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## Gender and the Discourse of 'Young Ireland' Cultural Nationalism

Sean Ryder

This paper examines the issue of gendering in one specific moment in the history of Irish nationalism—that is, in the cultural nationalism associated with the 'Young Ireland' movement of the 1840s. It was at that historical moment that a particular discourse took shape which influenced and structured Irish nationalist discourse for decades—a discourse which, as David Lloyd has argued, theorised, enabled, and eventually produced an essentially bourgeois Irish nation-state.<sup>1</sup> This particular form of nationalism (which I want to distinguish from other possible forms, such as republican, insurgent, or socialist nationalisms) actually mirrors in important ways the ideology of nineteenth-century imperialism, since both are grounded on bourgeois notions of identity. My attention here is on the gendering of that discourse, especially the way in which cultural nationalism produced an idealized version of national identity which identified subjectivity exclusively with masculinity, thus reproducing the gender roles and representations of bourgeois ideology in general. The material on which I focus my attention consists chiefly of writings from the Young Ireland newspapers and ballads.

The ballad, functioning as a means to produce and inspire nationalist sentiment, is a central feature of nineteenth-century nationalism, in Ireland and elsewhere. It enabled widespread dissemination of nationalist teaching in memorable and emotionally-powerful form. The genre itself, in its orality and apparent populism, also answered the desire to establish nationalist movements' rootedness in 'the people,' in tradition, and in pre-modern authenticity.<sup>2</sup> Thomas Davis, in one of the very earliest issues of *The Nation* newspaper, the journalistic organ of the 'Young Ireland' movement, called on aspiring poets to 'fling themselves gallantly and faithfully' into the patriotic work of producing a ballad history of Ireland—a sort of popular history through verse—and works like the song anthology *Spirit of the Nation* (first edition, 1843) and Charles Gavan Duffy's immensely popular *Ballad Poetry of Ireland* (1845) manifested this enthusiasm. For Davis and Duffy, in fact, the ballad sometimes appeared to function as the *chief* instrument of national consciousness-raising; a prime agent of interpellation, a means by which the nationalist subject is constituted and identified.

What is important, however, is that bourgeois cultural nationalism of the sort which Davis and Duffy developed in Ireland conceives of identity as singular and transcendent, supposedly raised above, or originating beyond, the divisive categories of gender, class and sect.<sup>3</sup> In this it mirrors the contradictions of bourgeois ideology in general, in which the imagined coherence of the historical subject necessary to the working of such ideology is achieved through the essentialist positing of identity as ultimately ahistorical and transcendent. What the subject must fail to see, for such a strategy to work, is the historicity and difference which continually prevents the consolidation of singular identity, be it identity on an individual or 'national' level. So, for Davis and Duffy, all differences among or within 'Irish people' (or the Irish 'nation,' since for cultural nationalism they are identical) are essentially inauthentic, since the 'real' ground of difference, the one which truly constitutes the identity of the nation, is the difference between Ireland and Other Nations, especially Britain. Alternative relations of difference, particularly those internal to the 'nation' as imagined, threaten the coherence and therefore the identity of that nation. In terms of gender, what we see as a consequence is not merely the unquestioned identification of 'male subject' as 'subject-in-general,' but the production of real contradiction in nationalist discourse, as gender difference cuts across national difference, undermining the very ground supporting the notion of homogenous identity. What we also see are the strategies by which attempts are made to suppress or defuse the threats these contradictions pose, especially as they manifest themselves, or threaten to manifest themselves, in nationalist activism.

One of the most obvious features of nationalist discourse is its very

gender-specific description of national identity. On the important point of the interpellative or ideological function of the ballad, for instance, Davis writes:

Happy boys! who may grow up with such ballads in your memories. Happy men! who find your hearts not only doubtful but joyous in serving and sacrificing for the country you thus learned in childhood to love. (Davis n.d.: 216)

Throughout the cultural writings of *The Nation*, as might be expected, the national subject posited by the rhetoric of Young Ireland is almost without exception a *male* subject, not the 'genderless' 'transcendent' Irish person which its own generalising logic would imply. But even beyond the exclusive employment of masculine nouns and pronouns, the rhetoric displays a more thorough-going structural gendering which determines not only the language used but the entire conceptual frame with which the relations of colonialism, nationalism and subjectivity are imagined.

To begin with, in poetry, as is well known, the relation between Ireland and Britain was commonly represented as a gendered relation, at least as far back as the late sixteenth century. In this poetic tradition Ireland becomes a contested female body (with variable names—Éire, Banba, Síle Ní Gara, Cathleen Ní Houlihan, and so on) which has been conquered and possessed by an aggressive and dishonourable male. It is conventional in such poetry to employ metaphors of imprisonment, enslavement, or rape to describe the relation between England or Britain and Ireland. In the eighteenth-century Irish-language tradition of the *aisling* (a genre which was revived and transformed through translation in nineteenth-century nationalism) the loss of freedom, dignity and integrity which this relation represents is linked very closely to the woman's loss of royal title and privilege. This link is important since it enables the poet legitimately to appeal to the exiled Stuart prince as a 'Young Deliverer' or 'Rescuer' who will drive off his English rival, wed the woman and restore her to the royal position she deserves. But obviously in this kind of narrative, she remains at all times the object of male rivalry and possession—her possibilities are limited to a choice between a cruel master or a generous one—and even to use the word choice is misleading, since she herself is powerless to act. Her only power is to lament—to move the poet to action—in other words, to enable others (men) to act.

The *aisling* tradition was an aristocratic one, with links to the wider European courtly love tradition and its associated values of chivalry and so on—indeed bourgeois 'chivalric' values become quite prominent in the gendered rhetoric of nineteenth-century nationalism. The Young Ireland

period also sees the translation of eighteenth-century *aisling* into English, with collections such as John O'Daly's *Poets and Poetry of Munster* (1849), so that we see the absorption and reformulation of a pre-bourgeois discourse into the project of cultural nationalism. The impression of historical continuity which this absorption gave obscures the transformations that occurred—for instance the way in which the aristocratic Queen, often a representative of a class or even specific family such as the Fitzgeralds, now acts as a figure for the transcendent nation, detached from the historical contingency which such a figure had in a previous era, when Stuart invasion was still a conceivable, if unlikely possibility. The important point about chivalry and courtly love of course, is that it presents women as exclusively the reified object of male possession and desire. In bourgeois nationalism, this desire becomes fixated on the *transcendent* figure of the nation, in keeping with the general drive towards transcendent subjectivity in a bourgeois political economy. Thus an actual historical woman who may have originally been the object of an actual man's desire becomes purely a sign, detached from locale or history, generalised to the extent that historical specificity and differences are lost (see more detailed discussion of this strategy in Gibbons 1992 and Lloyd 1993: 161)

A related figure of femininity characterising Irish nationalism has been the Poor Old Woman, the *sean bhean bhocht*, or 'Mother Ireland' figure. As a cipher for the Irish nation in general, this figure does not really appear until the nineteenth century, and then is used again to reproduce quite conveniently the 'chivalric' ideals of bourgeois gender relations, as well as figure a particular set of values and expectations concerning the role of the mother in Irish culture, a role which was undergoing transformation and re-definition in mid-nineteenth-century Ireland (see Inglis 1987 and Lee 1978 for further discussion of the ideology and function of motherhood in nineteenth-century Ireland). The *sean bhean bhocht*, like the young queen of the *aisling*, is powerless, apart from her power to lament or keen, but precisely because she is so, the implied male poet/reader/listener is able to define himself as her rescuer—active, courageous and ultimately patriotic. Here again the identity of the reader/poet is defined precisely through a gender differentiation which makes his nationality *conditional* upon his masculinity. To be an active national subject, you simply must be male. In a quite literal enactment of Althusserian interpellation,<sup>4</sup> the poem's subject is quite literally 'hailed' as masculine; he is constructed as lover or son by the appeals of distressed and helpless woman.

A third figuration of the woman, particularly common in the popular broadside poetry of the nineteenth century, as opposed to the middle-class publications of Davis and Duffy, is the figure of 'Grania Uaile', from Gráinne Uí Mháille, the sixteenth-century clan leader, pirate, and

sometime rebel from west Connaught, and contemporary of Elizabeth I. What is especially striking about this is that an actual historical figure (unlike the 'transcendental' Cathleen Ni Houlihan, for instance), and furthermore a figure who offers a real model of feminine power, becomes in the nineteenth century merely another passive 'Mother Ireland' figure—appearing most often in the formulaic phrase 'the sons of Grana.'<sup>5</sup> Sometimes in the early part of the century she is represented most unhistorically as the 'bride of Napoleon', a figuration as bride derived from the *aisling* genre. She occurs, not untypically, in an anonymous ballad in *The Nation* of 10 December 1842, entitled 'A Case for the Lawyers' which usefully illustrates a number of points. In the poem, Grana Uile, 'a fair little crayture' goes to consistory court in search of a legal separation from her husband John Bull, who is a miser and wife-beater. The poem is intended to be humorous and parodic, but significantly, much of this parody is at the expense of Grana Uile, who supposedly represents the Irish nation:

A CASE FOR THE LAWYERS  
Air: 'Rory O'More'

A fair little crayture, as ever was seen  
All robed in a beautiful garment of green,  
With a rent here and there, an' her arms black and blue  
An' her diamond eyes weepin', to make a Turk rue,  
T'other mornin' came to the CONSISTORY COURT,  
Where one UPRIGHT'S THE JUDGE—there's *but one of the*  
*sort!*  
And she dazzled each eye with the emeralds so bright  
Her lovely neck circling—her forehead's by right!  
'Be seated, fair lady,' exclaims the old judge;  
'Til justice is done you I'm blest if I budge!  
She curtsied so sweetly!—'Now, tell me your tale.'  
'That I will in *two twos*,' says poor GRANA UILE.

'You see, sir—my lord! I was weeny and small,  
When up comes MR JOHN BULL, so strappin' and tall;  
He saized me, an' taized me, an' thin he used force,  
An' tuk av my wakeness advantage, *av coorse!*

\* \* \* \* \*

The weddin' took place, and 'twas colder nor ice;  
And when it was over, I found in a trice  
Our UNION but made the fresh sorrow to sup—  
*For the articles niver was fairly drawn up!*

My fortune he spint—they of flaws were so full;  
And my share was of kicks more than ha'pence from BULL,  
So, you worship, I seek "RESTITUTION OF RIGHTS,"  
Or a SEP'RATE MAINTENANCE—by days and by nights!"

The first point to be made is that the poem provides a convenient illustration of cultural nationalism's utilisation of bourgeois conceptual terms. Albeit parodically, it casts the colonial relation between Britain and Ireland in terms of bourgeois marriage—that is, a legal contract between two supposedly autonomous and self-willed individuals. On a deeper level, such a figuration implies an identification between individual subjectivity and national subjectivity; it also legitimates the liberal bourgeois view that the dispute between Britain and Ireland can be resolved through legal re-arrangement—that is, reform rather than revolution. Furthermore, at the same time as it appears to express a nationalist argument, parodying the figure of John Bull and English misrule, the poem displays deep ambivalence towards the figure of Grana Uile herself. Its attitude fluctuates between sympathy for her as the abused and deceived representative of Ireland, and contempt for her frivolous manner and 'coarse' language, which are so much the focus of the poem's humour. More importantly, the fact that she is a woman means that, as in the *aisling*, she is seen to rely upon appearance, complaint, supplication, and victimage to effect change, rather than direct action, which is the province of masculinity.

Anxiety over these very qualities which constitute femininity produces some of the most extraordinary contradictions to be found in cultural nationalist writing. The femininity which at one moment is used to define Ireland as a nation which like a woman has been treated unjustly, becomes at another moment an embarrassment to a nationalism which internalises the dominant values of the imperialism it seeks to oppose, including those values which privilege 'masculine' traits such as activity, vigour, strength, and courage over 'feminine' passivity, weakness, vanity, and cowardice. In a very general way, the use of bourgeois discourse, which defines gender roles and characteristics hierarchically and asymmetrically, cause problems for a nationalism which wishes to assert equality and independence. Thus, for example, Edward Hayes articulates the 'chivalric' nationalist view of gender in his introduction to the influential anthology *Ballads of Ireland* (1855):

Woman has ever been honoured in Ireland with especial reverence. Since those ancient days which Moore has celebrated in one of his exquisite lyrics, when the fairest lady might travel the land from shore to shore without harm or danger, the Irishwoman's virtue and beauty have commanded

universal respect, and made her a national deity almost to be worshipped. This national chivalry imparted to the poet's allegory an insinuating and enduring power over the heart which no appeal to the passions could possess. Ireland was no longer an abstraction, but a familiar being; and still more an afflicted woman, a forlorn mother, a fallen Queen, mourning over her sorrows, and calling upon her sons to avenge her wrongs and restore her to the dignity from which she had fallen. (Hayes 1855: I, xxvi)

Yet when nationalists like Gavan Duffy find it necessary to encourage patriotic activism, they express contempt for such 'feminine' behaviour:

... brave men ... endure when it is not wise to act—they act when it is no longer needful to endure. But the woman's weapons of complaint and recrimination they scorn to use ever. ... These are men to build up a nation. (Duffy 1843b: 824)

The feminine 'complaint and recrimination' which in one context is constitutive of Ireland's call to arms, become in another context an index of cowardice and contemptibility, an obstacle to the 'masculine' task of nation-building. Similarly, while cultural nationalism continues to make strategic use of the figuration of Ireland as 'feminine,' some of its anti-imperial rhetoric, seemingly unaware of the contradiction, finds itself attacking such 'national femininity' in others. In one such startling example, from *The Nation*, the political opposition Ireland/Britain is practically collapsed in the face of a more passionately-described opposition between 'masculine' Britain and 'feminine' China:

... our amiable sister of England ... [is] triumphing over a nation of feminine creatures, destitute even of the brute instinct of resistance, and apparently incapable of imitating the most timorous animals, which become valorous by despair. ... Britain, by brute force, triumphs in China, over the most miserably effeminate and dastardly creatures of God's earth. (Murray 1842: 40)

Here the values associated with gender categories conflict with the values conventionally assigned on political grounds—in other words, where one would expect the writer to make an identification between the interests of Ireland and China, on the basis that both are victims of British imperialism, the article instead makes the victims appear even more odious than their oppressors, on the basis that 'effeminacy' is

contemptible. It was precisely such 'logic' that fueled British imperialism in the first place, and in this passage, where gender becomes the primary principle of 'difference,' the discourses of imperialism and nationalism collapse into each other.

The provision of role models (such as Cathleen Ni Houlihan) was the chief, but not the only means by which cultural nationalism encouraged the interpellation of the gendered national subject. Direct addresses to Irish men and women as gendered subjects, offering advice on the character and spheres of action proper to each, also formed part of the discourse. In fact the advice tends to reproduce fairly faithfully the conventional gender values of Victorian bourgeois morality—men are advised to adopt the virtues of temperance, vigour, industry and honesty, while women are advised to adopt the virtues of modesty, spirituality and domesticity (see Inglis 1987: 200ff. for an interesting discussion of the simultaneous privileging of these bourgeois values by the Catholic church in nineteenth-century Ireland). Gavan Duffy, in an essay from *The Nation* addressed to 'the young men of Ireland,' manifests great anxiety concerning the moral purity of Ireland's masculine heroes-to-be, advising them to steer clear of the dissipation and wasteful practices to which the young men of other nations have degenerated:

While their cotemporaries in England are wasting their manhood in the gambling-house and the race-course, or running over the bogs of controversy after the Will-o'-the-Wisp of Puseyism—while the young Germans are making syllogisms, and the young Italians making songs, the young Irish men, in a spirit of chivalry that has died out of the worn and wasted heart of old Europe, plant their feet firmly upon their fatherland, and declare that they will right her [sic] wrongs—gainsay it who may. (Duffy 1843a: 664)

Duffy's rhetoric (in which the contradictions of gender and bourgeois nationalism are given an extraordinarily ironic exposure at the end) also prefigures the Arnoldian and Yeatsian belief in the power of the Celt to redeem a decayed and modernising European civilisation.

As an example of the kind of advice provided for women wishing to participate in nationalist activity, *The Nation* published, on 11 February 1843, a poem entitled 'The Nation's Valentine. To the Ladies of Ireland,' by Young Irelander Richard D'Alton Williams. The poem opens by advising the 'Daughters of Erin' to adopt a supportive and decorative role in relation to their chivalric heroes: 'Tis yours to brace on the chainmail of your lovers, / and broider gay streamers to float from their spears' (ll.3-4). Alongside a number of highly conventional idealised descriptions of womanhood, derived from the *aisling* tradition, the

remaining stanzas invoke two historical figures who act as alternatively positive and negative models of national feminine subjectivity. The first is Sarah Curran, '[Robert] Emmet's first love,' who is praised for her spiritual qualities, and more especially for her capacity for self-denial:

Yet not her's is the wish to behold her adorer  
Forget his land's wrongs in the light of her eyes.

She refuses, in other words, to submit to the temptation to ensnare her patriotic lover, take advantage of his natural desires, and distract him from his public and political destiny:

Withdraw, then, thy presence, from pleasure's gay bowers,  
And smile but on him who braves danger and toil.  
Thus beauty and virtue, asserting their powers,  
Shall more than atone for the false Devorghoil.

Conventionally, Devorghoil<sup>6</sup> represents a negative model for Irish womanhood. She is treacherous, selfish and tempting—in fact the inverse of the chaste and patient Sarah Curran. What is significant here is that a seven-hundred-year crisis of Irish history is seen to originate as an issue of gender and sexuality; or more specifically, as a matter of feminine guilt. It therefore becomes the duty of Irish women to atone for these sins of treachery and betrayal, just as Christianity traditionally demanded the atonement of women for the sins of Eve. In fact, gender, and essentialist notions of female identity, are here a ground of alignment between the discourses of Christianity and Irish nationalism, and are also a ground for the dehistoricising project essential to bourgeois nationalism, in which real historical figures are reduced to types (Devorghoil/Eve; Sarah Curran/Virgin Mary), and history itself reduced to a replaying of myth. The passage also reproduces the common strategy by which women are effectively disempowered by being given the illusion of privilege—the supposed 'powers' of beauty and virtue (vague and passive in themselves) allegedly have the force to undo history itself. To exercise such powers, one need only 'be,' not 'do.'

There is no need here to rehearse the centrality of this gender discourse to bourgeois ideology in the nineteenth century—particularly to the pervasiveness of the Madonna/Whore figuration, through which Man defines himself against a feminine Other which remains both tantalisingly and threateningly at the margins of the symbolic order; crucial to his self-definition, yet always threatening to expose its artificiality. It does help to explain why cultural nationalism tended to discourage women activists within the movement, or at least carefully

regulate their role; the *Nation's* editor, probably Gavan Duffy, in one of the regular 'Answer to Correspondents' columns in *The Nation*, writes:

We have received, in a feminine hand, a most seditious proposal for the formation of a Ladies' Society, to talk treason, and defy the Gagging Act. The intention is excellent, but the plan is unnecessary. Every drawing-room should be a lady's society for 'advocating the case of the country, and putting to shame the slaves who are content with it,' and as for talking sedition, and acting it, the men must do that. (*The Nation* 13 May 1848: 312)

Nevertheless the Young Ireland movement of the 1840s did have its female activists.<sup>7</sup> Three of its most popular poets were women—Jane Francesca Elgee, later Lady Wilde ('Speranza'); Ellen Downing ('Mary of *The Nation*'); and Mary Kelly ('Eva of *The Nation*'). Jane Elgee and Margaret Callan in fact took over the running of *The Nation* during July 1848, when most of Young Ireland's male leaders were under arrest. Elgee was responsible for writing the editorial 'Jacta Alea Est', which the authorities considered seditious enough to justify the suppression of the newspaper altogether. Yet their poetry differs little from that of their male colleagues in its reproduction of bourgeois nationalist gender relations—the difference being that it often articulates such relations from a woman's point-of-view. Within that point-of-view she remains a de-centred and dependent subject—the exile's patient lover, the mother of emigrant sons, and so on. Similarly, the few prose pieces produced by women on the subject of women's role within nationalism tend to accept the ideology of women's subordination and 'separate spheres,' though they also argue for a recognition of the seriousness of women's place within that scheme. Ellen Downing's 1848 address 'To the Women of Ireland' in John Mitchel's nationalist paper *United Irishman* argues that women's role as nationalists is chiefly one of support rather than activism, and involves a kind of internal rather than external struggle, particularly against characteristically 'female' weaknesses such as hypocrisy, selfishness, and a horror of bloodshed. It is also very obviously addressed to a middle-class readership:

Few seem to look upon self-denial as a positive duty when country is at stake . . . if you cannot consent to wear a coarser dress for the sake of freedom and virtue, you don't deserve to be the wives and mothers of freemen . . . (Downing 1848: 211)

At least one more radical feminist contribution appears to have been made to the discourse of *The Nation*, a contribution which stands out for

the very rarity of its views. Mary Kelly, writing as 'Eva,' sent a letter to the paper in 1848, arguing that:

No woman, no more than a man, is exempt from aiming at all the perfection of which the human soul is capable. What is virtue in man is virtue also in woman. Virtue is of no sex. A coward woman is as base as a coward man . . . It is not unfeminine to take sword or gun, if sword or gun are required . . . Plead not in this hour the miserable excuse—'I am a woman.' (cited in Anton 1993: 36)

The radical implications of such an argument, which proposes an active, militarist role for women nationalists, is partly defused by the production of 'hagiographical' accounts of these women writers—accounts which represent them through the use of more conventional nationalist and patriarchal stereotypes. The life of 'Eva' herself, for example, is seen to follow the pattern of the Sarah Curran ideal, but with a happier ending. The pivotal instance of her nationalist career is her refusal to tempt her lover Kevin Izod O'Doherty, who had been arrested and was facing a sentence of transportation, to collude with the government:

If O'Doherty had accepted the compromise [a plea of guilty to 'treason felony'] the lovers would have been free at once to accomplish their marriage . . . The genius of the poet or the romanticist could hardly devise a situation more tempting to a loving and already affianced woman. But to 'Eva' it offered no temptation whatever. (McCarthy 1909: xvi)

O'Doherty was in fact transported to Australia; the couple were married after his pardon in 1854. Similarly, conventional accounts of Ellen Downing's life pivoted around her unhappy love affair with Joseph Brenan, another Young Irelander, and her subsequent entry into a convent in 1849 (see Markham 1913: 1-7).

More work needs to be done to determine the precise relations between this nationalist discourse and the lives of Irish women in general. Speculation on this subject has been greatly enabled by the recent work by Irish historians on women in the nineteenth century. Mary Cullen, for instance, has argued that among the wage-earning agricultural labouring classes in pre-Famine rural Ireland, up to 35% of family income may have derived directly from women's labour. This included activities such as the rearing and sale of pigs, poultry and eggs, cottage industry such as spinning and weaving, and, among the poorer classes, seasonal begging (see Cullen 1990). The political dynamic within the family in such situations was flexible and complicated; Cullen

cites contradictory evidence for, on the one hand, women's relative independence as a result of this system, and on the other hand, women's redoubled oppression as both wage-earner and domestic slave because of it (see Cullen 1990: 112-13; and see also Dymphna McLoughlin's discussion of Irish women paupers in the famine and post-famine period). In subsequent years, with the decline of women's labour because of changes in agricultural practice, and the privileging of 'cult of domesticity' which accompanied the rise of the Catholic middle-class, men were more likely to become the sole wage-earners in labouring families, and the beneficiaries of the authority which such position conferred. These alterations in domestic economy co-incide with the rise of cultural nationalism and may well be in a mutually-supportive relation.

Historian Maria Luddy's work on prostitution in the nineteenth-century has also produced some interesting statistics—such as the existence of 419 brothels in Dublin in the period 1845-1849, and the arrests of an average of 4123 women per year for prostitution during that period (see Luddy 1990: 56-57). In this context, literary models of chastity and passivity such as Cathleen Ni Houlihan seem to be more than just poetic figures; they are also moral *exempla*, crucial to the inculcation of bourgeois values in nineteenth-century Irish society.

In conclusion, then, the consolidation of bourgeois notions of family, economy and gender roles (while never entirely successful or complete in Ireland, just as in other postcolonial situations) was clearly not merely accompanied by, but intimately related to the rise of cultural nationalism. The discourses of each worked to interpellate a subject as autonomous and transcendent, while in fact producing its opposite-gender-differentiated subjects—by insisting on a gendered division of labour, and on a ideology of separate and hierarchical 'spheres.' Gender also becomes, as we have seen, one of the basic grounds upon which Irish cultural nationalism shows its indebtedness to the imperial culture against which it is defined; and even within nationalist discourse itself gendering poses severe problems by embarrassing the latter's logic of democracy and self-determination. Indeed, by reproducing many of the contradictions which structure bourgeois nationalist ideology in general, gender represents one of the most productive grounds upon which the deconstruction of bourgeois nationalist discourse can take place.



## NOTES

1. My arguments throughout the paper are indebted to David Lloyd's path-breaking work on Irish cultural nationalism; see especially his *Nationalism and Minor Literature* (1987) and *Anomalous States* (1993), particularly the latter's essay 'Adulteration and the Nation.'

2. Of course, the irony of the dependence of 'anti-imperialist' nationalism upon the tools of 'imperialist' modernity (such as print-culture) in order to disseminate its ideas, and work for the consolidation of the very 'nation' itself as an entity beyond gender, class and historical contingency, has been seen as one of the basic constitutive contradictions of nineteenth-century nationalisms; see Anderson 1983 for example.

3. Gavan Duffy, in the 1845 introduction to his anthology *Ballad Poetry of Ireland*, comments on the role of the ballad in this process: 'We need not apologise for making this not a party or sectarian, but strictly a national collection. Whatever could illustrate the character, passions, or opinions of any class of Irishmen, that we gladly adopted. Our duty is to know each other' (Duffy 1874: 37). See also Lloyd 1987: 60-77. Davis also comments that authentic nationality is only now being perceived by the Irish, and that recognition of this singular and 'authentic' destiny will cause the disappearance of the 'inauthentic' divisions which have prevailed hitherto: 'At last we are beginning to see what we are, and what is our destiny. Our duty arises where our knowledge begins. The elements of Irish nationality are not only combining—in fact, they are growing confluent in our minds. Such nationality as merits a good man's help and wakens a true man's ambition—such nationality as could stand against internal faction and foreign intrigue—such nationality . . . is becoming understood. It must contain and represent the races of Ireland' (Davis n.d.: 210).

4. See Althusser 1984: 47-8: '... ideology "acts" or "functions" in such a way that it "recruits" subjects among the individuals (it recruits them all), or "transforms" the individuals into subjects (it transforms them all) by that very precise operation which I have called *interpellation* or hailing ...'

5. See Zimmerman 1967: 55-6.

6. Devorghoil was married to Tiernan O'Rourke, king of Breifni in the twelfth century. She was abducted (willingly, according to Keating and other early accounts) by Dermot MacMurrough, king of Leinster. In the ensuing war between the two kings MacMurrough obtained aid from Henry II of England, thus precipitating the Norman invasion of Ireland in 1169, conventionally seen as the beginning of colonial rule in Ireland.

7. See Anton 1993 for a brief survey of some of the women associated with Young Ireland.

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## 16 *Unfaithful to the Original: The Subject of Dictée*

Lisa Lowe

If translation is to incorporate into the language and the spirit of a nation what it does not possess, or what it possesses in a different way, the first requirement is simple fidelity. This fidelity must be aimed at the real nature of the original . . . just as every good translation originates in simple and unpretentious love for the original. (Wilhelm von Humboldt, 'A Theory of translation,' 1816)

To speak means to be in a position to use a certain syntax, to grasp the morphology of this or that language, but it means above all to assume a culture, to support the weight of a civilization . . . Every colonized people—in other words, every people in whose soul an inferiority complex has been created by the death and burial of its local cultural originality—finds itself face to face with the language of the civilizing nation . . . (Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 1957)