

# Transcultural Journal of Humanities & Social Sciences

Print ISSN 4239-2636 Online ISSN 4247-2636



An Online Academic Journal of  
Interdisciplinary & transcultural topics in Humanities  
& social sciences

# TJHSS

BUC Press House



**Volume 4 Issue (4)**

**October 2023**

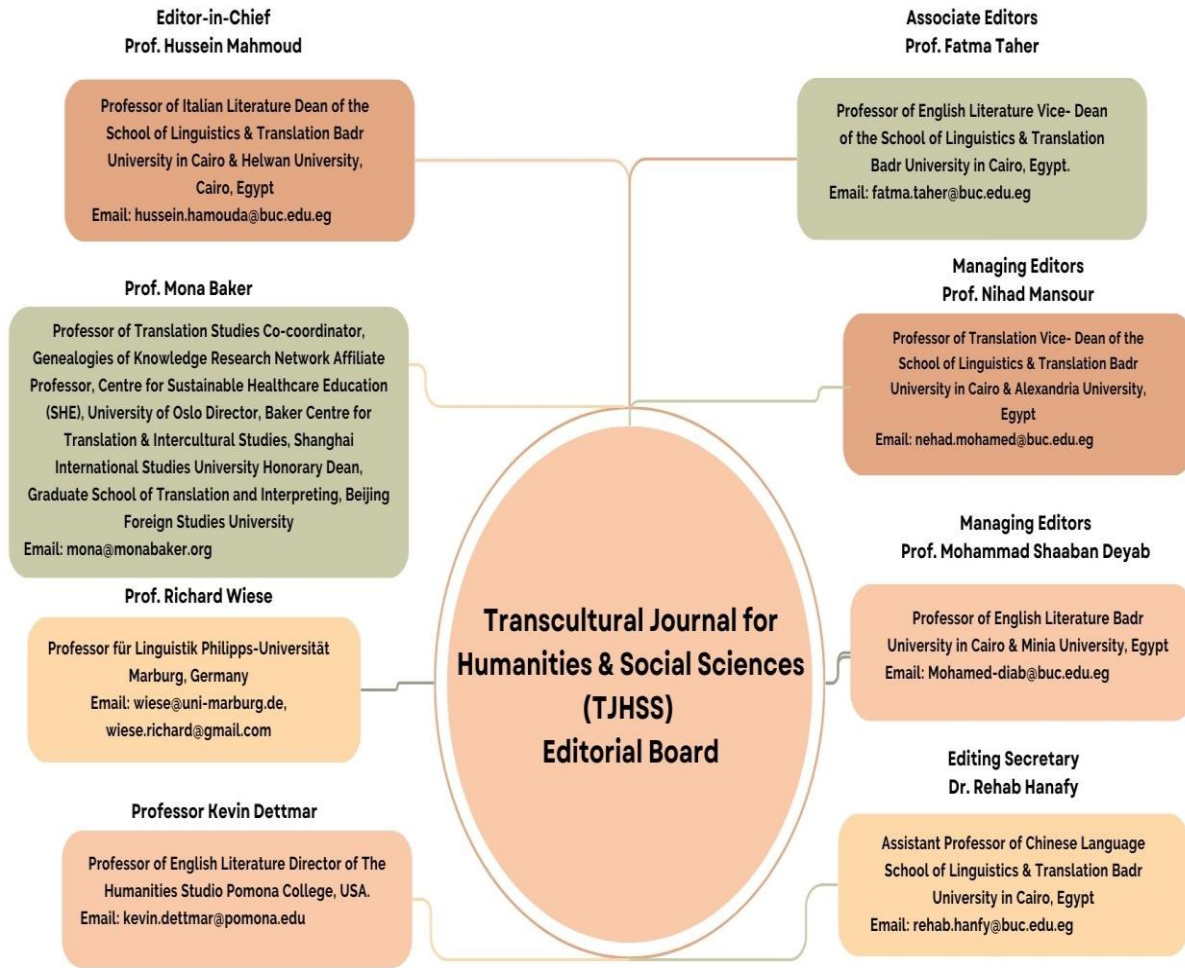
**Transcultural Journal for Humanities and Social Sciences (TJHSS)** is a journal committed to disseminate a new range of interdisciplinary and transcultural topics in Humanities and social sciences. It is an open access, peer reviewed and refereed journal, published by Badr University in Cairo, BUC, to provide original and updated knowledge platform of international scholars interested in multi-inter disciplinary researches in all languages and from the widest range of world cultures. It's an online academic journal that offers print on demand services.

**TJHSS Aims and Objectives:**

To promote interdisciplinary studies in the fields of Languages, Humanities and Social Sciences and provide a reliable academically trusted and approved venue of publishing Language and culture research.

- |                      |                  |
|----------------------|------------------|
| ▣ <b>Print ISSN</b>  | <b>2636-4239</b> |
| ▣ <b>Online ISSN</b> | <b>2636-4247</b> |

# Transcultural Journal for Humanities & Social Sciences (TJHSS) Editorial Board



## EDITORIAL BOARD

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE &amp; LITERATURE

<b>Prof. Alaa Alghamdi</b> Professor of English Literature Taibah University, KSA	Email: <a href="mailto:alaaghamdi@yahoo.com">alaaghamdi@yahoo.com</a>
<b>Prof. Andrew Smyth</b> Professor and Chair Department of English Southern Connecticut State University, USA	Email: <a href="mailto:smyth2@southernct.edu">smyth2@southernct.edu</a>
<b>Prof. Anvar Sadhath</b> Associate Professor of English, The New College (Autonomous), Chennai - India	Email: <a href="mailto:sadathvp@gmail.com">sadathvp@gmail.com</a>
<b>Prof. Hanaa Youssef Shaarawy</b> Associate Professor of Linguistics School of Linguistics & Translation Badr University in Cairo, Egypt	Email: <a href="mailto:hanaa.shaarawy@buc.edu.eg">hanaa.shaarawy@buc.edu.eg</a>
<b>Prof. Hashim Noor</b> Professor of Applied Linguistics Taibah University, KSA	Email: <a href="mailto:prof.noor@live.com">prof.noor@live.com</a>
<b>Prof. Nagwa Younis</b> Professor of Linguistics Department of English Faculty of Arts Ain Shams University , Egypt	Email: <a href="mailto:nagwayounis@edu.asu.edu.eg">nagwayounis@edu.asu.edu.eg</a>
<b>Prof. Tamer Lokman</b> Associate Professor of English Taibah University, KSA	Email: <a href="mailto:tamerlokman@gmail.com">tamerlokman@gmail.com</a>

## CHINESE LANGUAGE &amp; LITERATURE

<b>Prof. Belal Abdelhadi</b> Expert of Arabic Chinese studies Lebanon university	Email: <a href="mailto:Babulhadi59@yahoo.fr">Babulhadi59@yahoo.fr</a>
<b>Prof. Jan Ebrahim Badawy</b> Professor of Chinese Literature Faculty of Alsun, Ain Shams University, Egypt	Email: <a href="mailto:janeraon@hotmail.com">janeraon@hotmail.com</a>
<b>Prof. Lin Fengmin</b> Head of the Department of Arabic Language Vice President of the institute of Eastern Literatures studies Peking University	Email: <a href="mailto:emirlin@pku.edu.cn">emirlin@pku.edu.cn</a>
<b>Prof. Ninette Naem Ebrahim</b> Professor of Chinese Linguistics Faculty of Alsun, Ain Shams University , Egypt	Email: <a href="mailto:ninette_b86@yahoo.com">ninette_b86@yahoo.com</a>
<b>Prof. Rasha Kamal</b> Professor of Chinese Language Vice- Dean of the School of Linguistics & Translation	Email: <a href="mailto:rasha.kamal@buc.edu.eg">rasha.kamal@buc.edu.eg</a>

Badr University in Cairo & Faculty of Alsun, Ain Shams University, Egypt	
<b>Prof. Sun Yixue</b> President of The International School of Tongji University	Email: <a href="mailto:98078@tongji.edu.cn">98078@tongji.edu.cn</a>
<b>Prof. Wang Genming</b> President of the Institute of Arab Studies Xi'an International Studies University	Email: <a href="mailto:genmingwang@xisu.cn">genmingwang@xisu.cn</a>
<b>Prof. Zhang hua</b> Dean of post graduate institute Beijing language university	Email: <a href="mailto:zhanghua@bluc.edu.cn">zhanghua@bluc.edu.cn</a>
<b>Prof. Belal Abdelhadi</b> Expert of Arabic Chinese studies Lebanon university	Email: <a href="mailto:Babulhadi59@yahoo.fr">Babulhadi59@yahoo.fr</a>
<b>GERMAN LANGUAGE &amp; LITERATURE</b>	
<b>Prof. Baher El Gohary</b> Professor of German Language and Literature Ain Shams University, Cairo, Egypt	Email: <a href="mailto:baher.elgohary@yahoo.com">baher.elgohary@yahoo.com</a>
<b>Prof. El Sayed Madbouly</b> Professor of German Language and Literature Badr University in Cairo & Ain Shams University, Cairo, Egypt	Email: <a href="mailto:elsayed.madbouly@buc.edu.eg">elsayed.madbouly@buc.edu.eg</a>
<b>Prof. George Guntermann</b> Professor of German Language and Literature Universität Trier, Germany	Email: <a href="mailto:GuntermannBonn@t-online.de">GuntermannBonn@t-online.de</a>
<b>Prof. Herbert Zeman</b> Professor of German Language and Literature Neuere deutsche Literatur Institut für Germanistik Universitätsring 1 1010 Wien	Email: <a href="mailto:herbert.zeman@univie.ac.at">herbert.zeman@univie.ac.at</a>
<b>Prof. Lamyaa Ziko</b> Professor of German Language and Literature Badr University in Cairo & Menoufia University, Egypt	Email: <a href="mailto:lamiaa.abdelmohsen@buc.edu.eg">lamiaa.abdelmohsen@buc.edu.eg</a>
<b>Prof. p`hil. Elke Montanari</b> Professor of German Language and Literature University of Hildesheim, Germany	Email: <a href="mailto:montanar@unihildesheim.de">montanar@unihildesheim.de</a> , <a href="mailto:elke.montanari@unihildesheim.de">elke.montanari@unihildesheim.de</a>
<b>Prof. Renate Freudenberg-Findeisen</b> Professor of German Language and Literature Universität Trier, Germany	Email: <a href="mailto:freufin@uni-trier.de">freufin@uni-trier.de</a>
<b>ITALIAN LANGUAGE &amp; LITERATURE</b>	
<b>Prof. Giuseppe Cecere</b> Professore associato di Lingua e letteratura	Email: <a href="mailto:giuseppe.cecere3@unibo.it">giuseppe.cecere3@unibo.it</a>

araba Università di Bologna Alma  
Mater Studiorum, Italy

**Prof. Lamiaa El Sherif** Professor of  
Italian Language & Literature BUC,  
Cairo Egypt

Email: [lamia.elsherif@buc.edu.eg](mailto:lamia.elsherif@buc.edu.eg)

**Prof. Shereef Aboulmakarem**  
Professor of Italian Language &  
Literature Minia University, Egypt

Email: [sherif\\_makarem@yahoo.com](mailto:sherif_makarem@yahoo.com)

#### SPANISH LANGUAGE & LITERATURE

**Prof. Carmen Cazorla** Professor of  
Spanish Language & Literature  
Universidad Complutense de Madrid,  
Spain

Email: [mccazorl@filol.ucm.es](mailto:mccazorl@filol.ucm.es)

**Prof. Elena Gómez** Professor of  
Spanish Language & Literature  
Universidad Europea de Madrid,  
Spain

Email : [elena.gomez@universidadeuropea.es](mailto:elena.gomez@universidadeuropea.es)  
Universidad de Alicante, Spain  
[spc@ua.es](mailto:spc@ua.es)

**Prof. Isabel Hernández** Professor of  
Spanish Language & Literature  
Universidad Complutense de Madrid,  
Spain

Email: [isabelhg@ucm.es](mailto:isabelhg@ucm.es)

**Prof. Manar Abd El Moez**  
Professor of Spanish Language &  
Literature Dean of the Faculty of  
Alsun, Fayoum University, Egypt

Email: [manar.moez@buc.edu.eg](mailto:manar.moez@buc.edu.eg)

**Prof. Mohamed El-Madkouri  
Maataoui** Professor of Spanish  
Language & Literature Universidad  
Autónoma de Madrid, Spain

Email: [elmadkouri@uam.es](mailto:elmadkouri@uam.es)

**Prof. Salwa Mahmoud Ahmed**  
Professor of Spanish Language &  
Literature Department of Spanish  
Language and Literature Faculty of  
Arts Helwan University Cairo, Egypt

Email: [Serket@yahoo.com](mailto:Serket@yahoo.com)

#### HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

**Prof. Ahmad Zayed** Professor of  
Sociology Faculty of Arts, Cairo  
University, Egypt Ex-Dean of the  
School of Humanities & Social  
Sciences Badr University in Cairo

Email: [ahmedabdallah@buc.edu.eg](mailto:ahmedabdallah@buc.edu.eg)

**Prof. Amina Mohamed Baiomy**  
Professor of Sociology Faculty of  
Arts Fayoum University, Egypt

Email: [ama24@fayoum.edu.eg](mailto:ama24@fayoum.edu.eg)

**Prof. Galal Abou Zeid** Professor of  
Arabic Literature Faculty of Alsun,  
Ain Shams University

Email: [gaalswn@gmail.com](mailto:gaalswn@gmail.com)

**Prof. M. Safeieddeen Kharbosh**  
Professor of Political Science Dean

Email: [muhammad.safeieddeen@buc.edu.eg](mailto:muhammad.safeieddeen@buc.edu.eg)

---

of the School of Political Science and  
International Relations Badr  
University in Cairo, Egypt

---

**Prof. Sami Mohamed Nassar**  
Professor of Pedagogy Dean of the  
School of Humanities & Social  
Sciences Badr University in Cairo  
Faculty of Graduate Studies for  
Education, Cairo University

---

Email: [sami.nassar@buc.edu.eg](mailto:sami.nassar@buc.edu.eg)

<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>		
--------------------------	--	--

Amina ElHalawani	Hope and Harbors in Brian Friel’s Philadelphia, Here I Come! and Wonderful Tennessee	9
Sarah Abouelenine	Textual Competence in <i>Aladdin and The Enchanted Lamp</i> : A Text World Study	21
Oladimeji Mohammed Alabi	Survival Strategy of an Emerging State beyond Warfare: Diplomatic Practices in Ilorin Emirate, Central Nigeria in the Nineteenth Century	38
Ansam Abdulsalam Yosra Elshaik Eman Elshaikh	“Attention Deficits and Psychological Disturbances among COVID-19 Survivors in the Egyptian Population”	55
Christine Girgis	Il ‘caso’ dannunziano nel panorama contemporaneo arabo	68



## Hope and Harbors in Brian Friel's *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* and *Wonderful Tennessee*

**Dr. Amina ElHalawani**

Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Arts, Alexandria  
University, Egypt

Email: [aminahalawani@gmail.com](mailto:aminahalawani@gmail.com)

**ABSTRACT:** In *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* (1964) and *Wonderful Tennessee* (1993), Brian Friel presents his audience with the hope but also the complexity associated with journeys and acts of departure. Both plays treat moments that just precede traveling. The first overtly presents the question of the emigrant while the latter metaphorically presents us with the desire for a journey, being set at a pier awaiting a boat that never comes. This paper examines Friel's plays *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* and *Wonderful Tennessee* through van Genep's framework of rites of passage and Victor Turner's concept of liminality. In this light, the moment of departure on which the two plays are centered present a liminal space that separates a life to be left behind and another to be sought elsewhere. Written thirty years apart, the paper also compares the evolution of the theatrical image of departure in both plays, highlighting the metaphoric elements of the journey in *Wonderful Tennessee*.

**Keywords:** Irish, drama, emigration, liminality, rites of passage

Since the seventeenth century, Ireland has presented a real case study in terms of emigration and to a lesser extent, later return migration. Throughout history, the island has been highly affected by different phenomena of mass emigration, and North America has been one of the top destinations for such movement. According to Miller, "From the early seventeenth century to the establishment of the Free State in 1921-22, as many as seven million people emigrated from Ireland to North America" (1). Elaborating on the centrality of "massive, sustained emigration" to the Irish reality past and present, Miller points out to the impossibility of studying modern Ireland without realizing the centrality of its transatlantic history.

While numbers and statistics may get us into a discussion of how frequent, promising, easy and/or cheap it may have been to travel across the ocean, leaving one's home and starting a new life elsewhere, no matter how promising is never that simple. In fact, much of the literature shows that the image of the tormented Irish 'exile' was a recurrent and persistent one that followed the Irish émigrés (see Duffy; Miller; Cullingford; Mac Éinrí and O'Toole). According to Piaras Mac Éinrí and Tina O'Toole, "the emptying out of the country of origin [Ireland] and the historical events that caused and accompanied it, notably during and in the aftermath of the Great Famine, entailed the construction of a discourse of emigration and exile, based in part on tropes of victimhood and forced departure" (7). A similar statement is reiterated by Elizabeth Cullingford, "From the Flight of the Earls to the Great Famine and on to the economic depressions of the 1950s and 1980s, emigration was represented as, and often was, involuntary exile" (60). Cullingford goes on to highlight the sentiments of the Irish people towards emigration calling it "a heartbreaking saga of families destroyed, children lost, and a country drained of its most precious resource—its people" (60). Such statements bring to mind what Edward Said refers to in his essay "Reflections on Exile," as the "unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place" and "the crippling sorrow" that accompanies it to haunt the exilic experience (173). However, in contradistinction to Said's definition of exile as primarily predicated on the impossibility of return (i.e. political), Cullingford seems to

suggest a conflation of the categories of the emigrant and the exile for the Irish imaginary, or rather a widening of the definition of the exile beyond its legal implications to highlight the trauma of departure. According to Cullingford, the ritualization of the night of departure as “rites of a funeral, including poteen, dancing, and keening,” performed by some families, or the “American wake,” “reinforced the idea of leaving Ireland as death-in-life” (60).

Writing about the journey to the New World in an attempt to escape oppression and poverty in the first half of the 19th century, Mrs. Julia H. Scott laments “Alas, that the banner which Liberty rears, / Must bathe its pure folds in a foreigner's tears, / And the arm that is stretched [that is America here] for the exile's relief, / Must wreath o'er his forehead the chaplet of grief!” (136-7). To her, the “grief” is for ties broken with home and the lifelong yearning for return to follow. John Locke's “Morning on the Irish Coast” (also known as “The Exile's Return”), written a few decades later, is another example, which describes not only the excitement of the speaker to once again see the Irish coastline after an absence of thirty years, but also the sense of nostalgia he experienced during that period, and how, though physically in Texas, his mind would often fly back over the waves to the Irish coastline. In a chapter on “Literary Reflections on Irish Migration”, Patrick Duffy points to many further examples including popular songs and ballads like: “‘A lamentation for the loss of Ireland’, ‘The Donegal emigrant’, ‘The country I'm leaving behind’, ‘The emigrant's farewell’, ‘The exile's farewell’, ‘The exiles of Erin’, ‘I'll think of old Ireland wherever I'll go’” (32). Such songs, which became quite popular in the 1920s, provided examples of journeys of promise to the New World, but they also continued to consolidate a melancholy of loss brought about by these journeys. Thus, while America has often been conceived as a land of freedom, plenty and promise, the Irish emigrants' perception of the journey was often more complicated and conflicted.

Moreover, since emigration and exile do not only affect the lives of those who leave, but also the lives of those who stay, they do not only change the fabric of the society to which they go, but that as well from which they have moved, the question of emigration for Ireland is not only an individual question. It is not one of confusion or survival for those who go away, but also for those who stay home, and for the very definition of the Island itself as home. In his introduction to the first volume of Friel's plays, Seamus Deane identifies an interesting trend in Irish drama. He writes, “Since the beginning of this century [referring to the twentieth century], Irish drama has been heavily populated by people for whom vagrancy and exile have become inescapable conditions about which they can do nothing but talk, endlessly and eloquently and usually to themselves” (14). Deane's words highlight once again the centrality of the exilic condition and its “crippling sorrow” (Said 173) not only for those who left but also for those at home, describing it not in terms of movement but rather in terms of stasis, as an “inescapable condition” (Deane 14).

Rather than focusing on the post migrant experience, this paper focuses on what insights such notion of stasis in relation to emigration or exile can offer. It thus focuses on two of Brian Friel's plays, in which stasis is presented to poignantly portray the complexity of human emotion associated with emigration, departure and home: *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* (1964) and, to a more metaphorical degree, *Wonderful Tennessee* (1993), since the latter does not really deal with emigration per se but toys around with the ambiguity of life journeys. Both treating moments that just precede a journey, perhaps in an invocation of the “American Wake” tradition, this

paper examines Friel's representation of the moment of departure through Arnold van Gennep's concept of rites of passage, adapted and popularized by Victor Turner.

#### Arnold van Gennep's Rites of Passage and Victor Turner's Liminality

According to van Gennep, transition and change are at the core of human existence and rites of passage are a mechanics through which both individuals and communities have marked such change. "The life of an individual in any society is a series of passages [...]. Transitions from group to group and from one social situation to the next are looked on as implicit in the very fact of existence" (2-3). The use of the words 'transition' and 'passage' not only indicates that life is predicated on change and movement, but also suggests a trajectory for such movement. While this trajectory in some cases can be less about physical movement and more about abstract ways in which society works, the spatio-temporal dimension of it is still integral to van Gennep's theory. Starting with defining "territorial passages", van Gennep states that they "can provide a framework" for the rest of his work (15). For him, those territorial passages are marked with three kinds of rites: "the rites of separation from a previous world, preliminal rites, those executed during the transitional stage 'liminal (or threshold) rites, and the ceremonies of incorporation into the new world postliminal rites" (21).

Popularizing van Gennep's three-phase model in anthropology and extending its effects to Performance studies in his later work with Richard Schechner, Victor Turner focuses on the middle part of the passage, that threshold moment which both brings together and yet separates the two worlds. This liminal passage through what van Gennep earlier identified in his model as the "neutral zones" (17-18) between the territory the subject is leaving and the one he is entering is perceived by Turner to be the most important part of any ritual. For Turner, ritual, as opposed to ceremony, is associated with transformation, and hence has to have a trajectory and an effect carried through those liminal rites (95). He writes: "during the intervening liminal period, the state of the ritual subject (the "passenger") is ambiguous" (94). He sees great transformative potential in the passage personae being held "betwixt-and-between" (110), having already departed from the old self/place and not yet having arrived in new territory both physically and metaphorically.

#### **The Ambivalence of Departure in Philadelphia, Here I come!**

Philadelphia, Here I Come! was written right after Friel had returned to Ireland from an apprenticeship at Tyrone Guthrie's new theatre which had recently opened in Minneapolis. The play was thus a direct result of Friel's coming in contact with the Irish diaspora, as well as his own temporary displacement and experience of life in the United States. Paul Murray even argues that Friel had probably already started writing this work while still in the States, explaining that "the loneliness before his family joined him perhaps [inspired] the feeling in that play" (17), one I would argue of unbelonging and suffocation, mixed with wishful thinking and hesitation, in short: ambivalence.

However, the ambivalence with which Friel expresses his feelings towards migration was not a unique experience. The Encyclopedia of Irish History and Culture identifies migratory patterns at the time as follows:

The late 1940s and the 1950s [in Ireland] constituted a remarkable era of mass emigration. Over 500,000 people left independent Ireland between 1945 and 1960 ... The following decade saw reduced emigration, a significant decrease that, together with substantial return migration in the 1960s, contributed to a

rise in the population of independent Ireland by 1971—reversing the downward trend since the late 1840s. (440)

So in a way, *Philadelphia Here I Come*, which premiered in 1964, also comes in response to a phase of mass emigration as well as a beginning perhaps of some return migration. This explains its indeterminacy, or ambiguity in treating the issue of Gar O'Donnell's journey to the New World. In the play, Gar O'Donnell (our young protagonist) is torn to pieces between wanting to leave and knowing that the moment he does he will want to return home, while Friel expands the limits of this moment of limbo through the entirety of the play.

Gar's split persona, which Friel represents in literal terms by casting two actors to do Private Gar and Public Gar as two different characters on stage, perfectly demonstrates an emigrant's split persona and a struggle of worlds at ends. Private Gar is cast to act as the shadow of Public Gar to voice his most inner thoughts, sometimes the unspeakable, while Public remains the one seen and heard by the rest of the characters in the play. Roche finds interest in the invention of Private Gar, seeing him as "an original creation that transforms the nature of the play, rendering it both more psychologically acute and more self-consciously theatrical" (39). According to Roche, the splitting of Gar's character in such a way opens up the dramatic possibility for the id to emerge and for the emigrant's dilemma to occupy center stage by breaking the naturalistic conventions of the theatre. Moreover, it can be argued that splitting Gar's persona into two stage characters thus contributes to the play's ambivalence towards emigration as a whole. Ambivalence, here, is the keyword in explaining the emigrant's dilemma, which Paul White identifies as "[a] common feature of many migrants and migrant cultures" (3). Such ambivalence, White explains, appears in many shapes and forms.

Ambivalence towards the past and the present: as to whether things were better 'then' or 'now'. Ambivalence towards the future: whether to retain a 'myth of return' or to design a new project without further expected movement built in. Ambivalence towards the 'host' society: feelings of respect, dislike or uncertainty. Ambivalence towards standards of behaviour: whether to cling to the old or to discard it, whether to compromise via symbolic events whilst adhering to the new on an everyday basis. (White 3-4)

Through the character of Private, Gar is able, despite his repressed Public self, to express some of this ambivalence, where the present and past are held in tension with the anticipated future. While Gar mocks his girlfriend's father, mimics his own father and makes fun of their dysfunctional family relations, he also questions his own determination about the journey he is about to embark on.

PRIVATE: You are fully conscious of all the consequences of your decision?

PUBLIC: Yessir.

PRIVATE: Of leaving the country of your birth, the land of the curlew and the snipe, the Aran sweater and the Irish Sweepstakes?

PUBLIC: (With fitting hesitation) I-I-I-I have considered all these, Sir. (32)

Gar's ambivalence towards the very journey, however, is apparent in Private's further questioning. In an attempt to dissuade Public, Private calls America a "profane, irreligious, pagan country of gross materialism", "where the devil himself holds sway" (32). And yet again it is Private who also dreams of making it big in the New World, by maybe becoming "president of the biggest chain of biggest hotels in the world" (35). Private even toys with the idea of becoming president of the United States (56), and when reminded by Public that he will need to have been born there, he keeps suggesting all kinds of different scenarios, CEO of General Motors,

Hollywood, etc. and finally says: “Still, there must be something great in store for you” (57), indicating a persistent sense of wishful desire, though the inner conflict endures.

Shortly revisiting his plan to leave, Gar (or Public Gar) tries to justify his departure not through future dreams but through an expression of being fed up with the present.

PUBLIC: D’you know something? If I had to spend another week in Ballybeg, I’d go off my bloody head! This place would drive anybody crazy! [...]

PRIVATE: (pained) Shhhhhhh!

PUBLIC: Listen, if someone were to come along to me tonight and say, ‘Ballybeg’s yours –lock, stock, and barrel,’ it wouldn’t make that much difference to me. If you’re not happy and content in a place—then –then –then you’re not happy and content in a place! It’s as simple as that, I’ve stuck around this hole far too long. I’m telling you: it’s a bloody quagmire, a backwater, a dead-end! And everyone in it goes crazy sooner or later! Everybody!

PRIVATE: Shhhhhhhh . . . (78-79).

While Private tries to silence him, Public goes on with his rant about his frustration with life in Ballybeg. Gar’s motive here is a search for happiness, a desire for “home” where he not only belongs –“Ballybeg’s yours” – but where he is also “happy and content”. The dilemma thus is one of affect, where both options of staying and leaving provide him with either/or scenarios, either to belong or to be happy, not both. The idea of home here, or the feeling of being home, is deferred continuously.

This dilemma is presented in how Gar has trouble sleeping before he leaves, how he expresses concern over his father, and how he even constantly and obsessively sings the first verses “Philadelphia here I come, right where I started from”, raising the question of Gar’s relation to his past. Gar’s return journey is suggested to start before he even leaves, if not physically then mentally. Gar, understands his journey in exilic terms, he knows he will neither be happy nor content in America. The play closes on him watching Madge going to bed on his last night at home, trying to capture her “every movement, every gesture, every little peculiarity” (99), knowing that he will be replaying this scene over and over every time he misses her. The play even closes on Private angrily asking Public “God, Boy, why do you have to leave? Why? Why?” to which Public responds with pained effort “I don’t know. I – I – I don’t know” (99).

The song adapted from “California, Here I come!”, Al Jolson’s song from 1924, expresses his will to leave to Philadelphia yes, but interestingly, anticipates his nostalgia, because unlike the song this is not where he “started from”. Gar’s original hometown was Friel’s imaginary Irish town of Ballybeg (which translates into little town), hence his dilemma, confusion and heartache at the moment of leaving. His itinerary is to a place that is unknown to him and yet full of promise, while temporalities are blurred as the journey remains locked in his attachment to the past. Instead of an intention of mere forgetfulness towards the past, Private recalls flashes from a fishing trip with his father, which he calls “a moment of great happiness” (83). Private recalls how while the two of them sat on the boat, his father burst singing:

All round my hat I’ll wear a green coloured ribbono, [green of course representing Ireland],

All round my hat for a twelve month and a day.

And if anybody asks me the reason why I wear it,

It’s all because my tru love is far away” (83)

The lines adapted from the folk ballad “All Around My Hat” which coincide with Madge’s and his father getting up after being done with the rosary are significant. We are uncertain here whether Private is speaking about his father anymore, whose hat he was wearing that day, or whether he has slipped into his own thoughts. Gar himself questions the reality of his own memory.

Gar’s night before departure is highly ritualized. Between the reading of the rosary, the nightly game of chess Gar’s father and his friend Canon play, and the repeated conversations they have, Private Gar begs for some attention from his father, by putting on his records loudly, and criticizing the old man for his being “strong” and “silent” (89). Friel, Murray argues, believes in the centrality of ritual to drama as a whole (“Brian Friel”, 19). For Friel, “Ritual is part of all drama. Drama without ritual is poetry without rhythm – hence not poetry, not drama . . . it is the essence of drama. Drama is a RITE, and always religious in the purest sense” (Friel qtd in Dantanus, 118). While the whole play carries a certain sense of anticipation, the final episode is the most ritualized, shedding light on the rite of passage that Gar O’Donnell has to pass through to get to his imagined dream land.

### **Hope and Wonderful Tennessee’s Magic Island**

In *Wonderful Tennessee*, ritual is brought to the centre. While the characters are not emigrants as such, in some way, Friel still revisits Gar O’Donnell’s desire for the journey to the land of dreams. This time, however, three couples are stuck on a remote pier in Donegal county waiting to travel to go to an island called Oileán Draíochta (literally meaning Magic Island, and they refer to it sometimes as the Island of Otherness). Still, the boatman Carlin, read Charon like the Greek ferryman of the dead, never arrives. The analogy to Beckett’s Two Act play *Waiting for Godot* is plain to see, where the characters wait endlessly, kill time on stage, resolve nothing, and promise each other to return again to the pier next year. Their final promises remind us of the closing scene in *Waiting for Godot*, where Didi remarks “Shall we go?” to which Gogo responds “Yes, let’s go” (88). But the final contradictory stage direction “They do not move” indicates a plot set on repeat and the failure of a final resolution at the end of the play (88).

Unlike in *Philadelphia, Here I Come!*, where America/Philadelphia is claimed to be the destination to which Gar is headed, the connection to Tennessee in the title of *Wonderful Tennessee* is of ambiguous nature. The characters wait at Friel’s imaginary Ballybeg pier in county Donegal in order to be transported to the island to celebrate Terry’s birthday, with the pier acting like the threshold in van Gennep’s analogy. Once crossed, the threshold is expected to “unite oneself with a new world” (20), perhaps also the New World. The characters only see glimpses of the island – which they often call Tennessee – or they think they do, but it stays illusive, like a mirage; neither the island nor the dolphins, the characters claim they see, are certain.

And like Gar O’Donnell they are also confused and hesitant about their journey, yet they express a desire to go home, though in the context of the play this proves to be a dream desired but never realized. In reaction to Terry’s suggestion of a mystery tour, Frank exclaims: “This is no mystery tour he’s taking us on – he’s taking us home!” (378), which raises the question, if home is where they are headed, then where is it that they are coming from? Is it not home? This paradox reminds us of Gar’s final questioning of his compulsion to leave Ireland, posing a dilemma of dissatisfaction with the present and the anticipation of a perhaps different but comparable dissatisfaction with the future. Home thus is portrayed to be as illusive and elusive as the island itself, however this does not exclude the hope and desire in

pursuing it. According to Csilla Bertha, Terry's excursion can be understood as a "hope of homecoming: coming back to childhood experience, to the moment of happiness, peace and love" (136), expressed in his attempt to recreate the childhood memory of going to the island with his father. He tells the rest of the characters about the pilgrimages to the island on which his father used to take him when he was seven, a story not too different from Gar's fishing trips to the lake with his own father in Philadelphia, *Here I Come!* The unattainability of desire is expressed in how Terry himself knows he cannot buy the island due to his bankruptcy, and yet decides to express his hope nonetheless through taking an option on it and making a promise to return again the following year.

The same note of hope deferred is expressed in the play. While the play is musical and festive, boasting characters that express a desire to be happy, none of them express happiness itself. They rather sing repeatedly: "I want to be happy – [...] / But I won't be happy – [...] / Till I make you happy too" (353-4). Happiness here is conditional. There is this assumption that the other person is not happy yet, and thus personal happiness is as well deferred and conditioned on communal togetherness. If we put it in terms of the rites of passage, the liminal phase is extended over the course of the play and the transition is not effected as the characters are not allowed to move from the liminal into the phase of reintegration.

The anxiety of desire overshadows the hope embedded in this moment of anticipation, of being almost there. This is further expressed in Berna's reflections about happiness. Reflecting on her marriage, Berna exclaims "There are times when I feel I'm ... about to be happy [...]" Then she continues "Maybe that's how most people manage to carry on – 'about to be happy'; the real thing almost within grasp, just a step away. Maybe that's the norm" (387). Life is here portrayed as a series of wishful dreams never realized. Their closeness to embarking on a journey is more promising than their actual arrival at the island.

Writing on migrant journeys, and commenting on Leela Dhingra's story "La Vie en Rose" and her sense of comfort at airports, Sara Ahmed writes of home as desire, and hence an unattainable place, rather located in the future:

In such a narrative journey, [...] the space which is most like home, which is most comfortable and familiar, is not the space of inhabitation – I am here – but the very space in which one finds the self as almost, but not quite, at home.

In such a space, the subject has a destination, an itinerary, indeed a future, but in having such a destination, has not yet arrived (Ahmed 331)

The characters in *Wonderful Tennessee* are not allowed arrival, only an elusive destination, and endless waiting, which in and of itself seems to be comforting for them, even therapeutic. "Isn't it Wonderful?" (348), Terry keeps asking about the pier. Reassuring the other characters, he pronounces "it's everything you've ever dreamed of" (350), while their answers to his questions keep evolving the more the characters spend time there. For Gaviña-Costero, "The island is an object of desire, the embodiment of hope" (28). It is not a coincidence that Friel's initial working title for the play was "The Imagined Place" (Gussow 148). Each character sees the island differently, its shape constantly changing, as characters perceive it as a "perfect circle", a "ukulele", a "rectangle" (367-8). With incredible lack of certainty towards what the island looks like or whether it exists at all, Trish even questions whether "it's not a mirage" (369).

The indeterminacy of the shape or even existence of the island puts it in the realm of fantasy: "wonderful", "mysterious" and yet "sacred" (369). This island is of a mythic nature, and has a history of medieval religious practices endowing the play's action

with some spiritual meaning. “From the start, the pier has a presence, a personality; it is like a temple in that its solitude emanates a spiritual atmosphere. It is thus not inert, a mere designation of place, but a living, sacred space.” (Murray “Introduction”, xvii-xviii). The island is in fact heaving with symbolism. There are even references that it is an island of the dead. Yet despite that, as Lojek suggests, “If it is a world of the dead, it is also a world of holy otherness, a sort of salvation” (“Space” 52). References to Greek religion, Christian hymns, the island being the location of a Middle Age church, even the fact that the whole journey is a birthday celebration, all contribute to our perception of this night of waiting as a ritual, much needed by all characters to achieve some satisfaction in their broken lives, even though they will not reach their desired destination at all. “The ‘Eden of Tennessee’ – Wonderful Tennessee – holds out the promise (not necessarily the reality) of happiness. Like the island of wonder, it is elusive and perhaps illusive” (Lojek “Space” 53). A comparison to Yeats’s “The Lake Isle of Innisfree” is fitting here although a lot more macabre since the island is also portrayed as a land of the dead, not as some paradisiacal space. Perhaps the awaited journey is not a movement in space but in time, to an Ireland, long gone, impossible to revisit, impossible to claim in the first place. *Oileán Draíochta* in this context thus seems to be a representation of Ireland itself, though unromanticized, especially that the play refers to the island’s history religious mysticism as well as sectarian strife, which caused its present abandonment by its people.

The liminality of the characters’ situation is paramount. To put it in Turner’s words, “They are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between” (95). Not only are they waiting to be transposed to this island where their dreams come true, but they are also physically occupying a space of “inbetweenness”, a deserted pier in Donegal, the far North-Western part of Ireland. Donegal itself is a neither nor, it lies in the North of Ireland but it is not part of Northern Ireland. According to Bertha, set “even outside Friel’s usual setting of the village of Ballybeg, a forlorn pier in the Atlantic Ocean from where the next stop is Boston, immediately evokes a place outside civilization and community” the play is set at “the brink of the known world” (130). Gaviña-Costero calls the pier in *Wonderful Tennessee* “A no-man’s-land,” explaining “it is neither mainland — civilization, the world they come from — nor the island — mystery, otherness, the irrational, faith” (24). To add to the uncertainty the characters constantly question which county it is, and the answer “County Donegal” is repeated and repeated to remind us of the specificity of the locale, but maybe also to make us question it like they do themselves. José Laners contends that Brian Friel’s plays “have evolved around the notion of uncertainty” (162), *Wonderful Tennessee* is no exception. The characters in *Wonderful Tennessee* are constantly searching for happiness, connection, comfort, understanding, and the entire positive emotion associated with home and acceptance. However, while they make much progress on all of these fronts through their singing, dancing and ritualistic activities over the course of the play, their search endeavor remains inconclusive. Terry asks Angela who is searching for the island by looking into her binoculars, “Tennessee still there?” to which Angela replies “Lost it again”, yet Terry responds “Still there. Believe me” (389). It is faith thus that holds them together, from the first declaration of loss in the opening line in the play “Help! We’re lost!” (347), and on to their final decision to come back again to the pier next year.

Which brings about the question why a play set in Donegal about a journey to an island with an imaginary magical name, should carry the name of an American state, Tennessee, which is in fact an inland state, with no coastline. First, it maybe relevant to note the moment in *Wonderful Tennessee* when Berna and Trish start



singing Frank Crumit's 1928 song, "Down in de Cane Break":

'Come, my love, come, my boat lies low,  
She lies high and dry on the O-hi-o.  
Come, my love, come, and come along with me  
And I'll take you back to Tennessee' (388)

The notion of returning here reminds us of Gar's song phrase "Philadelphia here I come, right where I started from," where America is perceived to be the destination the characters are returning to rather than simply heading towards; a home of sorts that blurs the distinction between the past experience of the characters and the future that awaits them, confounding spaces and temporalities. Lojek suggests that the sound of Tennessee links it to sea (ocean) and see (vision) (Lojek "Beyond Lough Derg" 45). The sea is in fact central to this play's notion of movement of peoples and history. The island's history is enmeshed within the history of oceanic movement of peoples in a nod to the case of the Irish emigrants but also to those who have resettled on the island of Ireland, for a writer who has expressed his fear of Ireland becoming "a shabby imitation of a third-rate American state" (Friel, "Two Playwrights" 224).

Lojek goes on to suggest that "Wonderful" in the title conjures the idea of wonder, which mixes, "religious awe and ecstasy but also questioning and curiosity" ("Space" 53), and, I would add, mixed in with certain degree of playfulness. This island is an ambiguous space, which whether real or fantasy, remains for the characters unreachable. Maybe even this is what Gar's frantic speech about knowing Ballybeg inside out and hating it for it is all about. Happiness lies in the realm of the unknown, basically because it is unknown and thus wonderful. In fact, both Wonderful Tennessee and Philadelphia, Here I come! attribute wonder not just to the destination Tennessee or Philadelphia, but to the past and to the already existing reality.

In an article published a few months after the premiere of Philadelphia, Here I come!, Jonathan North in *Ulster Week* attacks Friel for writing plays which "set out problems which they make no attempt to solve" (qtd. in Boltwood 13), and while this criticism maybe true in its essence where the writer exposes a situation and leaves the ending for the audience to reflect upon, this very criticism seems to be the strongest point of his plays, they dissect situations and bring them to their fullest dimension. The play is seen as a liminal space "a realm of pure possibility whence novel configurations of ideas and relations may arise" (Turner 97). These pregnant threshold moments which his plays present are full of significance.

In other words, in Philadelphia, Here I Come!, Gar imagines that his emigration to America will allow him access to a happier life (despite all his arguments with himself), and Philadelphia becomes everything that Ballybeg is not. Gar, we have enough evidence to believe will take that journey, though it is doubtful he will ever find happiness there. In Wonderful Tennessee, the characters will never go to Tennessee, any more than they will ever reach the Island of Otherness, Mystery, Magic or whatever name they gave it. Tennessee, to them, may be wonderful precisely because like Gar's "imagined" Philadelphia it offers a counter-reality, a "wonderful" fantasy, perhaps not a search for home but homeliness.

It is that yearning hence, which Gar O'Donnell in Philadelphia, Here I come!, or the characters we meet in Wonderful Tennessee express, that will never be satisfied by mere displacement. They will always be haunted by something or somewhere else, the unattainable, magical, elusive, and embedded within all of this is still hope. The play ends on Angela promising George to return to the pier one day and she assures him: "For you, George! For both of us!" (445).

## Conclusion

Written almost thirty years apart, *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* (1964) and *Wonderful Tennessee* (1993) both treat moments that just precede an act of traveling in pursuit of happiness, while the latter also symbolically represents the dream and the anxiousness, being set at a pier waiting for a boat that never comes, so the image of the harbor as this liminal space, this in-between, appears in its fullest dimensions. The plays perceive the figure of the emigrant to be, or the character at the cusp of a journey – since in *Wonderful Tennessee* there is no literal migration, but more of a ritualized pilgrimage – as a figure often trapped in a certain time and space about to move, and that pregnant moment of potential is stretched to harbor both hope and anxiety, despite it being driven by desire.

While the plays do not allow for the liminal phase to end as such with arrival at the destination, they do not deny its capacity to effect change. The transition in this case is not necessarily physical, but primarily symbolic. Whether he finally takes the boat or not, *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* closes on a changed Gar, who is sentimentally watching Madge for the last time and who is frustrated with his own inexplicable urge to leave. In *Wonderful Tennessee*, the play embodies a ritual of getting together, where the characters head back to the city, also transformed, being better equipped at dealing with their lives' disappointments, despite the fact that they never got to the island.

Moreover, in *Philadelphia, Here I Come!*, Gar first seems to imagine a clear cut separation between a life to be left behind in Ireland and another to be sought across the Atlantic. However, as the play capitalizes on the moment of departure with Gar's psychological drama presenting the main conflict, the liminality and permeability of the boundary between the two worlds seems to become more evident. *Wonderful Tennessee* further blurs this distinction, negotiating modes of coping with the failure to overcome the challenges of home itself and raising questions of how one conceives of home at all, emigrant or otherwise.

### Works Cited

- Beckett, Samuel. "Waiting for Godot." *Samuel Beckett: The Complete Dramatic Works*. Faber and Faber, 2006, pp. 7-88.
- Bertha, Csilla. "'Island of Otherness': Images of Irishness in Brian Friel's 'Wonderful Tennessee.'" *Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies (HJEAS)*, vol. 2, no. 2, 1996, pp. 129–42. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41273944>.
- Boltwood, Scott. "'More Real for Northern Irish Catholics than anybody else' Brian Friel's Earliest Plays." *Irish Theatre International*, vol.2, no.1, 2009, pp. 4-15.
- Cullingford, Elizabeth. "American Dreams: Emigration or Exile in Contemporary Irish Fiction?" *Éire-Ireland*, vol. 49 no. 3, 2014, p. 60-94. *Project MUSE*, [doi:10.1353/eir.2014.0013](https://doi.org/10.1353/eir.2014.0013).
- Crumit, Frank. "Down in de Cane Break," Victor, 1928. [https://archive.org/details/78\\_down-in-de-cane-break\\_frank-crumit\\_gbia0005143b](https://archive.org/details/78_down-in-de-cane-break_frank-crumit_gbia0005143b)
- Dantanus, Ulf. *Brian Friel: The Growth of an Irish Dramatist*. Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, 1985.
- Deane, Seamus. Introduction. *Brian Friel: Plays 1*. Faber and Faber, 1996, pp. 11-22.
- Duffy, Patrick. "Literary Reflections on Irish Migration in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries". *Writing Across Worlds: Literature and Migration*, edited by Russell King, John Connell and Paul White. Routledge, 2003, pp. 20-38.
- Friel, Brian. "Philadelphia, Here I Come!" *Brian Friel: Plays 1*. Faber and Faber, 1996, pp. 23-99.
- Friel, Brian. "Wonderful Tennessee." *Brian Friel: Plays 2*. Faber and Faber, 1999, pp. 341-446.
- Friel, Brian. "In *Interview* with Mel Gussow (1991)" *Brian Friel: Essays, Diaries, Interviews 1964-1999*, edited by Christopher Murray, Faber and Faber, 1999, pp. 139-149.
- Friel, Brian. "Two Playwrights with a Single Theme." *A Paler Shade of Green*, edited by Des Hickey and Gus Smith, Leslie Frewin, 1972, pp. 220-227.
- Gaviña-Costero, María, "Liminality in Brian Friel's Wonderful Tennessee." *Estudios Irlandeses: Journal of Irish Studies*, no. 8, 2013, pp. 22-31.
- Jolson, Al. "California, Here I Come!" *Early Al Jolson, Vol 1*, Vintage Recordings, [originally recorded 1924] 2014. <https://open.spotify.com/track/2qrRoRVYFA0ffIoTsgQRuj?si=b3ad0f6b8bc64835>
- Lanters, José. "Violence and Sacrifice in Brian Friel's 'The Gentle Island' and 'Wonderful Tennessee.'" *Irish University Review*, vol. 26, no. 1, 1996, pp. 163–76. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25484661>.
- Locke, John. "Morning on the Irish Coast." *The Sacred Heart Review*, vol. 2, no. 2, 8 June 1889, p.1.
- Lojek, Helen. "Beyond Lough Derg: 'Wonderful Tennessee's' Elusive Allusions." *The Canadian Journal of Irish Studies*, vol. 21, no. 1, 1995, pp. 45–56. *JSTOR*, <https://doi.org/10.2307/25513016>.
- . "Space in *Wonderful Tennessee*." *Irish Theatre International*, vol.2, no.1, 2009, pp. 48-61.
- Mac Éinrí, Piaras and Tina O'Toole. "Editors' Introduction: New Approaches to Irish Migration." *Éire-Ireland*, vol. 47 no. 1, 2012, p. 5-18. *Project MUSE*, [doi:10.1353/eir.2012.0007](https://doi.org/10.1353/eir.2012.0007).

- “Migration: Emigration and Immigration since 1950”. *Encyclopedia of Irish History and Culture*, edited by James S. Connelly Jr., vol. 1. Thomson Gale, 2004, pp. 439-442
- Miller, Kerby A. *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America*. Oxford University Press, 1985.
- Murray, Christopher. “Brian Friel, Tyrone Guthrie and Thornton Wilder.” *Irish Theatre International*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2009, pp. 16-27.
- . “Introduction”. *Brian Friel: Plays 2*. Faber and Faber, 1999, pp. vii-xxiii.
- Pratt, William. “Brian Friel’s Imaginary Journeys to Nowhere.” *World Literature Today*, vol. 73, no. 3, 1999, pp. 445–50. *JSTOR*, <https://doi.org/10.2307/40154869>.
- Roche, Anthony. *Brian Friel: Theatre and Politics*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.
- Said, Edward. “Reflections on Exile”, in *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*. Harvard University Press, 2000, pp.173-86.
- Scott, Mrs. Julia H. “The Irish Emigrants”. In *Memoir of Mrs. Julia H. Scott; with her poems and selections from her prose*, edited by Mrs. C.M. Sawyer. Boston: Abel Tompkins, 1853, pp.136-8.
- Turner, Victor. *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*. Cornell University Press, 1967.
- van Gennep, Arnold. *Rites of Passage*. Translated by Monika B Vizedòm and Gabrielle L. Caffee, University of Chicago Press, 1960.
- White, Paul. “Geography, Literature and Migration”. *Writing Across Worlds: Literature and Migration*, edited by Russell King, John Connell and Paul White, Routledge, 2003, pp. 1-19.
- Yeats, W.B. “The Lake Isle of Innisfree.” *Selected Poems by William Butler Yeats*, edited by S. Miller, Barnes and Noble, 1994, p.11.