

The Presence of the Irish in Brazil within the Latin American Context

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Abstract

Though the main destination of the Irish diaspora has been the English-speaking countries, mainly Britain and the United States, Latin America received various waves of Irish immigrants from the mid-1500s onwards. This essay is focused on the Irish presence in Brazil within that context. The aim is to present a systematized information to create a map (still incomplete) to motivate young researchers from different disciplines to follow the trail, discover new vestiges and write a full history of the Irish immigrants and their descendants scattered around the country. It is also important to cover the gap in Irish cultural diaspora – circulation of Irish news, books and art when reaching Brazilian shores because there is no consolidated Irish community yet, as in the border country Argentina.

Keywords: Irish diaspora in Brazil; Rio de Janeiro mutiny; The Fenian Club; Roger Casement and the Amazon; Irish women; Irish pioneers and twentieth-century travelers.

When we think of “globalising Irish Studies” in recent years, one of the most challenging efforts is to move beyond the nation state as the primary unit of analysis and to think transnationally about a range of subjects, topics, and disciplines. In the Irish case this is especially relevant given both the scale and chronological breadth of the diaspora, and the effect it has on wider developments in

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Ireland itself and on Irish people living outside the country. But the transnational approach is not simply about migrations and the movement of people as is often assumed. It also extends beyond the idea of a nation: the history of ideas, political cultures, commerce & consumerism, material and visual culture, gender and virtually every aspect of the human condition – it is a community of purpose on multiple relations.

Migration is understood as a metaphor for change; but migration is also both a product and a cause of change that varies according to the place of origin and the host country. Ireland and the countries of Latin America share a history of European colonialism, subsequent emigrations, revolutions, and wars of independence. There is much to learn by comparing common experiences of colonization in the past and decolonization in our time; the positions of Latin American countries in relation to processes of globalization; and the processes of intersectionality of ethnicities, cultures, and languages because of colonial and postcolonial histories. Despite its not being an English-speaking territory, Latin America received various waves of Irish immigrants from the mid-1500s onwards. This essay is focused on the Irish presence in Brazil within that context. The aim is to present a systematized information to create a map that would motivate young researchers from different disciplines to follow the trail, discover new vestiges and write a full history of the Irish immigrants, their descendants scattered around the country and Irish cultural diaspora because there is no consolidated Irish community yet, as in the history of Irish-Argentina.²

In “Life-Writing and Diaspora I: The Autobiographical Writings of the Irish in USA and Latin America” (2018), James Silas Rogers and I wrote in relation to early and nineteenth-century Irish diaspora:

In Latin America, which presents a more recent experience of colonialism than the United States, cultural assimilation and upward social mobility have also occurred, but here the volume of Irish immigration was smaller, settlement patterns more sporadic and the levels of re-emigration to other destinations higher. Irish settlement in Latin America has also been more geographically confined than in the United States, Argentina and a handful of

² This survey is based on a FAPESP postdoctoral research (2004) published in my book *Narrativas de la diáspora irlandesa bajo la Cruz del Sur* (Buenos Aires: Corregidor, 2010; 2011), and in chapters and articles published in peer reviewed journals.

Caribbean islands being the chief sites where Irish communities took root and endured, even as the visible signs of ethnic difference faded. (p.316).

However, even in the process of assimilation, language has been an emotional and pragmatic marker as, in the beginning, the immigrants' speech denounces the intermingling of Irishisms and Hispanicisms and anglophone words whenever they could not find a better expression to represent their everyday experience, neither in their own nor in the adopted language.

A long history of Irish emigration has resulted in up to 70 million people worldwide claiming Irish ancestry (DFA Global Irish 2017).³ The number of Irish who decided on Latin America as their temporary or permanent home is still a matter of debate among scholars. Argentina and Uruguay alone received approximately 50,000 Irish-born immigrants. Thousands more were scattered in the Caribbean, Brazil, Venezuela, and Mexico because of military operations, trade, and colonization schemes. The rate of re-emigration within the Americas and to Australia, Britain or back to Ireland was high, yet like that of other immigrant communities. Moreover, the Irish had paradoxical experiences when settling in non-English speaking countries, especially when English and American companies were establishing in Latin American countries in their period of modernization. The Irish were frequently viewed as English due to the language they spoke, and they profited from this identification by getting better jobs than the natives.

There have been various periods of famine in Ireland; however, what is known as the Great Famine lasted from 1845 to 1850, with the worst year being 1847, which, in conjunction with factors connected with the existing political, social and economic system, caused a demographic catastrophe in the country (a reduction of almost 25% in the population) which is to this day a matter for debate in the academic community. The consequences in Ireland, under British rule, were tragic, causing death and emigration to English-speaking countries, mainly the United States and Canada. In *Irish Times. Temporalities of Modernity*, David Lloyd argues that the catastrophe was the consequence of a "colonial matrix" of political and economic forces regulated by a racial discourse about the Irish; the potato blight was "sent by God to scour the land of redundant people"

³<https://www.dfa.ie/news-and-media/speeches/speeches-archive/2014/october/global-forum-on-diaspora-and-development/>.

(2008: 31-31).⁴ This is a statement that confronts:

the historical circumstance that most famines have generally occurred among the poor because of agricultural problems such as drought, crop failure, or pestilence . . . [it] has conditioned people used to naturalize the causes and social consequences assuming the collective attitude that the cause is “an act of God”. This naturalization hinders criticism of the real situation and prevents people from noticing the economic and political causes underlying the social drama. (Izarra 2009, p.67).

The early Irish presence in Latin America has related to traditional links between the Irish in Britain, Spain, and Portugal. It was initially an extension of the Iberian dimension of the Irish diaspora. Many of the earliest Irish settlers in countries such as Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay, and Mexico were members of Catholic families displaced by colonial warfare at home. The first recorded Irish arrivals in South America there were those of Juan and Tomás Farrell, who accompanied Pedro de Mendoza to found Buenos Aires in the Río de la Plata region in 1536, and in Brazil, the first Irish was Thomas Field, a Jesuit priest who was followed by travelers and adventurers even before the Great Famine.

The pioneers: priests, adventurers, and travelers

In 1577, Limerick-born Thomas Field (Fehily) (1549-1625), from the Society of Jesus – founded in 1534 by Ignatius de Loyola and recognized by Rome in 1540 – arrived in Brazil with his friend Yates. They disembarked in Bahia where they lived three years until they were ordained priests. Fr. John Vincent (*vere* Yates)⁵ stayed in the region while Field went to São Vicente, near São Paulo, where he spent three more years working in the region between Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo with the famous Spanish Jesuit Padre José de Anchieta who was one of the founders of the

⁴ LLOYD, David. *Irish Times. Temporalities of Modernity*, 2008. p. 30-31.

⁵ A letter from Fr John Vincent (*vere* Yates), a Missioner in Brazil, to Fr John Good, dated, St Anthony's Brazil, 02 January 1589 tells Fr. Field's travels and dangers arriving roaming into the port of Buenos Aires (British Museum Lansdown MSS). He calls him by the alias name of “Thomas Feile”. Irish Jesuit Archives, IE IJA J/1288.

city of São Paulo on the Piratininga plateau on 1554, there establishing the Jesuit College. He witnessed Anchieta's miracles, learnt *guaraní* language and decided to go south to attend the call of the Bishop of Tucumán city in Argentina. After his dramatic arrival in Buenos Aires in 1587 due to the attack of an English pirate ship when they entered the estuary of the River Plate, Field was sent to Paraguay with two other priests. It was a difficult travel to the north to reach Tucumán and then Paraguay, the border country, to settle in the city of Asunción and become responsible for the Christianisation of the indigenous people of the region. He became the first emblematic Irish figure that united symbolically the three countries under a common religious purpose.

The expansion of European commercial and colonial enterprises in the Amazon basin in early 1600s brought Irish adventurers to the region, along with English, French and Dutch pioneers. The Amazon Company started with plantations and enterprises on the north shores of the river between Cabo do Norte and the confluence with Maicuru river. The first Irish arrived as members of the Dutch West India Company, a trading company founded in 1621. There were also merchants that dedicated to smuggling tobacco, dyes, and hardwoods. Captain Sir Bernard O'Brien del Carpio narrates in his *Chronicles* his journey to the Amazon with Sir Henry Roe in 1620 and registers the years they lived with the indigenous. According to Joyce Lorimer (1989), the English and Irish lost their interest in continuing in the region around 1640:

Bernard O'Brien, a tobacco planter from County Clare who, along with Irish brothers Philip and James Purcell, established trading settlements on the lower Amazon in the 1620s. O'Brien's written record of his experiences, simply entitled "Bernard O'Brien's account of Irish activities in the Amazon 1621-1624", constitutes the first autobiographical testimony by an Irishman in Latin America, though it can hardly be said to have inaugurated anything so grand as a literary tradition. (Izarra & Rogers 324).⁶

Huge profits were made by the colonists in tobacco, dyes, and hardwoods. Other plantations existed in Guyana and the Caribbean islands, where owners, managers, foremen and in some cases indentured laborers also came from Ireland. In Jamaica, Puerto Rico, St Domingo, Montserrat, St

⁶ The chapter contains references to autobiographical and travel writings of the Irish in the USA and Latin America (*op.cit.*)

Croix, and other islands the Irish produced tobacco, sugar, coffee, cacao and cattle. In Cuba, Richard O’Farrill from Montserrat made a fortune in the slave trade, and his family became significant owners of tobacco and sugar plantations, cattle ranches, sugar mills and hundreds of slaves. From Veracruz in Mexico, where the Murphy family traded fruit, arms, and slaves, to the wool-exporters in southernmost Punta Arenas, Irish businesspeople of all trades and ranks were present in the major ports and cities of Latin America. I would also like to highlight a former Jesuit student, William Lamport of Wexford, who was an early proposer of Mexican independence. Known locally as Guillén Lombardo, Lamport was jailed in October 1642 and died in prison in 1659.

Before later travelers write about Brazilian commercial and civic life – such as Cork-born naval officer James Tuckey or Waterford-born Anglican clergyman and historian Robert Walsh – Richard Flecknoe, a Catholic priest, poet, and playwright who may have been Irish born, wrote the pioneering travel narrative *A Relation of Ten Years Travels in Europe, Asia, Affrique and America* (c.1656). He describes his voyage from Lisbon to Pernambuco and onwards to Rio de Janeiro, “where he spent most of 1649, chronicling his impressions of the climate, vegetation, animals, commodities, and ‘savage’ natives” (*op. cit.* p.324).

Nineteenth-century Brazil and the Irish Mutiny in Rio de Janeiro

In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, British-Irish arrived in the River Plate in unsuccessful military expeditions, such as the English invasions in 1763 to Colonia del Sacramento in Uruguay and in 1806 and 1807 to Buenos Aires. An unknown number of Irishmen deserted from the army and settled in Argentina and neighbour countries; some joined the armies of the two great liberators of Spanish South America, José de San Martín, and Simón Bolívar. While some were historically recognized by their deeds in the adopted land, in Brazil, a small group settled in Rio Grande do Sul in 1809 though it did not constitute an agricultural colony. The first official attempt of Irish colonization was in 1643 when a group of Catholics from Ireland were denied authorization to settle in Pará.

In 1826, the Emperor Dom Pedro I sent Colonel William Cotter to his native Ireland to recruit mercenary soldiers, resident in Cork and Waterford, who came to Brazil with their families to join the Brazilian Imperial Army and fight in the ongoing war against the newly born Argentine Republic over the Uruguayan lands. The unsuccessful Cisplatine war and the government refusal in giving them the promised land grants, as they were brought within the program of “agricultural colonization”, provoked them to join the revolt of German mercenaries in a mutiny of three days in the military barracks of Sant’Ana in Rio de Janeiro when they murdered their commander because he inflicted a violent punishment upon one of the German mercenaries. The historian Robert Walsh, who was appointed chaplain to the British embassy in Rio de Janeiro in 1828, describes in *Notices of Brazil in 1828 and 1829* (1830) what happened to the 3,000 Munster men and their families. Most of the Irish survivors were sent back home and 101 families were given the possibility of settling in a colony named Santa Januaria, in Taperoá (Bahia), as referred by Fernando Basto in *Ex-combatentes irlandeses em Taperoá* (1971): ‘Some men from Waterford and Lismore worked in a quarry ... and they carved granite blocks for construction; (...) Another family, the Cooks, from County Tipperary, was recommended to Mr. Marsh and Mr. Watson, who established it on a ranch in the Serra dos Órgãos, where I [Walsh] visited them with the latter’ (*apud* Basto, Walsh 1828, p.132). There were also fertile lands, and they were given a daily subsistence until they could earn their own living. However, as Brigadeiro José Egidio Gordilho de Barbuda wrote to the Emperor Pedro I, on 26 September 1829, the majority of the settlers ‘were men with no capacity to cultivate land, old people, drunks, sick people in general, unable to carry on colonization, thus rendering useless the expenses incurred by them’ (Basto 1971: 34). So, in 1830, only twenty settlers were willing to continue in the place and the government suspended the subsidy of the rest who spread around the country and the few ones left decided to return to their country of origin or re-emigrate. This tragic story stopped Irish emigration to Brazil until the second half of the century. In the end of the century, an alike situation occurred later in Argentina, when around 1.700 immigrants, being most of them Irish, arrived in Buenos Aires on board of the *SS. Dresden* in 1889, were sent south to settle in barren lands without any support from the government; many fell ill and died, and some returned to Buenos Aires on foot.

Brazil has always been the safe port on the southern sea route. After remaining isolated for almost three centuries by the Portuguese, Brazilian ports were opened to friendly nations in 1808 and

travelers visited the country freely from then on. Despite the tragic experience mentioned above, Brazil has been a geographical space that attracted the attention due to its unexplored territory. ‘Giant by nature’ and by the character of its people – generous and hospitable – the image of its natural riches, unity and security have fed for centuries the imagination of foreigners coming from the most different places in the world to realize their utopias in these tropical lands.⁷ Thus, in the mid-nineteenth century, the target of Brazilian agents promoting emigration to Brazil were not the poor farmers in Ireland but the displaced Irish who were living in the margins of the English and American societies, ready to emigrate again to renew their hope for better opportunities somewhere else – a diaspora of a diaspora.

William Scully (1821-1885), an Irishman from Tipperary and editor of *The Anglo-Brazilian Times* (1865-84), a weekly newspaper in Rio de Janeiro, was the propagandist abroad of the opportunities that immigrants would find in these tropical lands⁸. He also played a predominant role promoting new laws of immigration together with other journalists, intellectuals, politicians, and members of the International Immigration Society founded in 1866. Deputy and founder of the society, Aurélio Cândido Tavares Bastos, and the journalist and politician Quintino Bocaiúva stimulated migration from the United States (the first encouraging the ex-confederates and the second concerned nothing more than reaching the quotas of emigrants from New York). On the other hand, Scully was concerned about the arrival of labor for the plantations, trying to attract Germans and British (a term that at the time also included the Irish) since, in his opinion, they came to make a home and stay unlike the Portuguese and French who sought to make money and return to their homeland. The ex-Confederates looked with reluctance on the New York Irish recruited by Bocaiúva but, despite this rivalry, upon arriving in Rio de Janeiro they were distributed without differentiation in the different colonies of the states. The majority went to Porto Alegre in Rio Grande do Sul in 1840s and 1850s, where they dispersed through the German agricultural settlements near Nova Petrópolis and Caseros. Some of the New York Irish were sent to Cananéia and south of Santos,

⁷ See my article “Reinventando o Brasil. Releituras e renovação nas narrativas de viajantes irlandeses”. L. Izarra (org.) *Literaturas Estrangeiras e o Brasil: Diálogos*. (São Paulo, 2004), pp. 159-176. It was translated and published in *Irish Migration Studies in Latin America*. (July 2006), Vol. 4, No. 3, “Reinventing Brazil: New Readings and Renewal in the Narratives of Irish Travellers”. It deconstructs the founding myths of Brazil and present in its symbols and national anthem. <http://www.irlandeses.org>

⁸ Other newspapers of the Irish community that circulated in Latin America, U.S., Ireland and Australia are *The Southern Cross* (1875 - today), *The Standard* (1861-1959), *Fianna* (1910-1912), *The Irish Argentine* (1888-1889).

but the states of São Paulo, Paraná and Colonia Príncipe Dom Pedro in Santa Catarina received most of the Irish in the 1860s and 1870s, though always in smaller numbers than in Argentina.⁹ (Izarra 2010, pp. 64-70).

Scully also promoted the image of the Brazilian Emperor Pedro II as a benevolent monarch, favorable to modernization, scientific development, and social well-being. (Marshall 2005: 23). In his newspaper, from its foundation in 1865 until its closure in 1884, documents, news and literary texts written by important Brazilian authors, such as José de Alencar, Machado de Assis y Salvador de Mendonça, were published to show the state of the art and level of education of the natives. In his Letter to the Clergy of Ireland published in *The Anglo-Brazilian Times* (9 October 1866), he highlighted the main benefits for the immigrants in Brazil compared to United States: the climate is an eternal spring; there is religious tolerance; laws protect the individuals and their property; the immigrant may get their citizenship after 2 years of residence in contrast to 5 years in the United States; there is absence of discrimination and racism; good job opportunities among other advantages. He reaffirms the image of greatness of Brazil – “lush paradise” – and the promising future immigrants have, thus configuring the founding myths of a nation. Brazil was indeed the country of the future!

<p style="text-align: center;">EMIGRATION TO THE BRAZILS</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The most PRODUCTIVE and PROMISING FIELD upon the GLOBE. ASSISTED and FREE PASSAGES From England to the Ports of Brazil.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">BEDDING, COOKING, and all SHIPPING UTENSILS allowed free GRANTS OF LAND and facilities afforded for Permanent Settlement. EMIGRANTS TOOLS, AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENTS AND MACHINERY FREE OF TRANSPORT.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Emigrants' Home open and Guide provided. LABOUR IN DEMAND AND GOOD WAGES.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Apply to Le Chevalier J. de Almeida Portugal COMMERCIAL AGENCY OF BRAZIL Westminster Chambers, Victoria Street, London <i>(The Brazil and River Plate Mail. 2 November 1867)</i></p>

⁹ See Oliver Marshall (2005) for a full history of the colonies founded by Confederates and Irish Americans on the right side of the Itajai-Mirim River and of other Irish settlements in the south of Brazil (pp.63-87). See also Miguel Alexandre de Araujo Neto (2003) about the *Anglo-Brazilian Times* (MA dissertation, 1997).

Scully wrote *Cities and Provinces of Brazil* (1865) where he described the Brazilian agricultural regions and the best lands to raise cattle in order to attract Irish immigrants to accelerate the end of slavery in the plantations. However, the historian Miguel Alexandre de Araujo Neto (2003) affirmed that Scully was a British agent after the end of the bilateral relations between England and Brazil in 1863. According to Araujo Neto, Scully's activities seemed to be subsidized by the British government which was in favour of the liberation of the Brazilian immigration policy (Neto 2003).

Irish farmers from Wednesbury, the most miserable English industrial region in 1850s, were organized under the leadership of Father George Montgomery – an Anglican priest converted into Catholicism – to emigrate to Brazil, a catholic country where they could prosper spiritually and have new opportunities supported by laws of immigration advertised by the government. The first group left in 1868 on the *Florence Chipman* and Father Montgomery created the association Pioneers of Our Lady of Help whose objective was to establish Irish Catholics in self-sufficient communities in different uninhabited places, in Brazil and in neighbouring countries, thus creating a network of “New Irelands”, as it was announced in the *Universal News* (15 Feb 1868). But the first Irish communities in Brazil had to face various difficulties and many of them returned to their place of origin or remigrated to other countries. The colonies where they were established lacked infrastructure and the immigrants who came had no experience in agriculture, which accelerated the decline of the settlements.¹⁰ Father Montgomery fell ill and could not travel to Brazil and exercise the same role as Father Fahy did in Buenos Aires. He also silenced the terrible failure of the colony in Santa Catarina. In Buenos Aires, *The Southern Cross* (16 May 1892) published an article from the weekly *Herald of Cork* (6105/189: 2) – ‘Emigrants to Brazil: the hardships of Irish and Scotch people. Extraordinary story of outrage and privation’ denouncing the Irish and Scottish immigrants’ sufferings.¹¹

¹⁰ In 1875 Great Britain prohibited the emigration to Brazil following the same measures adopted by other European countries in 1859. (Marshall 2005)

¹¹ The story of the 140 men, women and children from Bradford who arrived in Rio de Janeiro and after ten days badly accommodated and without food were sent to the south to construct roads and afterwards sent to a colony. Payment was not enough, many fell ill and without any support from the British consul, they returned to Rio de Janeiro on foot and some embarked to Pernambuco. (Izarra, p.66).

Among other important Irish that can be mentioned to research their actions during their stay in Brazil are: Bartholomew Hayden (1792-1857) from the Brazilian Navy; Dr. Ricardo Daunt (1818-1839), a pioneer in Brazilian public health medicine; Robert Halpin, responsible for laying the Atlantic cable from Portugal to Recife, Brazil; and, Hamilton Lindsay-Bucknall who arrived in Rio de Janeiro in 1873.¹² In *A Search for Fortune. The Autobiography of a Younger Son, a Narrative of Travel and Adventure* (1876/ 1978), Lindsay-Bucknall wrote his adventures since he was sixteen when he joined a militia regiment on account of the Indian mutiny. As it came to an end while he was being trained, he volunteered for active service in New Zealand; then he went to Sidney and back to London till his father's death. His cousins said, "go and search for fortune". He was offered a job in Argentina where he worked as horseman in Rosario and Buenos Aires and, after three years, he returned to old England and spent some time in Ireland.

He studied all about submarine telegraphy and general electricity to apply to a new Submarine Telegraph Company. He arrived in Rio de Janeiro as a member of the committee of telegraph operators and engineers of the Western Brazilian Telegraphic Company to inaugurate on 22 June 1874 the submarine cable laid by Halpin, the captain of CS *Seine*. His first impressions of the country – the beauty of nature, the people and the busy cities with tramways in the decade of 1870s, the first communication with Europe, the grand ball and supper given by the people of Rio de Janeiro in commemoration of 'the uniting of Brazil with Europe by means of the cable', a decree published in the *Official Gazette* approving his plans for the construction of the Rio de Janeiro-Niteroi Tubular Railway which was abandoned due to its complexity and no budget (pp. 434-436) – are registered in his autobiography. The publication has numerous illustrations by P. W. Barlow, Jun.

Irish Women in colonial and postcolonial Brazil

In the historiography of Irish emigration, men are the protagonists of the stories though many Irish women migrated alone to the United States where language and a long history of migration were

¹² Source: Peter O'Neill, Irish-born independent researcher living in Rio de Janeiro.
<https://catedrawbyeats.fffch.usp.br/links-between-brazil-and-ireland>

shared. But, even more fearsome, they migrated to South America having to face not only the same men's hardships when arrived with their husband, but also discrimination and social stereotypes for having landed as individual souls in a new non-English speaking land. Eliza Lynch arrived in Paraguay with her partner Francisco Solano López in 1855 and became the most powerful woman as the First Lady of Paraguay who modernized the society, influenced Paraguayan music and architecture and supported Solano López and the soldiers during the Paraguayan War or War of the Triple Alliance (1864-1870). In 1858 Marion McMurrough Mulhall arrived in Buenos Aires with her husband Michael Mulhall who set up with his brother Edward *The Standard and River Plate News* (the title was shortened to *The Standard* in 1882), the first English-language newspaper in South America. Cecilia Grierson (born in Argentina of Irish mother Jane Duffy) is Argentina's first female physician and founder of the first school of nursing in 1891.

In Brazil, the first records bring us to Narcisa Emília O'Leary, born in Cork, who in 1790, got married with José Bonifácio Andrada e Silva in Portugal. They had two daughters and her husband's child when they moved to Santos. They lived in the city port some years till they moved to Rio de Janeiro. He was appointed Minister and articulated the Independence process, being known as the Patriarch of the Brazilian Independence. He was imprisoned for political reasons and exiled to Bordeaux, France where they lived on loans. After six years they returned to Brazil but, two days before arriving in Rio, Narcisa died suddenly. She was buried in the Convento do Carmo, on 27 August 1829.

The Mulhall brothers played an important role in the flow of Irish immigration to South America as they published a *Handbook of the River Plate (1869)* and *Handbook of Brazil (1877)*, in which they mapped the most fertile regions and their economy. Michael documented his travels to the border countries such as Paraguay.¹³ He was accompanied by his Irish-born wife Marion, who wrote *From Europe to Paraguay and Matto Grosso (1877)*. She portrayed herself as a courageous "English woman" facing the wilderness of the unknown country. Marion later published *Between the Amazon and Andes, or Ten years of a Lady's travels in the Pampas, Gran Chaco, Paraguay*

¹³ *The Cotton Fields of Paraguay and Corrientes (1864)* – and Brazil; *Rio Grande do Sul and its German Colonies (1873)*; *The English in South America (1875)*; *Journey to Matto Grosso, September 1876 (1879)*. The Mulhalls were Unionists in opposition to the Irish Nationalist movement. The Mulhall's newspaper *The Standard* represented the pro-British Irish community.

and *Matto Grosso* (1881), which includes observations on Irish settlers and the indigenous. Marion's narratives about her adventures between the Amazon and the Andes were written and illustrated with her own drawings and some others by C. Maurand with the hope of calling the attention of the more educated travelers to explore these new exotic lands despite dangers that could be faced (Mulhall 1881, p. 192). She also wrote *Explorers of the New World Before and After Columbus and The Story of the Jesuit Missions of Paraguay* (1909) and *Beginnings or Glimpses of Vanished Civilizations* (1911) about Ireland having been part of the Atlantis.

Among twentieth-century women travelers, Cynthia Longfield (1896-1991) was an entomologist and world traveler who came to Latin America in two expeditions.¹⁴ Born in London to Anglo-Irish parents from Cloyne, Co. Cork, she traveled to many countries, and became a leading authority on dragonflies and damselflies, being named 'Madam Dragonfly'. She was inspired by reading about Charles Darwin's theory of evolution and his *Beagle* voyage of 1831-6. In 1924, she participated in the *St George* scientific expedition, an 18-month-long re-enactment of Darwin's *Beagle* voyage. During the expedition, Longfield collected moths, beetles, and butterflies for the Natural History Museum in London. In 1927, she participated in a six-month-long scientific expedition in the Mato Grosso, Brazil, where she collected 38 species of dragonfly, three of which were new species. In 1937, she published the sell-out *The Dragonflies of the British Isles*, which became the standard handbook on the topic. She retired from London's Natural History Museum in 1956 and returned to Cloyne, but never stopped travelling or studying entomology. Two dragonfly species were named in her honour: *Corphaeschna longfieldae* (Brazil) and *Agrionoptera insignis cynthiae* (Tanimbar Islands). Her personal archive and library were donated to the Royal Irish Academy in 1979, and her Irish specimen collection to the Natural History Museum in Dublin.¹⁵

Travel writings, letters, autobiographies of diasporic people living in exotic countries and narratives of the Irish revolutions triggered the imaginary of women and men at home and abroad.

¹⁴ See Angela Byrne 'Constructing the Global Irish Woman Traveller: Cynthia Longfield's Scientific Researches in South America, 1921-27'. *ABEI Journal* 21(2): 27-36. Byrne, an Irish historian-in-residence at the Irish Emigration Museum (EPIC), curated the exhibition 'Blazing a Trail. Lives and Legacies of Irish Diaspora Women' shown at the EPIC and at USP (2019).

¹⁵ Sources: Jane Hayter-Hames, *Madam Dragonfly: The Life and Times of Cynthia Longfield* (Pentland Press, 1991); *Dictionary of Irish Biography* online edition; Royal Irish Academy Longfield Collection.

Irish nineteenth-century women's writings, though very few, inspired twentieth-century women to narrate their own adventures in the new country – in Argentina, Bárbara Peart's memories, *Tia Barbarita* (1932), and Kathleen Nevin's *You'll Never Go Back* (1949) – or to write about the experience of their women ancestors, such as Argentine writer and singer María Elena Walsh's *Novios de Antaño* (1990), or biographers and writers who focus on a historical woman figure, such as Eliza Lynch ('the queen of Paraguay') – the Irish novel by Anne Enright, *The Pleasure of Eliza Lynch* (2002).

Early twentieth-century: the imaginary

Brazilian Republicans were inspired by Ireland and its Fenian legendary warriors¹⁶ in their struggle against slavery and caste. The Fenian Club, a Brazilian carnival society (a samba school), based in the city of Rio de Janeiro, was founded in 1869, having been one of the three largest societies of Rio Carnival for decades. They adopted the colors red (war) and white (for the shamrock) as their distinctive colors. They also created the club's shield, which to this day, although modified, contains the Phrygian cap, the sun and the harp, symbolizing freedom, light, and harmony. Artist Fiuza Guimarães organized their parades on the 7th and 19th March 1916 (Correio da Manhã, 7th March 1916)¹⁷ and there are also registers of the 1928 parade (Centro da Memória do Carnaval, <http://liesa.globo.com>)¹⁸ with 7 allegorical cars and 3 cars of political critique. The main car was a grandiose allegory called "Peace to the World". The car measured 30 meters carrying a Pegasus at the front mounted by the genius of Peace. On the second stage the emissary of the Fenians stood in front of the Earth globe surrounded by the figures of Humanity, Labour, Commerce, and Industry. On the third backstage, the sun of peace; the car ends with the figures of Poetry, Painting, Sculpture and Architecture. As a standard car it had an honor guard, the "Peace Guard". This imaginary represented by the Pegasus assembling two temporalities and cultural spaces provokes an estrangement that summons the public to achieve world Peace through hope and Fine Arts rather than violence.

¹⁶ Fenian: a member of secret nineteenth-century Irish and Irish-American organization to overthrow British rule in Ireland.

¹⁷ I thank Mariana Bolfarine for sharing this information.

¹⁸ Source: Peter O'Neill (*op. cit.*)

Moreover, the legendary myth of *Hy Brazil* feeds the imagination of many travelers and immigrants. Roger Casement's address written during his time as a British consul in Belem do Pará (1907/8) also refers to that imagery.¹⁹ Though its poetic narratives recall Paradise, Casement's experience in Brazil was the opposite – either when he was consul in Santos (1906), or transferred to Belem do Pará (1907) where he undertook a voyage to the Madeira-Mamoré railway; and finally as consul general in Rio de Janeiro (1909) when he was appointed to be part of the Commission of Inquiry and to undertake in 1910 the voyage to the upper Amazon to investigate the atrocities committed against subjects of the Crown (the Barbadians working for the Peruvian Amazon Company) and the indigenous people of the Putumayo, a disputed frontier region between Peru, Colombia and Brazil. Casement witnessed the atrocities, wrote down the testimonies not only from the Barbadian overseers but also from the indigenous who bore on their bodies the Arana's marks caused by the whipping and flogging because they haven't carried enough rubber. 'His daily observations, thoughts, concerns and actions were dutifully recorded in an extensive journal' – *The Amazon Journal of Roger Casement* (Mitchell 2010, p.37). He also wrote Diplomatic and Consular Reports on the Trade of Santos (1905-1906), *The Blue Book* which contains the reports and testimonies on the treatment of British colonial subjects and native Indians employed in the rubber boom period in the Putumayo District. After going back to London, he went to Africa and on his return, he resigned from the British Foreign Office, became one of the principal figures of the Easter Rising negotiating guns in Germany and advocating the German guarantee of Irish independence if they won the war. He recruited an Irish Brigade from captured Irish prisoners of war. He was caught in a German submarine, tried for treason, and sentenced to death by hanging.

Another traveler who spent some time in Brazil is the Irish writer Liam O'Flaherty (1896-1984). In his non-fictional book *Two Years* (1930) he narrates his desire to go to sea as he was tired of being a clerk and he got a job on board of a tramp steamer thinking that he was going to Boston, Massachusetts, but he found out that instead, the ship was sailing to Rio de Janeiro. He found it was more romantic going to South America and he was delighted when he disembarked in Rio. He wrote all his adventures realizing that people are not equal and described the brutality of the

¹⁹ Roger Casement argued that the origins of the name Brazil derived from the mythical island *Hy-Brasil*, located west of Ireland and described as a 'Promised Land', the Island of the Blessed – called Tír na nÓg by Irish monks or Braaz by the Phoenicians. It appears in the maps of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

natives. He summed up his experience in the tropics saying that it ended ‘in disillusion and without any credit to myself; unless I could count among my gains the renewal of my faith in the superiority of European man’ (p.160). He left Brazil with the intention of seeing the revolution in Ireland though he lost all interest on his arrival in England and took a ship to Greece, then to Canada, Boston, New York and back home on an English ship that was bound first for Rio de Janeiro and then after having called along the coast to Buenos Aires, it would steer back to Europe.

The ever-efficient Irish representatives in Latin America have been religious missionaries. Most knowledge of Latin America in Ireland is derived from missionary news circulated through churches. Many Irish religious orders have been present in Brazil: the Redemptorists, the Kiltigans and the Holy Ghosts, Dominicans, Sisters of Mercy, among others. Some devoted their lives to the indigenous in the Amazon’s rainforests while others to the poorer citizens living in the periphery of large cities, diminishing violence through education. Examples of the latter are: Father John Cribbin (1936) from Limerick who arrived in Brazil in 1962, moved to Rio de Janeiro in 1966 and became its honorary citizen in 2004²⁰; Father James Crowe (1945-2023) from County Clare, who founded the Forum in Defense of Life and Overcoming Violence, the Community Police and the Society of Holy Martyrs in Jardim Ângela, São Paulo; Father Patrick Clarke (1937), born in Dublin arrived in Brazil in 1977 and worked with the marginalized population of Vila Prudente, São Paulo. In 2019 he received the Presidential Distinguished Service Award for the Irish Abroad. They represent the ability of exercising ‘soft power’ to integrate the people who were excluded from the society. They have used culture, political values, and foreign policies to enact change without being coercive. They involved the people of the *favelas* and peripheries shaping their preferences and making visible their potentiality.

Irish literature is the cultural matrix of Irish Studies in Brazil since 1980.²¹ In the last decades of the twentieth century and in the twenty-first century, Irish writers have visited Brazil and recorded the gaze of the contemporary traveler, describing their compatriots in interaction with the society

²⁰ Source: Peter O’Neill (*op. Cit.*)

²¹ See the academic production and history of academic exchange at <https://catedrawbyeats.fflch.usp.br/>; The Brazilian Association of Irish Studies <http://www.abeibrasil.org/> and its Journal <https://www.revistas.usp.br/abei/>

of the adopted country. The poet Paul Durcan (1944 -) published *Greeting to Our Friends in Brazil* (1999) and he registers his impressions in his poems as if it were a travel diary; Mary O'Donnell also wrote a poem about the city of São Paulo. The most important international Brazilian Paraty Literary Festival has received Cólom Tóibín, Anne Enright, Edna O'Brien, Colum McCann, John Banville/ Benjamin Black, and Sinéad Gleeson to promote the translation of their books. Among other authors, historians (David Harkness, Joe Lee, Terence Brown), scholars, artists (Brian Maguire and Rita Duffy) and actors (Denis Rafter, Stephen Rea), there are playwrights (Declan Hughes, Billy Roche), film directors (Alan Gilsenan, Thadeus O'Sullivan, John T. Davis), poets (Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin, Macdara Woods, Moya Cannon, Mary O'Donnell) novelists and short story writers (Hugo Hamilton, Mary O'Donnell, Claire Keegan), cultural critics (Fintan O'Toole) – just to mention some.

Looking to the future

The symbolic meanings created by the publications of the nineteenth century influenced the Irish emigrant's imagination propelling a chain migration. Their analysis reveals strategies that imply the role of memory, space, and identities in relation to the new habitat, the need to preserve the community far from homeland, and the construction of a new home far from the “home” of origin. The propaganda of agents in England and the United States who sought labor for the agricultural colonies in Brazil subliminally fuels the desire for the real existence of Hy Brazil, the myth of Fortune Island, that until now it has existed only in the imagination of the Irish.

Contemporary Irish travellers and people in residence are still to be mapped to see the way the displaced community, or a group of individuals, is configuring a new collective identity in Brazil and how they interact with their culture of origin and host culture in times of transnational networks and high technology. Culture is a strategy of survival (Bhabha 1995) that keeps the migrants in a constant process of transformation while they still share a common history of cultural displacement. This transnational dimension rooted in specific social and cultural practices ‘turns the cultural translation into a complex process of signification’ (Bhabha, p. 49). Paul Durcan, in his poem ‘The Daring Middle-Aged Man on the Flying Trapeze’ looks with the “eye of the other”

at such cultural complexity:

(...)

However, when I heard that on June 16

In Finnegans Pub in São Paulo

A Japanese actor would be declaiming in Portuguese

Extracts from *Ulysses*

my wife persuaded me to fly with her to Dublin.

I remonstrated with her: “Fly?”

She insisted: ‘Dublin is a gás,

Dirty, ordinary, transcendental city – just like São Paulo!’

(...) (Durcan, p.30)

Contemporary Irish cultural diasporas to Brazil are still timidly explored. It can be traced back to 1988 when Haroldo de Campos and Munira Mutran started celebrating Bloomsday at Finnegans’ pub, in São Paulo, with a group called Amigos de Joyce [Joyce’s Friends]. Readings of Irish writers translated excerpts from the works by Joyce and Beckett, one-act performances, and music were part of the programme of bebemoration [a word joining drinking + commemoration] with an audience of young artists, scholars, and the general public. This cultural commemoration has spread to many important Brazilian cities congregating Joycean scholars and fans.²² However, a study about this celebration, and more recently of St. Patrick’s and St. Brigid’s Days would open new fields of research if compared with Brazilian celebrations. Arts, music, cinema, architecture, sports, and science should be studied in dialogue with the host culture. It is also time to explore the Brazilian presence in Ireland, a new path to be trodden.

Transnational and translational practices within the process of cultural encounters are a way of sharing the history of ideas, of constructing a multidirectional knowledge of the global Irish. As alterity is part of Brazilian identity, the material and visual cultures allow an open dialogue that leads to mutual understanding of Otherness and of the arbitrariness of the cultural signs. Moreover, they awaken the ethical right to signify every aspect of the human condition. I hope that young

²² See the annual online publication of Peter O’Neill with the Bloomsday programmes in different Brazilian cities.

scholars of Irish Studies living in a globalizing age do not fear to tread inspiringly a double way 'less travelled by' to say to themselves in the end: '... and that has made all the difference.'²³

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²³ 'The Road Not Taken' by Robert Frost, 1915.

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