, 1881-1921: Ideology and Innovation* (1994) by Philip O’Leary (1994) who concludes that O Conaire is a pioneer leader in this literary Irish movement in “his willingness to deal seriously with authentic urban themes in Irish.” Moreover, O Conaire ¹presents the modern urban to revive the native Irish in their social communication. Further, O’Leary goes on, O Conaire’s leadership in this Gaelic Movement shows that his language possessed the flexibility to treat

entirely new things and thoughts in a natural and artistic manner. Nonetheless, however firm his commitment to bringing Irish into the twentieth century, and however great his own debt to the intellectual freedom and ferment of urban life, he invariably saw the city through the eyes of an outsider (p. 340)

O Conaire’s employment in the British civil service enabled him to have a good command of English. However, O Conaire found it best for his authorial intentions to create the text E in Irish, an unfamiliar language to London publishers that could impede the future publication of the text for the English audience. However, O Conaire’s text translated into English is a literary masterpiece for being really a sign of belonging to the national identity of Ireland.

On the contrary, we recall writers such as Oscar Wilde, who imitated the English literary modes and wrote his literary texts in English. W.B. Yeats thought that it was possible to imagine Ireland while being physically there in London. When a group of writers declared that Ireland is like a waste land or a land of ghosts, Yeats decided to go back to Ireland to prove it is still alive. He encouraged O Conaire and others, who used to meet in London as a group of Irish exiles, to defend their native language and culture in an attempt to found “a truly national audience”(Kiberd 100). The following Anglo-Irish writing stressed the use of Irish materials in the English language. The problem that faced those infatuated with the revival of Irish language, clearly uncovered by Roger McHugh and Maurice Harmon, is “how would a tradition of writing in Irish survive the disappearance of the Irish-speaking areas?” (McHugh and Harmon 299). While Fr Peadar O Laoghaire’s *Seadna* (1894) is the first folk-novel in Irish,

¹ A brief introduction to O Conaire is given by Coillín D. Owens in *Modern Irish Writers: A Bio-Critical Sourcebook* (1997).



Exile is the first novel in Irish, as Kiberd states. It might be possible to say that O Conaire takes the lead from O Laoghaire and creates a promising work of elevated literary style.

5. The Hunger of Memory in Exile

The story of Exile opens with the problem of a poor crippled Irish man, who is twenty-seven years-old age, and who has left Galway for London in search of a job, but in vain. Michael's ambition is a determination to go back home if he were to become rich. Because of a car accident, during his quiet despair in search of work, he is physically crippled with one leg and one arm. It was better for him to die crippled than to live as poor as he is. An amount of two hundred and fifty pounds is given away to him as a sign of compensation. The descriptive portrayal of his past and present life, before and after the accident, makes us so sympathetic that the reader is extremely involved in the tragic narration of the story of "an old forest tree laid low by an axe," as he says. This image illustrates that such alienating life he feels is a result of life of exile that he leads, as well, to the present psychological crippling he endures because he is unable to walk freely as he used to: "How well I remember that day, how full of joy I was to be able to walk, with my crutch and my wooden leg. How miraculous was each stroke struck by the wooden leg the paving stones of the street ... Indeed, I was little affected, what with learning to walk again, and being able to get along under my own stream" (E 1). The question is: what does it mean the image of learning to walk again if we recall the childhood's initial growing-up how-to-walk experience in the past? The emergence of the problem of exile may provide a possible answer.

From its beginning, in a re-reading of Caliban's experience of violence in TT, AT,

PE, specially in O Conaire's E, Michael recalls the actual hunger of the history of the Irish peoples, who are silent because they are subaltern:

I was angry because nobody noticed me, because nobody asked me for my story, that I was not being asked about my accident; but when a lovely young lady who was passing by looked pityingly at me, and seemed about to speak my anger turned to rage. She was just being inquisitive, I thought. The flighty butterfly! What could she have to do with anybody like me? I needed to insult her in some way; since I understand well how much people, and especially women, hate cripples like myself, although you might think that they'd have a lot of pity for us. But I managed to hold my tongue until she had passed me by. [My emphasis] (E 10)

Because the literal and metaphorical exile is a base to this paper, my consideration of Lamming's PE should explain two major points: the seeds of racism and the psychological deterioration done by colonialism in the Prospero-Caliban relationship. Since it is hard to mirror the argument as a whole, which is detailed in each of the ten chapters (ideas), it sounds better to focus on only five ideas: the first two ideas, entitled, in turn: 'In the Beginning' and 'The Occasion for Speaking,' quote epigrams from TT, and the second two ideas 6 and 7, also entitled, in turn: 'A Monster, A Child, A Slave' and 'Caliban Orders History,' quote epigrams from Cesaire. Because of its structural consistence with the plot of O Conaire's E, the last idea, presented in the 8th chapter, 'Ishmael at Home,' corresponds to the going of Michael back home to Galway. Thus, the next analysis is to explain these five ideas in relation to the analysis of the novel.

O Conaire's Michael reflects on the streets of London, where his own predicament of physical and psychological crippling is



unbearable. The purgatory role of Nature motivates him to remember that it is “a fine day of sunshine” on the streets of London with a lot of pedestrians: “Some of them carefree, light-hearted, others burdened, sad in themselves. And others seemed timid, anxious, fearful [...] I started to think. I should have to spend the rest of my life in this predicament” (E 10). Because no one responds to his story and no one listens, he has to be changed into Caliban: “I began to hate those people who were passing me by on healthy limbs, so quickly, so full of gusto” (E 10). The strong will to walk again makes the crippled man able to feel a kind of “delight” in his own heart. Admittedly, the British people, who speak English, a mediating source of exile, are overlooking him because he is, in their eyes, in part, one of the dead people and because they failed to observe that they are responsible for this crippling condition: “I thought they should at least have looked at me, at someone who was learning to walk for the second time, someone who had been face-to-face with death, and had come back again, someone with only one arm and one leg and a twisted, warped” (E 10). Michael, the updated image of Caliban, is the exiled emigrant with his “own pitiful condition” (E 14). Prospero and Miranda, who were strangers to the island where Caliban spent all his life, are replaced by the image of the native British strangers with whose insignificance and racial attitudes Michael is feeling an extreme alienation. He is not alone in exile, because there are a lot of Irish minorities in London. He is also not alone if he continues to be rich because of a set of “false friends” (E 16). Drink is his sole cure of pitiful loneliness. Sometimes he comes to think sacrilegiously when he looks at the wooden leg, at the picture with healthy men, and no hope to get out of his dull poor miseries for

not using his limbs any more. But all agonies are recalled into his mind while seeing healthy man, young or old, running: “I would want to hit him with my crutch, and if I had killed him, I should have been just as pleased” (E 15). Pondering at night on his own conscience, especially when he has almost lost most of the money given to him away in compensation, he realizes that “a great change had come over my disposition, my heart and my mind; that hatred and disgust, and depression and wretchedness, would be my companion for the future; that I should have gloom for a spouse until the day of my death [...]” (E 16). This is a strong will to change his present miserable life for something completely different. And do forth in a life daily circle.

It is this antithesis of the British and Irish cultures that informs the whole novel: the author emphasizes the differences between the colonizing behavior of the white society, of the small yellow man, the father of the London mistress and the colonized behavior of the black society, of the slaved Michael because of his extreme poverty first, and second of his physical crippling. Accordingly, it is possible to separate two interrelated stories—the story of the white and that of the Irish, surrounding one main character, Michael as one of many exiles composing one Irish group of four hundred men living, in full, in a ghetto called ‘a little Ireland’. The ghetto is “[a]ny section of a city in which members of a racial group are segregated” (Webster’s New Secondary School Dictionary 346). Although there are many exiles surrounding Michael, he continues to live in exile because each one has “his own little cubicle ... preparing his own bit to eat” (E 17). At the time when exiles like Michael are deprived of food, The Small Yellow Man, on the contrary,



forces his daughter, the Fat Lady, to eat much in order to fit the funny role as the public spectacle played in the circus. She is so fat that during the act of Michael's and the Fat lady's reading, Michel is unable to read one word, as her "huge bulk blocked out the sunlight ... It was no wonder that Little Yellowman was so happy in his mind. No wonder he washed his hands in the air every time he looked at her" (E 42). Similarly, Prospero in Shakespeare's play controls the mental and emotional life of his daughter Miranda as well.

To remember that the life of Michael is emotionally debilitating is to remember his ex-beloved Mary Lee, for whom he left Galway to save money and get married, but now she is officially engaged to another man. He remembers her before his temporary journey back to Galway, and is allowed later to see her with the necessary distance through eye contact when he is at home. In order to keep the necessary distance in the relationship between such two cultures, O Conaire makes his readers seem fascinated, instead of being agitated, by the lives of people in the master-slave different cultures, who are brave and weak, in turn, especially in the show business, and probably followed by the immediate reversal of the adjectives. This reversal in attitude is always amazing because it is unexpected to feel the courage of the hero to escape his social condition and actually enjoys focusing on his cultural fate. Mary appears again, in the third part of the hero's life journey, as a widow; the moment of confrontation between Michael and her, then, encourages one to think who may be responsible for the dilemma he is living at the time. The one who is in love with him is the woman with the red hair. What is interesting is Michael's London mistress, the Fat Woman, who accompanies him in the

three parts of the novel, but he feels no love, or even deep desire, for her. His London mistress was just "lazy and lethargic by nature" (E 42). Back to London where the meeting of the two cultures' encounter again, is quite interesting. He needs us as readers to care more for his thoughts and their hunger of historical memory in order to know who is to blame or critique, especially when he wants to live as a human being.

Exile refers to the paradoxical texture of the character of Michael as ambivalent in nature. Such ambivalence is intended to entrap the reader in away to bring off his conception of Michael's inner experience; moving from the state of being dependent to that of independence mirrors the stages of loneliness, participation, and self identity in which he leaves all the tough woes of the past memories and the challenging obstinacy of the present memories for a possible living of the future in death. Of course, by the end of the novel, it is evident that Michael dies under the tree. The place of his death is really of central importance because it means that Michael would like to be in unity with nature.

6. Re-Writing the Song of Exile

In 1950, at the age of twenty-three, Lamming, a distinguished writer from the island of Barbados, emigrated to England where, for a while, he worked in a factory; in 1951 he became a broadcaster for the BBC Colonial Service. He has written five more novels, including *The Emigrants*. He wrote his autobiographical novel *In the Castle of My Skin*; additionally, away from his Barbados, where he was born and educated, and also from Trinidad and Tobago (now Trinidad), where he spent a study period of four years, PE represents the emigrant experience of living in London as faithfully as O Conaire's story. Lamming's introduction to the 1984 edition embellishes



the “the predicament” of a group of the English-speaking Caribbean writers who “arrived in Britain as part of a larger migrating labour force. It records the circumstances which had forced their departure from the islands and it focuses on the colonial character of their relation to the metropole” (PE 6).

J. Ruthetford (1997) profiles the metropolis of London as an age of “migration, change and uncertainty” (p. 5). He takes us in a tour across the streets of central London, beginning at Victoria Station through Belgravia to Hyde Park, down to Buckingham Place and then along The Mall to Waterloo Place. He registers the imperial architectural vision of the big city where there are no monuments dedicated to “civic culture or intellectual life”, but only when you reach the Waterloo Palace one will find a few statues of men “not directly related to militarism or war. They are the explorers, the other face of empire” and it is vividly clear that:

The public face of our national culture is overwhelmingly imperial and royal; grandiose and triumphal commemorations of military victories, self-sacrifice and violent death...All the dead bodies are still speaking ... their tale of self-sacrifice and heroism ... that England is the greatest nation on earth and the Englishman its most noble warrior. (p. 11).

The shortest introduction to *E* spells out deeply how exile is a terrible uprooting experience of a crippled man with “my tale of woe” (E 10), whether forced or voluntary, literal or metaphorical, knit together delicately, beautifully in a seemingly web of spatio-temporal unity. In similar ways to the necessity of telling a tale like *Exile*, Ruthetford reminds us that Robert Falcon Scott’s inscribed note on his grave says that “Had we lived,” he wrote in 1911, “I should have had a tale of the hardihood, endurance

and courage of my companions which would have stirred the heart of every Englishman. These rough notes and our dead bodies must tell the tale” (p. 11). How the dead body is able to speak from his grave is admitted as well in Lamming’s *PE* that could be one of the reasons why he delineates exile with a series of tales narrated, in the heart of the city of London, as a sort of pleasures. Are there any pleasures in the painful experience of exile ?!

Lamming details one aspect of exile as presented by Simpson: the emigration of writers “needed a quieter or a more stimulating” place to practice writing’s talent. In his introduction, Lamming brings to mind his experience of living as a writer in London and explicitly states the betrayal to the land of Caliban: “My subject is the migration of the West Indian writer, as colonial and exile, from his native kingdom, once inhabited by Caliban, to the tempestuous island of Prospero’s and his language [my emphasis]. This book is a report on one man’s way of seeing” (PE 13). This illustrates how much significant is the cultural and linguistic imperialism in the land of the colonized and, here, of the colonizer. The issue of emigration with relatives and acquaintances is presented in ‘The Occasion for Speaking’ chapter. Lamming has a point of interest that any student who intends to pursue a degree, for example, from the colonizing England by “its historic ties with” his colonized country, he should study at a very different country in which he might start from “scratch” even not to be “thwarted by the memory” (PE 25). Otherwise, there is no need for the student “to try to understand an Englishman, since all relationships begin with an assumption of previous knowledge, a knowledge acquired in the absence of the people known” (ibid). He has spent six years



of his life in England. Therefore, he addresses the circumstances that lead certain writers from West Indies to the London metropolis. He poses a set of challenging questions to answer:

Why have they migrated? And what, if any, are the peculiar pleasures of exile? Is their journey part of a hunger for recognition? [emphasis added] Do they see such recognition as a confirmation of the fact that they are writers? What is the source of their insecurity in the world of letters? And what, on the evidence of their work, is the range of their ambition as writers whose nourishment is now elsewhere, whose absence is likely to drag into a state of permanent separation from their roots? (PE 23)

Because of the central importance of Shakespeare's TT to Lamming's thoughtful questions given above, much of the treatise of PE aimed to criticize English colonialism. In order to address the argument of Lamming on a sound ground, it is worth stressing the tragedy of Shakespeare's TT first, then a re-reading of Shakespeare's text in view of the adapted version of Césaire's AT in order to fit the Caribbean culture. Indeed, an issue of the master-slave relationships is highly considered in the two great plays. It remains later then to read *Exile* in light of the critique of Lamming in PE, which is considered an interlocutor to the two readings of Shakespeare and Césaire, in order to establish points of leverage to be able match the criticism of Lamming with that the textual adaptation of Césaire and mainly with O Conaire's text as well.

There is the national appeal to unity and collaboration when all Calibans in the world come to resist British hegemony. In his chapter 'Caliban Orders History', Lamming asserts that "The entire Caribbean is our horizon; for Caliban himself like the island he inherited is at once a landscape and a

human situation" (PE 119). The same is absolutely true for the nation of Ireland in which the seeds of national cultural identity are established by O Conaire's E in its beautiful theme of literal and metaphorical exile. The styles of the two authors Lamming and O Conaire might be different, because Lamming's PE is a political self-conscious autobiographical text, while the E by O Conaire, who spent his twenties as a civil worker in London, is an invented piece of fiction. However, their message is probably the same: trying to grapple with the major issues of politics, race, and self-worth. This is so, because the problem of cultural identity is almost encountered by everyone in both the colonized society and the colonizing society where the sense of exile and alienation is so pervasive.

7. Speaking the Unspeakable

Based on the fact that one of the aspects of British colonial policy was to demolish the native language and culture of Ireland, this means that O Conaire, who preferred not to be exiled from his Irish language, is possibly free from any English imitation but he is influenced by Russian writers like Gogol and Cheleow. Rather, O Conaire, like George Moore, understood French and Russian literature, and he read as well Hardy and Meredith, in order to compensate for "the lack of available Irish models" at his time (McHugh and Harmon 299). This avid reading in European literature allowed O Conaire to shape his Irish attitudes in writing and how this thought of O Conaire is reflected in Lamming in his Caribbean attitudes in writing as well.

This comparative analysis of the two plays allows us, now, to see how Lamming, who shares Césaire the Caribbean homeland, envisioned, as well, Shakespeare's play as a way of seeing, of writing back: "[...] it is my intention to make use of *The Tempest*,"



stresses Lamming at the night of initiating the experience of writing back, “as a way of presenting a certain state of feeling which is the heritage of the exiled and colonial writer from the British Caribbean [...]” (PE 9). This complaint itself is interesting, not only in what it presumes to be important but also in the historical attitude it addresses toward even Western hegemony, in which colonies in the past two centuries from different nations representing cultures onward have been suffering and exiled even at their own home.

Therefore, Lamming’s argument in his introduction to PE includes concise witty epigrams as he quotes James Joyce, a representative of the Irish culture: “‘History is a nightmare from which I am trying to awaken’.” Indeed, the voice of the whole book is for most colonized cultures to awaken:

It is the duty of the Dead to return and offer, on this momentous night, a full and honest report on their past relations with the living [...] The Dead need to speak if they are going to enter that eternity which will be their last and permanent Future. The living demand to hear whether there is any need for forgiveness, for redemption; whether, in fact, there may be any guide which may help them towards reforming their present condition. Different as they may be in their present state of existence, those alive and those now Dead—their ambitions point to a similar end. They are interested in their Future. (PE 9-10)

In other words, there are two types of alienation: when the alien is a rebel, or when he is a victim of corrupt social and political surroundings. The sense of how an individual sees himself and how he is perceived by others in his struggles against sufferings in order to evolve the human dignity and hope is a commitment to the realization of identity.

Throughout O Conaire’s story there seems to be a longing, a search for a home, and for a sense of belonging. The racial memory is evident in the remembrance of Michael the bad treatment of the Fat Woman’s father, called the Small Yellow Man. Does this Small Yellow Man’s contagious illness of racism represent the whole of London? What is the significance of Michael’s living in an “Irish” house in London? What does it mean that Michael meets the Fat Woman in the Irish house? What are the dynamic aspects of emigration? Why did people go to big cities and towns? Generally speaking, the phenomenon of emigration, in view of Kleiner, Okeke, and Sorensen (2003), might be answering clues to the above-mentioned questions when it requires us to “consider the place and influence of macrolevels of analysis (e.g., institutional influences), microlevels of analysis (e.g., the structure of the personal social networks), associated symbol systems (e.g., values, motives), and their interactive effects as well” (p. x). In sum, this macro-analysis includes the existence of Irish and West Indian minorities in the imperial London in which there is a sort of the racial tyranny of the majority in the marginalization and exclusion of minorities. The micro-analysis includes the debility of social communication in the British society, which is mainly based on class separation and racial resentment like the feeling of insignificance and inferiority in behavior. Indeed, Lamming is correct when he explains in ‘A Monster, A Child, A Slave’ section that the politics of “the Island, the size of its population as well as its relation to the world beyond its shores, we are left with a remarkable example of a State which is absolutely run by one man. Absolute is the only word for a power which does not even require an army” (PE 98). This means that the active meaningful paradox in



PE as it has been in E is to describe the truth that in a rich country like Britain, there are those depressed of work, of human life because of woes of suffering from an abject poverty, and from a lack of psychological emotional balance from the macro-level and micro-level of analysis, in turn.

The image of hunger is mainly physical when it identifies the daily experience of Michael's ceaseless attempts to eliminate the physical act of hunger; this kind of literal exile stops irritating a cripple like Michael if he either gets a job or, rather, when death approaches him: "The pangs of hunger would recede as death was coming closer, until intoxication, then madness, would come over you. And how would death itself come? Like an arrested thief with his back to the wall"(E 21). The third level of "associated symbols systems" like values and motives in view of Kleiner and others indicates the necessity of Caliban to Prospero: "He needs this slave. Moreover, he must be cautious in his dealings with him, for Caliban contains the seed of revolt" (PE 98). The problem has always been that the self of Britain cannot do without its Irish or the Caribbean people, the other. This self-other encounter dominates literary studies because it invokes values from both sides of the one unity such as the other's surrender to the self and the self's precautions against the other's revolt. O Conaire states that the feeling of physical hunger is gradually escalating within three days as follows: the first day you would feel "so empty inside your gut," then the second day is the "dreadful thirst would come," and finally after that you would "imagine yourself being pricked by a thousand hot needles" (E 21). When the third day is based on imagination, it reflects a feeling of metaphorical exile, this is the absolute feeling of homeland and homecoming when

the emigrants' experience starts to feel the last dreadful moments of death.

The feeling of death is quite clear in the colonial behavior of the new Prospero, the father of the fat Lady, who is immoral because of his lies. For the success of the show business in the circus, the new Prospero announces to the audience that Michael, who prefers to speak in Irish, was assigned another nationality. Prospero narrates the invented false story of the Small Yellow Man and Michael tries to stop him not to continue, but he fails:

He told them that I was a German; that I had been a lunatic during one period of my life; that I had killed eight men during that period (some of them drew back from me); that I had been kept in a madhouse for a long time—until the king of that country was satisfied to leave me released. My sanity had, of course, returned by this time, and what did I do but go on safari in East Africa, killing lions? (E 25)

This is the spectacle of a well-bodied man and to show his ability to quarrel with the wild beasts like lions, or to carry so heavy stuff, in order to prove his unique physical strength and thus to attract the onlookers. The word 'anger' or 'angry' has been frequently repeated to describe the intoxicated mode of Michael in the acts of enslavements in dealing with this Small Yellow Man. Michael's revolt has many signs. Alone, and because he did not get his money from Prospero, Michael thinks seriously that he will get rid of him one day:

But I shall kill that thieving little yellow sprat one of these days. How he makes me hate him! How was I so misguided as to sell my body to him for three pounds a week? How was I unfortunate as to make myself into a horror and a spectacle? [...]Wasn't he the villain? I tell you, little Yelloman, here is the one who could cheerfully choke you, be you devil or angel! (E 38)



Michael decides to uncover the truth of the false story among the onlookers and thus to destroy the circus as a whole. The story of real agony to Michael is that the native people of his Galway started to frighten their children not to approach him because of the bloody knife in his pocket. Thus, he is so ashamed that he says: "I should never be able to set foot in my native city again" (E 130). The unexpectedness of Michael's acts of revolt makes the Little Yellowman so irritated that he decides to avenge himself for the loss of his circus. When Caliban and Prospero meet at the end of the story, Prospero is dissuaded, however, from his revenge because he is mentally occupied for the elopement of his daughter with her father's enemy, Michael. The story comes to an end when he dies alone under the tree in London.

8. Forever Caliban

In conclusion, this paper is an attempt to highlight the similar issues in the song of slavery that both Michael and Caliban can sing in their encounter with Prospero in a strange and native land, in turn. In the matter of Michael, the Little Yellowman, who employs, exploits, or accurately enslaves Michael and degrades him and the Fat Lady, his daughter, from the freedom to act like a human being in the show business in the circus held at Galway, is the updated Prospero in the essential doing and doubt in O Conaire's story. Later, this is analyzed in the loss of values in the social network of Prospero in relation to Michael. It is the same experience felt to be integrated when the colonized peoples are exiles in their own land in as much the same way as the ancestors of slavery are also exiles in the land of foreigners. As long as slavery exists primarily in the context of the play's moral disorder, a set of assumptions about the action of the master and the reaction of the

slave should have occurred, there should have been change. Michael narrates that when a kid tossed him a penny in his fist, he became so raged that "It took me some effort not to hit him with my stick. Why should he have thought I needed money?" (E 10). He admits that he was under extreme change which "had come over my heart since my accident. The sort of change that comes over a potato left on the ridge under the autumn sun. I suddenly realized that I had become a surely melancholic, and I made a firm resolve to repair the damage if I could" (E 11). The significant reference of O Conaire to nature prepares Michael to be like Caliban when he becomes at its blossoms by his journey.

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Dr. Mahmoud Gewaily obtained PhD in Comparative Literature from Purdue University, IN. Mahmoud is devoted to a cross-disciplinary approach to research on translation studies & comparative literature. His research passion lies in the nexus between dialogism, culture, language, new rhetoric, philosophy and psychology. He is affiliated to Minia University, Egypt.

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