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Kenneth W. Knight
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CHILDREN OF THE DARK ROSALEEN:
A CULTURE AND PERSONALITY STUDY OF THE IRISH

by

Louise Mary Cooper

A thesis submitted in fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Anthropology  University of Sydney
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SUMMARY

It is argued that anxious attachment (as distinct from confident attach-
ment), and to a lesser extent, over-nurturance of the Irish child and adolescent
in the family generate a poorly-developed sense of personal autonomy. This
results in the development of authoritarianism and dependent behaviour on the
one hand, and anti-authoritarianism and defense mechanisms that limit the
power of others over the individual, on the other. The argument makes its
starting point at the ontogeny of the child, but equally important in maintain-
ing and recreating the Irish personality are the sexual relationships between
men and women. In marriage, defense mechanisms in the form of personal guard-
edness, and the desire of each partner to avoid being subordinate to the other,
both of which derive from childhood experiences, preclude the development of a
marital relationship which would fulfil the respective needs of the husband and
wife. Husbands withdraw and become poor providers and protectors of their
families, and wives cease to look to them for these services which would offer
them a sense of security. Instead, they look to children for their self-
realisation and psychological satisfaction in life, and to sons in particular
who, they hope, will in the future fulfil their needs for protection. To this
end, mothers over-nurture them, and use mechanisms that prevent them from bec-
coming independent of the mothers, thereby inhibiting a well-developed sense of
selfhood in the children. The father withdraws from his family, becoming typi-
ically either a punishing figure, or a benign but ineffectual one. The mechanisms
which create the anxious attachment in the children operate at the unconscious,
partly and fully conscious levels of both parents.

It is shown how the personality "stereotypes" identified generate tradi-
tional Irish culture. Authoritarianism can be found in both personal behaviour,
and in institutions such as the Catholic Church, the State, the educational
and scholastic systems: dependence, the obverse of authoritarianism, is equally
represented in these institutions. Defense mechanisms include lying and hypoc-
risy (or "blarney"), ridicule, malice, and various forms of humour including sa-
tire. Anti-authoritarianism has its most salient representation in the Irish
predeliction for rebellion (rather than bargaining or negotiating) as a means
of resolving personal, as well as political problems at the national level. In
this dynamic relationship between Irish personality and culture, the persona-
licity and personal relationships are considered to have a greater influence in
creating the culture, than the culture has in creating the personality.
Wherever evidence is available, it is demonstrated that the contemporary Irish
personality and culture preceded British colonisation. By this manner, a
sustained attempt is made to counter the popular notion that much of what is
considered characteristically Irish is the result of a long history of
British colonisation.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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To Milton,
for his generosity, patience, loyalty and wisdom.
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Intimate attachments to other human beings are the hub around which a person's life revolves, not only when he is an infant or a toddler or a schoolchild but throughout his adolescence and his years of maturity as well, and on into old age. From these intimate attachments a person draws his strength and enjoyment of life and, through what he contributes, he gives strength and enjoyment to others. These are matters about which current science and traditional wisdom are at one.

John Bowlby
*Attachment and Loss, Vol. I*
*Attachment* (1980:442)
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

...to look for systematic relationships among diverse phenomena...we need to replace the 'stratigraphic' conception of the relations between the various aspects of human existence with a synthetic one; that is, one in which biological, psychological, sociological, and cultural factors can be treated as variables within unitary systems of analysis. The establishment of a common language in the social sciences is not a matter of mere coordination of terminologies or, worse yet, of coining artificial new ones; nor is it a matter of imposing a single set of categories upon the area as a whole. It is a matter of integrating different types of theories and concepts in such a way that one can formulate meaningful propositions embodying findings now sequestered in separate fields of study.

(Geertz, 1975:44)

It was armed with Geertz's recommendations that I approached my fieldwork in the Republic of Ireland in 1979-80 in the hope of understanding what relationships existed between child-rearing practices, personality and culture. I intended to base myself in a small town with a view to making a pan-Irish study. Partly by chance and partly by design I found myself in a small market town in the south east, with a population of about 2,500. Here I did the bulk of my fieldwork, although it was not confined to this parish. I spent three months in a total of eleven in Cork, Dublin, Belfast and the west of Ireland, usually staying with families through contacts provided by people from my town. While most of the people in this town were born in this, or in a neighbouring parish, as were many of their parents and grandparents, a few came from other areas - the west of Ireland, Dublin, or from England as returned emigrants, or the children of such emigrants born in England.

The only place in which child-rearing activities can be
effectively studied in Ireland is in the home, for mothers spend little time elsewhere, either alone, or with their children. The school is also an area in which children can be observed, although it is difficult to study any particular child there; and a little could be learned for my purposes from observations of children playing on the street in spring and summer. It was essential, therefore, that I find suitable homes which I might visit regularly throughout my fieldwork. At first I visited whoever would accept me, and continued visiting these homes as I was given contacts which broadened my network to about ten families whom I visited regularly, and seven or eight more with whom I lived for up to three weeks during the last three months of my fieldwork. Such families were predominately large with young children, although several had grown-up children and grandchildren who either lived with the parents or visited often. My interactions were not confined to these families whom I visited at least once a week, sometimes staying only two or three hours, sometimes ten, for through such families I would meet parents, sisters and brothers and single friends some of whom I came to know quite well. My perspectives were broadened when I joined a particular group for their part in the town concert, going to rehearsals in various people's homes and getting an opportunity to see the interactions of members of other families.

It will be revealed in the thesis that personal guardedness is a pre-eminent Irish characteristic, one of a number of defense mechanisms developed that prevent the other from penetrating a subject's thoughts and feelings. To overcome this problem, I tried to inform my fieldwork methods - essentially those of participant/observer - with those of the child ethologists (e.g., McGrew 1972; Burton Jones ed. 1972): that method which requires the observer to make minimal interference in naturalistic settings. So I did not take notes in people's presence, nor tape conversations, and with families, I never conducted formal interviews. Nor did I ask a lot of personal questions but engaged in conversation much as a friend might do, which I sometimes cautiously steered. I was felt to be, and treated as a friend by many of my female informants, feelings reciprocated by me whose sociability helped make their somewhat isolated lives more interesting. And I gave a hand with the children or housework as I felt proper. In these conditions my informants were as generous with information as they are correctly reputed to be with their hospitality and material goods.
Although I have taken a multi-disciplinary approach, this thesis belongs essentially to the stream of culture and personality studies in anthropology. My interest in this school was first aroused as an undergraduate by Levy's *Tahitians* (1973) to which I feel deeply indebted, however much I may have deviated from its methods and theory. No less influential on my thinking has been the work of Clifford Geertz whose writings engendered an interest in the symbolic interpretation of culture, and the use of anthropology to interpret literature, and conversely, in the use of literature to give insights into personality and culture, attempts at which will be found at various points throughout this work. In endeavouring to develop the skill of symbolic analysis, structuralism furnished a useful tool. It was Terence Turner's phenomenological structuralism (1975) which enabled me to make a symbolic analysis of the Tikopan religious, ritual and social structure for my B.A. Honours thesis.¹ This predilection for structuralist methods has remained, and will be found quite frequently in the analysis of both personality and culture. Most important perhaps, was the introduction as an undergraduate to sociobiology by Dr. Les Hiatt, an introduction which led to my discovery of the ethologically inspired works of John Bowlby which furnish the framework for my argument.

My orientation is functionalist in as much as I believe - as do many scholars in the school of culture and personality - that there is some kind of functional relationship between the way in which children are reared and the personality by which they are characterised, and the culture in which they live and create. When Langer says "All knowledge goes back to experience; we cannot know anything that bears no relation to experience" (1953:390), she is also implying the obverse - that we do not create cultural beliefs without any experiential basis. This is a position explicitly argued for by Tuzin (1977). To this I would add nor do people create for themselves institutions which are unrelated to their life experiences. More particularly, I do not believe that culture is a level of organisation that can be understood without reference to the psychobiological mechanisms that process traditionally transmitted information. While my approach to behaviour and culture is only partly informed by evolutionary theory, my general approach is probably best expressed by the sociobiologist Peter Reynolds who is engaged in an entirely primatological study. This is one that
...rejects the sui generis social fact and the disembodied collective representation; it begins instead with the heuristic that institutional behaviour in man is the product of the interaction among individuals and groups seeking to implement their own motives, through instrumental action, in accommodation to the perceived behaviour of others, as interpreted by conceptually coded information as to the nature of the ongoing interaction and their relation to it, and partially mediated through innate behaviour patterns experientially modified. In such an approach, institutions are still the coordinated social action by which humans produce a collective product not reducible to the individual action of the participants, but it does not suppose that such a collective action can exist in a realm causally independent of the knowledge, skills, feelings, and aspirations of the people who bring it about, or that a characterization of the collective product is a substitute for explicit treatment of the behavioural coordinations allowing such complex products to be created and sustained.

(Reynolds, 1981:71)

This approach studies institutions from the bottom up, through the actual social interactions by which they are implemented.

While I find that some behaviour and cultural creations can be understood without recourse to psychobiology in particular, nevertheless, throughout the thesis I show that there is a systematic relationship between cultural content and individual psychology. I do not confine myself to purely sociological analyses of institutions as disembodied objects with an autonomy of their own, such as for instance might be done on the subject of the extremely authoritarian and hierarchically structured Catholic Church in Ireland. This is only one side of the coin. Equally important considerations are: what is this institution meeting in its creators' (i.e., the Irish Catholic people) personal needs?; why are they motivated to supplicate themselves to this body?; and what is it in the personality of the individual members of the Hierarchy that motivates them to pursue a career involving authoritarianism? The Irish Catholic Church may have an autonomy of its own which is not reducible to the individual action of its participants; it may be acting to mould the people who created it, but equally, the Irish people themselves create and maintain this institution.

The answer to all these questions must initially be sought in child-rearing practices. In understanding these I believe John Bowlby's work holds out enormous potential for future anthropological analyses. In his scientifically-developed theory of attachment behaviour, Bowlby (1971; 1975; 1980) does not rely on any simple "cause and effect" model to explain behaviour, but on systems theory which considers the
actors in a particular field who are mutually influential. Thus, in looking at the growth of affectional bonds, of identity, autonomy, security, or the absence of these in the child, both mother (or care-giver) and the child are simultaneously considered. In his monumental studies of attachment behaviour, Bowlby has argued from an ethological perspective that attachment behaviour is a primary instinct (rather than secondary, as Freud postulated for the bond between the child and its mother) developed in "man's environment of evolutionary adaptedness".

Attachment behaviour has become a characteristic of many species during the course of their evolution because it contributes to the individual's survival by keeping him in touch with his caregiver(s), thereby reducing the risk of his coming to harm, for example from cold, hunger or drowning and, in man's environment of evolutionary adaptedness, especially from predators.

(Bowlby, 1980:40)

In humans the attachment instinct becomes activated at about the age of six months and remains very intense until about the age of three years after which it slowly declines as the child matures and gains autonomy. Man is never entirely emotionally self-sufficient, so the attachment instinct remains a powerful force throughout his life. But the quality of the maternal bond affects the individual's personality permanently and therefore all his subsequent relationships, and his expectations of them. Bowlby says:

A special advantage claimed for the paradigm [of attachment theory] is that it facilitates a new and illuminating way of conceptualising the propensity of humans to make strong affectional bonds to particular others and of explaining the many forms of emotional distress and personality disturbance, including anxiety, anger, depression and emotional detachment, to which unwilling separation and loss give rise.

(Bowlby, 1980:39)

In his earlier work Bowlby and his followers such as Mary Ainsworth, found that serious or total disruptions in the primary affectional bonds during infancy after the age of six to eight months result in acute distress and can lead to disorders such as pathological depression, affectionless psychopathy, delinquency, deprivation dwarfism and even death in the infant stage. By tracing the consequences of disrupted affectional bonds in childhood to adulthood in his third volume, Bowlby has found that it has been possible to indicate how certain combinations of circumstances in childhood lead to certain forms of personality disturbance and how these affect not only the individual, but members of his family. Among such disturbances are to be counted clinical
disorders from which suffer a majority of all those who claim the attention of clinical workers in the western world today. And evidence to support his arguments has been drawn from many disciplines and cultures (1980).

Bowlby (1980) has recently responded to attempts to qualify or repudiate his findings (e.g., Rutter 1966; 1972: Clarke & Clarke 1976). In the Clarkes' volume instances are cited of children who, despite having suffered severe emotional deprivation, psychological punishment and physical neglect, have recovered when placed in good, loving homes. The prevailing picture emerging from these studies is one of great resiliency in children. The conclusions of the editors on summing up the contents of the book is that:

Apart from those which make it impossible to sustain life, it appears that there is virtually no psychosocial adversity to which some children have not been subjected, yet later recovered, granted a radical change of circumstances. (Clarke & Clarke, 1976:268)

...the view that the early years of infant development are of crucial importance has become so widely accepted as to be implicit in the writings and decision-taking of research workers and practitioners alike. We have assembled a body of evidence which suggests a reformulation... 'early experiences, however drastic at the time, do not necessarily set into motion patterns of behaviour that cannot subsequently be modified'. (Clarke & Clarke, 1976:269)

But what exactly does recover imply? In his discussions of the problem of pathological forms of mourning which he traces to disrupted affectional bonds in childhood, Bowlby answers that his critics do not

...consider the possibility of there being individuals who, though managing to carry on without overt disturbance during childhood and adolescence, are none the less made vulnerable by an early bereavement and thereby more prone than others to react to further loss with a depressive disorder.

(Bowlby, 1980: 298-9)

Bowlby's point may be transposed to the level of social and cultural institutions. While the Irish suffer from the highest levels of hospitalisation for psychological disorders and alcoholism in the western world (see Schepers-Hughes, 1979:57,66), the origins of which I would argue lie in the family, nevertheless most people do not succumb to
psychiatric disorders as a result of disruptions in the attachment bond. Rather they develop ways of dealing with the problem, some of which lead to the creation of cultural and social institutions. These mechanisms are developed in response to a lack of autonomy initially generated in the relationship with the individual's mother, but exacerbated or maintained by others in the family, especially the father, and by the wider society and its institutions as the child matures. This lack of autonomy is related principally to the condition of anxious attachment which I shall now discuss in detail.

In his earlier work Bowlby was concerned to demonstrate that when separated from his caregiver (or mother) a child goes through three marked stages of behaviour - protest, despair and detachment. Protest is interpreted as an attempt to retrieve the absent mother, and detachment as a defensive process of excluding awareness of the conditions causing him distress. When a child's experiences have led him to build a model of an attachment figure who is likely to be unaccessible and/or unresponsive to him when he desires, anxious attachment is likely to develop. Bowlby deals with this at length in volume II (1975).
Anxious attachment is revealed most clearly when a child is reunited with an absent parent, and it is characterised by an oscillation between anxious clinging, dependence and a refusal to let the parent out of his sight on the one hand; and on the other, anger and rejection because the parent is seen to be responsible for the child's distress and loss.

The reason that anxiety about and hostility towards an attachment figure are so habitually found together, it is therefore concluded, is because both types of response are aroused by the same class of situation; and, to a lesser degree, because once intensely aroused, each response tends to aggravate the other. As a result, following experiences of repeated separation or threats of separation, it is common for a person to develop intensely anxious and possessive attachment behaviour simultaneously with bitter anger directed against the attachment figure, and often to combine both with much anxious concern about the safety of that figure....because models of attachment figures and expectations about their behaviour are built up during the years of childhood and tend thenceforth to remain unchanged, the behaviour of a person today may be explicable in terms, not of his present situation, but of his experiences many years earlier.

(Bowlby, 1975:296)

And just as we found that there is a strong case for believing that gnawing uncertainty about the accessibility and
responsiveness of attachment figures is a principal condition for the development of unstable and anxious personality so there is a strong case for believing that an unthinking confidence in the unfailing accessibility and support of attachment figures is the bedrock on which stable and self-reliant personality is built.

(Bowlby, 1975:366)

It is precisely a personality lacking in self-reliance which is built in most individuals in Ireland primarily as a result of anxious attachment, and to a lesser extent, from over-dependence not created by anxious attachment, but by over-indulgence inhibiting the development of autonomy and self-sufficiency. In order to understand how anxious attachment is revealed in the personality, we much look further at Bowlby's findings on children subjected to unresponsive, or partly unresponsive or rejecting parenting. In volume III Bowlby says that:

...when a child's attachment behaviour is strongly aroused and when, for any reason, it is not responded to and terminated...the child protests more or less violently and is much distressed. Should the situation recur frequently and for long periods, not only is distress prolonged but it seems that the systems controlling the behaviour ultimately become deactivated....The deactivation of systems mediating attachment behaviour, thought and feeling, appears to be achieved by the defensive exclusion, more or less complete, of sensory inflow of any and every kind that might activate attachment behaviour and feeling. The resulting state is one of emotional detachment which can be either partial or complete.

Deactivation of attachment behaviour is especially liable to be initiated during the early years, though it can undoubtedly be increased and consolidated during later childhood and adolescence. One reason why a young child is especially prone to react in this way is that it is during the second half of the first year of life and the subsequent two years or so that attachment behaviour is elicited most readily and continues to be so at high intensity and for long periods, leading to great suffering should no one be available to comfort him. As a result it is during these years that he is especially vulnerable to periods of separation, and also to being rejected or threatened with rejection.

(Bowlby, 1980:69-70)

There is probably no age at which human beings cease to be vulnerable to factors that maintain or increase any defensive exclusion already established.

(Bowlby, 1980:72)

Thus Bowlby has extended his observations made in Volume II that some children subjected to unresponsive and rejecting parenting seem to despair. Instead of developing anxious attachment they become more
or less detached, neither trusting, nor caring for others, and are often aggressive and disobedient. This development is more common in boys, whereas anxious clinging is more common in girls. This is reflected in adult behaviour where anxiety occurs more frequently as a neurotic symptom in women than in men, and conversely, delinquency is more common in men than in women (1975:261). These findings are confirmed by my Irish observations, and from the literary sources. However, detachment is not complete and Bowlby shows examples of some children temporarily separated from and returned to their mothers alternating between phases of detachment and clinging (1980:21). In a consideration of the findings of another scholar on how infants from twelve to eighteen months responded to a frequently rejecting mother, it is revealed that such infants tend to defensively exclude the mother but remain in her proximity and on fair terms with her so that she will still be available for protection (1980:73). For Bowlby has shown in Volume II that most parents of anxiously attached children are more likely to be intermittently or partially rejecting rather than consistently so. Therefore, these children usually have the option of seeking protection and comfort. We see in this example how the child, while remaining detached, can yet keep open the possibility for attachment, the need for which persists.

Now we are seeing here two opposing behaviour patterns within the anxiously attached child - detachment and yet dependence. It is embodied in an example provided by Bowlby of a child in an orphanage who had grown attached to a particular nurse. She left the orphanage but returned several weeks later. The child was lost and desperate after her departure, but would not look at her when she came in. Later in the evening the little fellow was heard to say: "'My very own Mary-Ann! But I don't like her!'" (1975:286).

Bowlby's work on the condition of anxious attachment provides evidence then, that the individual does not become more independent, but deactivates to some extent behaviours mediating attachment, i.e., he becomes detached, while remaining dependent upon the parental figure. In fact he says that adults whose mourning takes on a pathological course are likely before their bereavement to have been prone to make affectional relationships of certain kinds, one group of whom are disposed towards emotional self-sufficiency, towards asserting independence of affectional ties, although the very intensity with which
the claims are made often reveal their precarious basis (1980:202).
He gives an example of a man who told his psychotherapist that he had
spent "a life-time of anxiously pretending to be an independent
person". During his courtship he had been intensely afraid that his
fiancée would leave him, yet afraid of becoming too dependent on her.
He began to hide his desires for her love and support and refused to
ask for help or have anything done for him. He deactivated the systems
mediating his attachment behaviour but not completely, and as a result
he found himself in the most appalling conflicts. He needed his girl-
friend but feared dependence, so encouraged her to leave him, which

I am developing the notion of anxious attachment because it is
what I believe is generated in Irish child-rearing practices. So
powerful a force is it that almost all of the personality character-
istics which are generally agreed to be commonly found among the Irish,
and all traditional forms of culture and political behaviour are dev-
lopments of the consequence of anxious attachment, which in phenomen-
ological terms may be called a poorly developed sense of personal
autonomy. While it is Bowlby whose work has enabled me to "diagnose"
the "condition", it is R.D. Laing whose work provides a simple model
or framework into which I place Irish personality and culture. It is
one which Bowlby has perceived, but not developed in the form that
Laing has done.

Laing's existential phenomenological approach to understanding
human behaviour has much in common with Bowlby's, but he has not the
scientific, systematic approach of Bowlby. Where Bowlby sees re-
enactments of the attachment bond in personal relationships, with all
their implications from the individual's childhood experiences and
expectations, Laing simply sets all particular experiences within the
context of a person's being-in-his-world and attempts to understand
what is happening in the relationship by considering what each is giv-
ing or taking from the other. Although he says that "It is out of the
earliest loving bonds with the mother that the infant develops the be-
inings of a being-for-itself", he does not posit a developmental
theory like Bowlby's that would help to understand subsequent rela-
tionships. As Laing considers relationships:

...each and every man is at the same time separate from his
fellows and related to them. Such separateness and relatedness are mutually necessary postulates. Personal relatedness can exist only between beings who are separate but who are not isolates. Here we have the paradox, the potentially tragic paradox, that our relatedness to others is an essential aspect of our being, as is our separateness... (Laing, 1965:26)

In order to engage freely in reciprocal relations with others a person requires what Laing calls an existential position of primary ontological security. In chapter three of *The Divided Self* (1965) he deals with the issues involved where there is only a partial or almost complete absence of assurance derived from this position.

It is this lack of primary ontological security which, to varying degrees, characterises the Irish personality, and it is derived I believe from the condition of anxious attachment that the child experiences in his dealings with his mother. However, this is a descriptive term which I do not personally use in the thesis, partly because it is cumbersome, but more importantly, because it is placing a tighter definition on a rather indefinable state than I would like, a state best understood by people’s behaviour. I prefer to describe the condition as a poorly developed sense of personal autonomy, integrity, or self-reliance, which are terms Laing himself uses as synonyms. Some of the ways in which Laing says the individual deals with this condition are congruent with the way the anxiously attached child is shown to behave by Bowlby. But Laing has a very keen understanding of the dynamics of these mechanisms of dependence and detachment, and I refer to them, rather than to Bowlby’s whose conceptions are not as well developed, phenomenologically speaking. Laing says:

> The capacity to experience oneself as autonomous means that one has really come to realise that one is a separate person from everyone else.
> If the individual does not feel himself to be autonomous this means that he can experience neither his separateness from, nor his relatedness to, the other in the usual way. A lack of sense of autonomy implies that one feels one’s being to be bound up in the other, or that the other is bound up in oneself, in a sense that transgresses the actual possibilities within the structure of human relatedness. It means that a feeling that one is in a position of ontological dependency on the other (i.e. dependent on the other for one’s very being), is substituted for a sense of relatedness and attachment to him based on genuine mutuality. Utter detachment and isolation are regarded as the only alternative to a clam- or vampire-like attachment in
which the other person's life-blood is necessary for one's own survival, and yet is a threat to one's survival. Therefore, the polarity is between complete isolation or complete merging of identity rather than between separateness and relatedness. The individual oscillates perpetually, between the two extremes, each equally unfeasible. He comes to live rather like those mechanical toys which have a positive tropism that impels them towards a stimulus until they reach a specific point, whereupon a built-in negative tropism directs them away until the positive tropism takes over again, this oscillation being repeated ad infinitum. (Laing, 1965:52-3)

The question may be raised, why should I attempt to explain all Irish personality traits and traditional cultural patterns on a model of child-rearing practices, given Ireland's relatively long history of colonisation by a foreign power? Would not some of the behaviours especially those which I call defense mechanisms, be derived from the Irish Catholics' position as a subjugated people? The answer is a categorical no, and the entire thesis is structured to refute this commonly posited explanation for much that is peculiarly Irish. Wherever it is possible I give historical evidence for the existence of any given personality trait or cultural institution that preceded colonisation, but in addition, three chapters contain substantial information that is specifically designed to deny it: chapters three, four and seven. But it seems there are certain misunderstandings about Irish history which the reader should be made aware of before I begin my argument on Irish child-rearing practices.

The first misconception is that Ireland has suffered from "a thousand years of slavery": it would be more accurate to say it endured 320 years or so under British colonisation. Certainly there were periodic invasions by the Norse people for two centuries from the year 795 A.D. which disrupted life somewhat in certain parts of Ireland, especially the eastern and southern coastal areas, as such invasions did elsewhere in Europe. McGrath acknowledges that while parts were devastated, a lot of Ireland was unaffected, particularly the northern and western areas. He says that Douglas Hyde admits that despite the troubled conditions of Ireland during the Norse invasions, she nevertheless produced a large number of poets and scholars in this period. Cultural life continued during this time (McGrath, 1979:131). The Norse invaders were not colonisers. They settled down as Christians rather than as pirates and in time they were absorbed into the general
population. Their final settlement was limited to small kingdoms around Wexford, Waterford, Cork and Limerick, all trading ports which the Norse built (Freeman, 1950:89-90). Ultimately they contributed to Irish life by building trading centres (which the native Irish did not do) and by their technological and craft skills. Freeman says craftsmanship achieved a new perfection during the Norse period both in stone work, such as the high crosses, and in gold and bronze work. Architecture was similarly successful (Ibid:91).

The first true colonisers were the Anglo-Normans in the 12th century. They established themselves firmly in the Norse centres displacing the Norsemen in towns like Dublin. Leinster was the province they most effectively controlled, but even here the Wicklow mountains remained unconquered and the counties now known as Liex and Offaly preserved their independence. The Anglo-Normans established some lordships in the valleys and lowlands of the south around Cork and parts of Waterford. Galway town became a lone outpost of English influence in Connaught. Ulster remained virtually unpenetrated by them. There was no effective anglicization of the country, no centralised force to subdue rebellions and even more important, the Normans were adopting Irish customs to become as is commonly said, "more Irish than the Irish themselves". Neither the English language nor English law was known in the greater part of Ireland in the early 14th century. Indeed the Statutes of Kilkenny in 1366 endeavoured to prevent further absorption of the Anglo-Normans by the natives, but the English envisaged enforcing these laws only in nine counties. Although re-enacted on several occasions for more than 200 years, they failed to establish a social order in which the conquerors and conquered remained distinct from one another (Freeman, 1950:92-3). Boyce asserts:

The Anglo-Irish lordships were a mixture of Gaelic and English customs, institutions, language and manners, scarcely distinguishable in their mongrel appearance from their Gaelic neighbouring power blocs;...

(Boyce, 1982:40)

The final refuge of the Anglo-Normans whose political orientation was towards England was the English Pale, a strip of land based on Dublin. It varied in size and at its weakest was little bigger than the present county Dublin. The rest of Ireland comprising fifty to sixty petty kingdoms (tuathas) was governed by autonomous Gaelic and Anglo-Norman lords who paid scant, if any attention to the English
governed Pale, living according to Irish customs and laws, and as late as the 16th century a writer said each

...‘maketh war and peace for himself...and obeyeth to no other person, English or Irish, except only to such persons as may subdue him by sword’.

(Beckett, 1966:14)

It was because the Gaelic and Anglo-Norman lords posed a threat to England that the Tudors attempted to subdue them: but as Beckett says, Tudor policy "was essentially defensive rather than aggressive: its great end was the safety of England, not the subjugation of Ireland" (1966:13). But owing to the difficulty of pacifying the chiefs by such means as giving them titles to land in return for their allegiance to the Crown, force and small plantations were ultimately resorted to. Elizabeth reluctantly embarked on wars which finally established some degree of English rule over the country by 1603, the year of her death, although there were to be more rebellions through the 17th century and Ireland was not fully conquered until the end of that century.

The disastrous land confiscations of Ulster by Cromwell in reprisal for the Ulster Rising of 1641 did not end Gaelic influence, however, for although those who remained in that province constituted a minority of its population, it was to "hell or Connaught" that they were banished, and here their culture thrived, and has continued to do so until this day. Because this is such an inhospitable region with poor fertility compared with the other provinces, landlords were few and far between during the 18th and 19th centuries, and the literature indicates people lived as they had done traditionally, the Gaelic lord's Big House and the poets of his court surviving through to the 18th century, fossilised remnants of a tradition at least 1200 years old. It is in the western areas remote from any significant English government or landlord influence (landlords were usually only nominal owners of land from which they collected rents when they could get them through agents and lived elsewhere, usually in England) that we find the traditional aspects of the personality and culture to be most entrenched to this day.

But colonisations themselves take on various forms and the conditions of any particular colonisation changes over time. So we must consider Ireland's colonisation in comparison to others elsewhere, and compare its eras internally. Although most of the Catholic's land - Gaelic and Anglo-Norman - was confiscated and at the lowest point
Catholics owned a mere 14%, they were not evicted from that land to any extent except in Ulster. They remained as tenants. While prior to the later part of the 18th century they had not been allowed to live in towns nor to engage in commercial activities, neither of these rules had been well enforced. While there was some religious persecution in the 16th and 17th centuries, the penal laws of the 18th century did not involve the kind of religious persecution that obtained in contemporary France. Bishops and priests were banished, but secular clergy were not and priests disguised as laymen remained. As the 18th century progressed it became clear that as far as the suppression of the Catholics was concerned, it had been quite unsuccessful and by the end of that century, the British Government agreed to found a seminary to train Irish priests at home instead of having them sent abroad. The Catholics were denied franchise, but so too were the members of the non-established churches. And as the 18th century progressed the penal laws were relaxed, laws which were not meant to eliminate the Catholic Irish, but to keep them in a position of social, political and economic inferiority. By the end of that century the Catholics and dissenting Protestants were given limited franchise, Catholics allowed to own businesses, and by 1829 Catholics were permitted to stand for parliament. In 1831 a national education system was established, and by the 1880s extensive reforms were being made on both the local and national governmental levels to bring services and make reforms that befitted a part of the United Kingdom.

Ungenerous though it was, the English colonisation was not quite like that of the Americas where vast numbers of Indians were wiped out and those who remained, with their hunting lands taken, found their social structure collapsed. Nor was there anything resembling true slavery where the family organisation is ruptured; nor was there the use of migrant labour such as exists in South Africa today which takes men from their families on a semi-permanent basis. Most Irish Catholics remained peasants in a system of quasi-feudalism in which there were no obligations binding the landowner to the tenant. As I suggest in the thesis, as Gaelic society had been far from democratic (see Nicholls, 1972:37, for example), colonisation by England had the effect of replacing one set of oppressive landlords by a more oppressive and rapacious set. It is rapacity more than any other factor which distinguished the Irish peasant experience from that of many other national
groups in Europe who have suffered a similar fate to that of Ireland where the peasantry belonged to an entirely different culture from that of their governors, such as occurred in Greece where from the 15th to the 19th century they were ruled by an alien minority, the Turks. Irish culture was scarcely interfered with at all, and as there were often as many as four agents, each subdividing his lease of land between the landlord and peasants, at the bottom of which were often to be found Catholic agents, the Irish Catholics would have had very little systematic contact with members of the dominant group. While the Anglo-Irish landlords drastically changed the traditional system of land ownership and tenure in all but the most western counties, it would seem from McCourt's study on the subject of traditional patterns of land-holding, the system of joint ownership of land known as "rundale" coexisted to some extent with the new English system until the end of the 18th century in most counties except those on the Central Plain where it had broken up earlier (1950). Minus a few institutions such as the Gaelic lord's court and retinue of poets and scholars, the native Irish culture survived almost intact into the 20th century, as far as I can establish: even the poets and scholars survived without their lord's court.

Despite the economic exploitation of the Anglo-Irish landlords and the humiliation of being a colonised people, the Irish gained something from British rule - her government bureaucracy at both the national and local levels and democratic institutions which made it possible to run their country, something which would not have been possible with the Gaelic institutions as they had been in the 17th century. In fact, far from independence giving cultural freedom to the Irish Catholics in 1921, this event was followed by an intensification of native Irish culture and institutions many of which are quite undemocratic and oppressive. Yet such acts and others, are often mindlessly blamed on the British inheritance.

In some cases colonisation exacerbated certain Irish tendencies, especially some which I classify as anti-authoritarian. I argue that anti-authoritarianism is created in child-rearing practices, but political, economic and social conditions of the time will determine to some extent how strongly these will be expressed in adulthood. For instance, "hunger-striking" in an incipient form is engaged in by children protesting against over-bearing mothers. In real form
among Irish adults hunger-striking has been engaged in against fellow Irish persons, from the time of St. Patrick to that of the Free State. But the presence of British troops in Northern Ireland for the last decade has at times exacerbated this tendency. But their presence has not created it. Some Irish behavioural tendencies associated with British colonisation are not directly linked to this, but rather to adverse economic circumstances, such as the tendency to "cry the poor mouth". Hence, those itinerant people who beg (largely from fellow Irishmen) in modern Ireland do so with a skill and eloquence that equals anything found in 19th century literature describing the same behaviour among peasants. But in a muted form, crying the poor mouth is found widely in Ireland at all levels of the social strata, and is a personal response by Irish persons finding themselves in what they perceive to be adverse circumstances - both economic and non-economic in origin - even those which are entirely of their own making.

On the other hand, in some cases British colonisation actually mitigated certain Irish behavioural tendencies, one of which is a form of anti-authoritarianism - the tendency for warfare which had been endemic among the Irish chiefs throughout native history. I believe the present changes occurring in the Irish personality and culture are due to concepts derived from a Protestant democratic tradition found elsewhere in the western world, and of which the Anglo-Irish were bearers, however renegade many may have been. For those who would still argue that much of what we see today as characteristically Irish is the result of the British inheritance, I would put forward the challenge to explain the origin of traits which existed before any invasions, some from the time history has been available to us in the fifth century A.D., and why they have continued to exist, often with renewed vigour, for two to three generations following independence?

Let us consider the argument that one quality I propose is a defense mechanism - that of lying and hypocrisy, generated by Irish child-rearing patterns which have developed independently of English colonisation - may in fact have been generated by the need of a subjugated people to protect themselves from rapacious landlords and unjust courts. We need not take cognizance at this point of the fact that this quality was commented upon as a particular skill of an Irish
lord by Queen Elizabeth I, the Lord of Blarney after whom a peculiar form of Irish lying which involves sweet honeyed words and hypocrisy is named. Certainly it would have been judicious for peasants to be skilful deceivers of landlords and their agents, and to use this skill in the courts. But the vast majority of Irish people never entered the few courtrooms that did exist in Ireland (relative to the population), and then, those few who did, appeared there perhaps once or twice in a lifetime. Furthermore, agents and landlords did not normally live on the peasants' doorsteps. A peasant's encounters with them would generally have been numerically few and brief. For both dealings with courts and landlords adept lying could have been used for the short time the interactions went on. Indeed peasants the world over are known to be adept at deceiving greedy landlords, be they the Church, or well-to-do fellow peasants about their wealth, but the lie being told, honesty or relative honesty is reverted to in the family and among equals. An Irishman who lies once a week or month to his agent has no reason to practise the skill first on his family. Even in the unlikely event of lying entering an adult male's repertoire of behaviour permanently, how is this quality passed onto his wife and children? They would have had no dealings to speak of with the outside world of courts and agents. Yet it is among children that this quality appears very early in life today, despite negative injunctions by parents, and a general dislike of it by all Irish persons angered at being imposed upon. In the early part of last century the writer Maria Edgeworth reported similar findings about children displaying blarney very early in their lives.

The argument that lying enters the personality through an individual's dealings with landlords or courts and is passed on to his children implies that children learn this skill by imitating their fathers. We will neglect the fact that Irish children traditionally had minimal interaction with their fathers until the boys were adolescent. But it is an idea I would like to debate in order that I can reject it. Lying or the predisposition to lie and to deceive others, with or without additional skills such as hypocrisy and blarney, is a feature of the personality, not of the culture. Personality is not learned by imitating or identifying with others either consciously or unconsciously: I would contend it is created by the combination of genetic and constitutional factors in the individual with environmental experiences in the form of interactions with other people, espec-
ially with the parents and members of the family. And people create and influence personalities much more than does physical environment. The same material circumstances in life, such as those of poverty and oppressive landlords do not generate the same personality characteristics in all peoples across the world. Indeed, these conditions are, and have been, shared by a large number of peoples and cultures in the world: if environmental circumstances created personality, there would be little variation on a pan-cultural basis.

There are some scholars, especially those following psychoanalytic theory, who assume that male sexuality for instance, is acquired by internalising the image of the father. It is worth noting that Bowlby persuasively rejects the Freudian tradition of identification that has been given a key role in the emotional ties of one person with another, or with an object (1980:30). De Vos says that because the Irish father is an inadequate figure, the ideal image of manhood is embodied in the "desexualized priest" (1973:45). In De Vos' terms of identification of boys with adult roles (De Vos is using role concepts here more than psychoanalysis), a scholar might argue that this model would explain why Irish life has an ascetic, non-sexual tone about it. But no one has shown us better than the sociobiologists how little culture is involved in the development of the differential male and female sexual dispositions per se. Exactly how these genetically and hormonally determined differentials will be realised depends on the way they are mediated through the peculiar experiences characterising the particular society; e.g., whether they will be freely and openly expressed in the individual's manner, or profoundly repressed. In either case, the individual's sexual demeanour may bear little relationship to the cultural mores. For instance, the Catholic religion the world over is characterised by very strict sexual codes, but the Irish take their injunctions seriously, the Italians do not, and in each case, women are more obedient than men. The ascetic nature of Irish sexuality, like their tendency for blarney, are personality characteristics learned not by imitation I would argue, but spontaneously, by the child's interactions with others, especially the mother. This is not to say, however, that culture is not learned, such as language, literature, and the material and plastic arts and so on. A rich oral and literary tradition may also give assistance to a person with a predilection for blarney. However, as it will be seen in chapter two, the natural tempo that characterises the speech of many Irish people (natural being that
which has not been consciously or unconsciously modified) may be learned less by imitation of a long tradition than as the result of the effect of the child's interactions with the mother. So too some particular forms that material culture take in Ireland are learned less from the preceding generation than from needs created afresh in the ontogeny of each individual. As argued earlier, I believe that behaviour and culture are not transmitted from generation to generation so much as they are "rediscovered" afresh in each generation.

This does not mean that injunctions embodied in the culture, such as those to control one's sexuality, have no influence whatsoever on people's behaviour. It is only to say that in themselves they have little or no direct influence on the personality. They may, however, have some indirect influence on changing or modifying conditions which are factors in the creation of personality. For example, in the third chapter I suggest that while many Anglo-Irish Protestants in the Republic tend to have "Irish Catholic" personalities, these personality traits are modified by a cultural tradition inherited from elsewhere. Furthermore, there is little evidence that such personality traits are allowed to enter the culture, such as the religious system, as they do among the Catholic Irish. The Anglo-Irish people's religion remains incongruent to some extent with the personality needs of many of its adherents. While I do suggest that it is unlikely that the native Irish personality and culture could generate change from within its own dynamics, this is not claimed to hold universally. From within its own dynamics the European tradition threw up the Protestant philosophy, which McClelland suggests may have resulted in a change of child-rearing practices (1976), a suggestion which my findings from Ireland indirectly support.

It has been implied by the foregoing material on history, that my approach to history will not be that of a conventional historian. While I do draw out themes from history to support an argument made on contemporary life, equally I use the regressive method in history which takes a later period as a base, because it is an era I do know about. I then work backwards from there. However, this should not be thought to be a method which consists of taking descriptions of relatively recent situations and cheerfully assuming they apply equally well
to other periods. My approach to what ordinary Irish people, and some nationalistic scholars, believe about their history is different again. For here the unit for analysis will not be what actually happened in history, but what people believe happened in history (see Leach, 1969:18). For instance, I analyse Ireland's colonisations independently from what Irish people believe about these colonisations. To believe that they suffered "seven hundred" or "a thousand years slavery" is to reveal something about the Irish personality, about the feeling of the individual being a "slave" and subjugated to others in his own life experience, not about Irish history itself.  

One of the means by which I acquire information which gives historical depth and generality of distribution of personality traits and of culture is through the use of Irish literature. In this way I am also able to establish that certain qualities transcend class and status barriers, and regional variation as well. In the absence of much anthropological work having been published on Ireland, literature provides a valuable entree into personality and culture. As Levy says:

Just as one must have some understanding of cultural generalities, of conventional forms, before one can understand personal relationships to those forms, so one must understand something about shared or prevalent psychological qualities before one can study and understand variations, whether those variations designate a type of person (e.g. innovator, leader, deviant) or a unique individual.

(Levy, 1973:xxiv)

The Irish have always had a very rich literary tradition which has mainly been concerned with themselves on the personal, cultural or national level. The poem after which this thesis takes its title (see chapter seven) is so revelatory of Irish personality and culture that simply to entitle the thesis so is to create a metaphor that embodies its basic argument. Irish literature is, then, a source of such rich information that no study can afford to ignore it.

However, I do acknowledge that one has to be very careful about how one uses data collected from this domain. In the thesis most of the material taken from literature is subjected to the same kind of anthropological analysis as that provided by my personal informants. Information from both sources constitutes exegetical data which does not itself constitute the final explanation for the anthropologist's purposes, but rather is subjected to further analysis. But not all
literary data is so treated. Material from novelists is sometimes used as descriptive material where it is felt to be accurate. This requires calculated judgements which are made easier if the qualities cited are frequently mentioned by other writers and observers, and if I have also observed them myself among contemporary Irish people. The writer I rely on most for this kind of material is William Carleton, the "Walter Scott" of 19th century Ireland.

Despite Carleton’s predilections for moralising, and caricature, we find revealed in his works a very colourful peasantry before the time of the Great Famine. Some would dispute the validity of using data from this writer, but I feel it can be justified. A member of a rare class in his time, the Irish Catholic middle-class, he became a convert to Protestantism in adult life. Whether or not this conversion was due to a desire to dissociate himself from his background in order to ingratiate himself to the Anglo-Irish ascendancy I shall leave to his biographers to argue about. I am concerned though, that because of this action he may be charged with unduly criticising the people about whom he wrote, the Irish Catholic peasantry. I am persuaded by Chestnutt’s biography and criticisms of Carleton and his writings which argues essentially that while in the late 1820s it would seem from his autobiographies that he had rejected his origins, both religious and social, and filled the vacuum by adopting a set of principles and attitudes utterly opposed to those in which he had been brought up, nevertheless, some of his severe judgements in his earlier stories have been muted in his later ones. Carleton criticised the Catholics for their slavish respect for the priest and tried to advise them only to respect and honour their clergy, for instance. His criticisms of extreme forms of Catholicism do come from a Protestant point of view: for example, the evil of confession which allows a person to go away and commit the sin again, and which grants the priest great power over the confessee. But on the other hand he was very critical of the absentee landlord. There is genuine outrage and genuine sympathy in Carleton’s works and Chestnutt sees no grounds for supposing that either sentiment is spurious. Although he accepts that much of what has been said about the Irish by the English is justified, he protests that the former people have hitherto undescribed admirable qualities which he is concerned to convey to the reader. There is no arrogance in his portrayals and positive elements are eagerly pointed out. Carleton suffered from
the sense of cultural inferiority typical of colonial writers and he often felt a need to act as apologist for his countrymen. But he was a realist with an extensive knowledge of his subject and a desire to instruct his readers: an incorrigible propagandist, but an admirable story-teller who painted a composite picture of the life during his times. Said Yeats:

'William Carleton was a great Irish historian. The history of a nation is not in parliament and the battle-fields, but in what the people say to each other on fair-days and high days, and in how they farm, and quarrel, and go on pilgrimage. These things has Carleton recorded.'

(Chestnutt, 1976:3)

I have reached the point now where I can begin to delineate the argument of the thesis. In chapter two, I am concerned to establish that a variety of child-rearing patterns in Ireland are conducive to anxious attachment, which results in a poorly developed sense of autonomy in the child, adolescent and adult. Some aspects of the culture are introduced here to enable me to make this argument, but most are only alluded to, to be expanded upon in subsequent chapters. Mothers are emphasised, for fathers' role in child rearing is minimal, although it can be a powerful negative force. Their role as husbands is crucial in understanding why children are subjected to dominating mothers who seek to make their children dependent, and their part in the maintenance and recreation of this behaviour is suspended until chapter six on relations between the sexes.

The result of a poorly developed sense of autonomy is, as Bowlby and Laing in their respective ways show that the individual oscillates between dependence on authority figures (or caregivers) on the one hand, and detachment and assertions of independence on the other. To this I add another mechanism of which I believe both Bowlby and Laing are implicitly aware is a possible way to solve the problem: Bowlby would call some aspects compulsive caregiving, Laing would call it a desire to dominate others, and I generally refer to it as authoritarianism. Thus, in chapter three, I argue that there are many forms of authoritarianism on the one hand, and supplication to authority figures on the other (i.e. dependence) in the culture - in religious, political, social and economic behaviour - which are generated from within the personality. Because they lack a sense of political competence the Irish Catholics are generally politically apathetic and dependent on a
a small authoritarian minority to act on their behalf, notwithstanding their tendency to prove they are not dependent through intermittent rebellions, i.e., assertions of independence which will be dealt with in the antitheses to this chapter, chapters five and seven. Many of the qualities and institutions discussed in this chapter manifesting themselves in contemporary life can be seen to be very old, some being quite evident as early as the 5th century A.D. The native Irish or Catholic tradition is contrasted throughout with the Protestant tradition in general, the differences lying fundamentally in the argument that self-realisation for the Irish Catholic takes place through other persons, both upwards and downwards in the social hierarchy. For the Protestants in Ireland, as elsewhere in the European world, it is through the competitive creation of material goods, services and ideas. It is postulated that the tradition of Irish Catholicism is much more opposed to Protestantism than is Catholicism in many other countries. The profound differences between the two traditions account for the distance kept by the Anglo-Irish rulers from the native Irish (see also conclusion), and for the sheer horror of the contemporary Northern Irish Protestants at the idea of joining the Republic.

Chapter four pursues the ideas raised in chapter three in the domains of education and scholarship. The education system's principal aim has not been to produce students to create or maintain a technological society, but to maintain the values of their culture, values that give pre-eminence to relationships over the creation of material goods. The trend in education is towards extreme authoritarianism, an emphasis on rote learning and memorisation, and an absence of analysis and criticism. The consequence of such an educational system has implications for the culture in general, and for academic scholarship, tendencies in both domains being traced throughout Irish history in this chapter. The implications sometimes have the same manifestation in the 5th as in the 20th century, and sometimes are discernible through transformations. The absence of critical enquiry and analysis, philosophy and ideology in both the culture in general and in scholarship is argued to be the result of an over-dependence on one's predecessors or superiors through whom one realises one's existence. There is little competition for better ideas among scholars, for this requires a sense of the scholar's confidence in his own ability to stand alone among his fellow scholars. Rather, there is an attempt to reproduce
a sacrosanct tradition through which one gains status; there is no creation of philosophy which reflects upon the Irish people's condition at any particular time. By imbibing the power of one's god-like precedents, or a sacrosanct tradition, one may claim a power for oneself, and this often takes the form of an imperious arrogance demanding the "worship" of other scholars or people. One may change places in the hierarchy of scholars, dead or living, but the form that hierarchy takes never changes. And so we see that this extraordinary conservatism generated from the fear of Irishmen to stand alone and create new ideas or a new order has also characterised the political domain. A revolution came and went in 1919-21 involving a change in leadership from the British to the Irish, but it involved no change in ideology, or social structure, to speak of.

The fifth chapter analyses most of the mechanisms developed spontaneously in the Irish person to protect himself against the authority figures on whom he depends, from assuming too much control over his autonomy and taking away his integrity altogether. Included in these mechanisms are various forms of detachment. This chapter is the antithesis of chapter three, and the embodiment of the second pole of Laing's continuum: that which involves assertions of independence by the dependent persons who lacks a sense of his own autonomy. This chapter anticipates the following two, one on sexual relations and the other on nationalism. I shall foreshadow the argument of the latter before the former since it is in chapter six that I explain through means of a cybernetic model how the syndrome of lack of autonomy is maintained and regenerated in the culture. Chapter seven on nationalism is placed after that model because at the end of it I analyse the place and meaning of women in Irish nationalism, a task not possible before the dynamics of relations between the sexes is explained. But its argument is included in the cybernetic model in chapter six.

Chapter seven extends chapter five, arguing that political rebellion is a form of religion in Catholic Ireland, at the opposite pole of Catholicism which involves the supplication to authority: political rebellion is its denial. Owing to the fact that rebellion is a rival "religion" to Catholicism, thereby bearing in its quintessential form of martyrdom many of Catholicism's features - i.e. (paradoxically) supplication to authority and authoritarianism - political rebellion
epitomises the condition of the Irish personality: one whose forces oscillate between dependence on the one hand, and assertion of independence on the other as revealed in Laing's model. In this chapter however, I have argued that far from rebellions gaining anything for the Catholics, they have usually acted to set back reforms and the achievement of the sovereignty of their country. Although the colonisation by the British of Ireland is deplored, nevertheless the implications of chapter three are extended here, i.e., that native Irish behaviour contributed to the severity of its own colonisation, and that their behaviour is an important contributor to the Northern Irish Protestants reneging on their democratic traditions towards fellow Northern Irish Catholics. In fact the title of the thesis carries this assumption: Ireland remains a divided country less because of the unreasonable nature of the Northern Irish Protestants, bigoted and beseeched though their mentality and behaviour may be, than because of the behaviour of the Irish Catholics.

However, it is in chapter six that I make the explanation for how child-rearing practices which generate a poorly developed sense of autonomy are maintained and recreated in the next generation. This chapter extends the notion developed in the previous: defense mechanisms that prevent the person upon whom one depends encroaching too far onto one's integrity characterise the sphere of relations between the sexes. It shows how these relations are fraught with the desire of each partner to keep his/her integrity from being engulfed by the other in a relationship where the differential "givings" and "takings" of the male and female can only be understood by means of knowledge derived from sociobiology. Here, through the medium of the cybernetic model, I synthesise sociobiology with psychology and anthropology to make it possible to understand how the syndrome of an inadequately developed sense of personal autonomy in the child is maintained, and recreated in the following generation. The nature of the relations between men and women in Ireland is as important a component as child-rearing practices in creating and maintaining Irish personality and culture. This chapter explains something further which has implications for cultures other than Ireland: why it is that the State in Ireland institutes legislation restricting sexuality between legitimate partners (i.e. married couples); and why it is that the Irish Catholic Church is the most sexually repressive of all modern Catholic Churches.
An explanation of these phenomena can only be made by placing them in the context of the Catholic Church’s traditional restrictions on sexual behaviour.

The concept of the cybernetic model may need a brief introduction. It evolved in the hard sciences, and Bateson explains its dynamics thus:

When the phenomena of the universe are seen as linked together by cause-and-effect and energy transfer, the resulting picture is of complexly branching and interconnecting chains of causation. In certain regions of this universe (notably organisms in environments, ecosystems, thermostats, steam engines with governors, societies, computers and the like), these chains of causation form circuits which are closed in the sense that causal interconnection can be traced around the circuit and back through whatever position was (arbitrarily) chosen as the starting point of description. In such a circuit, evidently, events at any position in the circuit may be expected to have effect at all positions on the circuit at later times. 8

(Bateson, 1973:380)

When we exclude all things and real dimensions from our explanatory system, we are left regarding each step in a communicational sequence as a transform of the previous step. If we consider the passage of an impulse along an axon, we shall regard the events at each point along the pathway as a transform (albeit identical or similar) of events at any previous point. Or if we consider a series of neurons each firing the next, then the firing of each neuron is a transform of the firing of its predecessor. We deal with event sequences which do not necessarily imply a passing on of the same energy....Similarly, we can consider any network of neurons, and arbitrarily transect the whole network at a series of different positions, then we shall regard the events at each transection as a transform of events at some previous transection.

(Bateson, 1973:386)

One of the advantages of this model (to which systems theory, as used by Bowlby is related) is that it calls for the simultaneous consideration of all the elements of the system being studied, thereby minimizing the possibility of making an explanation which considers one element to the neglect of others. The manner in which I use it in the thesis, as well as the way I managed to arrive at the model, has much in common with Geertz's hermeneutic method wherein one interpretation is piled on top of another, one version of a text (or action treated as a text) is compared with another, one set of perceptions set against another. There is a continuous dialectical tacking between the minutest item of behaviour and the most general cultural forms in
such a way as to bring them into view simultaneously.

Hopping back and forth between the whole conceived through
the parts which actualize it and the parts conceived through the
the whole which motivates them, we seek to turn them, by a
sort of intellectual perpetual motion, into explications
of one another.

(geertz, 1977:491)

Telescoping the entire argument of the thesis, my use of the
cybernetic model to explain the relationship between Irish personality
and culture would appear thus:
1. Irish Catholic child-rearing are conducive to the development of anxious attachment in the individual, resulting in a poor sense of personal autonomy.

Generates 2.

4. Women project their hopes onto their children and look especially to sons for protection that husbands have failed to give them. To this end, they try to keep children to themselves, and to have control over them forever, hence creating dependence in their children. Fathers, jealous of the affection lavished on their children by their wives, tend either to punish them for the husbands' exclusion, and/or prevent them achieving their full potential as adults.

3. Relations between the sexes

Females fear husbands' sexual impositions on their bodily integrity and try to prevent men having sex with them except when they, the women, are in a superordinate position.

Males fear engulfment in sexual relations: they fear the psychological power that a wife has over them in manipulating their protectiveness.

Males act to deny that women have any psychological power over them either as wives or as quasi-mothers.

Women become resentful that men have taken their integrity without allowing them a return in the form of psychological control. They refuse to acknowledge that men in fact are their protectors.

Men cease to act adequately as protectors and providers for their wives and families.
It is necessary to explain that despite my attempts to deal sensitively with the analysis of Irish culture and personality, with all its subtleties and paradoxes, the presentation of my material is nevertheless bound to produce a somewhat gross picture of the personality. My study dissects and re-assembles in anthropological form the Irish Catholic personality without giving any total picture of individuals. This would have been possible to a limited extent if I were able to give case histories, but owing to the confidential nature of my work and the fact that I promised informants my findings would appear in a generalised form, this option is not open to me. There is a place for the reader to get a picture of Irish individuals however - through the novels and autobiographies.

In dealing with the Irish personality in the thesis itself, I am not concerned with the more idiosyncratic components of an individual's personality,

Those components presumably, determined by the fine details of his constitution and his developmental adventures, by his responses to the unique reality of his experience.

(Levy, 1973:xxiv)

although this was a concern in the field. Rather, I am interested in certain noted unique qualities which many Irish persons share, or variations on these, and I distinguish them either explicitly or implicitly from other peoples in the western world, such as the Australians or Greeks with whom I have some familiarity, or with Irish Protestants in some cases. I am not saying that many Irish qualities may not be seen elsewhere in the world, but it is the constellation of qualities, and sometimes their intensity of expression, that makes Irish persons "Irish" rather than say "Australian".

While I found that the Irish Catholics behaved a little differently generally according to class, and to a lesser extent region, nevertheless there are specific Irish qualities that transcend class, and region, and this includes Northern Ireland. In the domain of family relations, for instance, Humphreys found that

The class differences in the family life of the New Dubliners, then, are many. Yet, surely, the judicious eye can discern beneath the differences a wide range of similarity on all class levels in the internal structure of family relations and in the family's relations to the larger community.

(Humphreys, 1966:221-2)
This does not mean that I assume a spurious uniformity of behaviour. Nor am I saying that all qualities mentioned in the thesis can be found in the majority of individuals. The qualities represent various ways of dealing with a similar problem: some people adopt only a few of them, some many. On the one hand there are individual Irish persons who would be scarcely distinguishable from some Australian people, given the degree of variance among individual personalities in each of these countries, and on the other, Irish individuals who embody Irishness in its quintessence.

Finally, it must be noted that this is a study of traditional Irish behaviour and culture. Ireland is changing, the personality is being modified and some of its culture also, although much that is traditional remains. I do sometimes refer to this, but it is outside the scope of the thesis to deal with its implications to any extent. What is significant, however, is that the changes have not been generated from within that cybernetic model. Rather, change has emanated from Ireland's entry into the EEC. These changes which have their origin in the legacy of the Protestant philosophy, I believe, give to the individual a greater sense of his own autonomy, even when childrearing practices have been traditional. They have come principally through the education system and the media. They have also come through greater individualisation of families in the community, made possible by each family being economically independent of others with the advent of an adequate state welfare system, increased employment opportunities, and farming techniques which do not require the assistance of neighbours.
NOTES – CHAPTER ONE


2. Briefly, Laing says an existential phenomenology of action is concerned with the movements, the twists and turns of a person, as one who puts himself in different ways more or less into what he does (1971:128).

3. However, I do not agree, as Bowlby would not, with the end of this statement which says: "but any particular person is not a necessary part of our being" (Laing, 1965:26).

4. Throughout the thesis I shall use the masculine personal pronoun when referring to children generally, for the sake of convenience. Females are implied unless it is made clear I am discussing only boys.

5. The term "colonisation" in reference to the post 17th century period may not be strictly accurate. Boyce says that after the 17th century Ireland was not a colony but a sister-kingdom and then, after 1800, an integral part of British polity, inextricably linked with British politics (1982:388). But "colonisation" is employed here partly because it is what the Irish Catholics often felt they experienced, and partly for the sake of convenience in the absence of a more precise term.

6. This approach is somewhat similar to that which I took in my B.A. Honours thesis (op. cit.), although here my approach was entirely ahistorical owing to the fact that the Tikopia are a pre-literate people without historical records.

7. Bowlby's analysis of the possible reasons behind some instances of compulsive caregiving, however, differ from mine. At various points in Volume III he suggests that the person — either adult or child — engaging in this behaviour, instead of longing for love and support for him/herself, becomes intensely concerned about the losses and sadness of others, and feels impelled to do all in his/her power to help and support the other. In this way, the cared-for person comes to stand vicariously for the one giving the care (see Author Index on compulsive caregiving, 1980). Equally, however, one could argue that the compulsive caregiver is imaging him/herself by contrast conception to the other whose losses then appear greater than his/ her own: his/her own loss is diminished by comparison with the other (see chapter two p. 50 for a fuller explanation of this structural model).

8. A circuit structure is a closed pathway (or network of pathways) along which differences (or transforms of differences) are transmitted (Bateson, 1973:458).
CHAPTER TWO

CHILD REARING

Throughout the land of Eireann stands
the stranger's halls of learning,
Where minds are trained for combat
with the sweeping storms of life,
Where skilful hands are buckling on
the strong defensive armour
That will bring the youthful battlers
all-triumphant thro' the strife.

But all their arts of teaching, and all
their stores of knowledge,
Cannot raise to strength the blossom
that has fallen from the tree:
The lesson of all lessons is the one
that's learned in childhood,
And the greatest school in Eirinn is an
Irish mother's knee.

O, the college halls are stately, and
those books are mines of learning,
And the flowers that men call culture,
rich in perfume, flourish there;
Grand old volumes, treasure-laden from
the rich fields of the Ages,
Travel slowly to its portals, weary
'nearth the lod they bear.

Yet, for all, there's something higher
than the wisdom of the masters;
There's a power far above them, great
and learned tho' they be:
You will find it by the hearthstone, near
the bogland and the mountain;
'Tis the knowledge given in childhood
on an Irish mother's knee.

See a simple-hearted peasant girl, a
flower from Erle's garden,
Forced by fate, or lured by folly, to a
land beyond the seas.
Where the strangers frown upon her,
and the foulsome breath of cities
Breaks the spirit, once as buoyant as
her native mountain breeze.
What sustains her in the conflict, when
destruction strives to claim her,
When the dark clouds gather round her,
and the hope-lights fade and flee?
Oh! there's something unforgotten,
something never lost or broken:
This the Faith she found in childhood,
on an Irish mother's knee.

Here, again, we see two pictures - one
a man with honours laden,
From the stranger's halls of learning -
on the sweets of culture fed,
Of Irish birth, but false to Eire, with
the slaveling's word of scorn
For the land that nursed his fathers,
and that gave their dust a bed.

And the other - never college walls
enclosed that manly form,
He has roamed the giant mountains that
are sleeping by the sea;
In the language of his country he can
trace his country's story,
For he learned it thus in childhood by
an Irish mother's knee.

Aye, the stranger's halls have charms
for a vain and foolish people,
Taught to ape the airs and customs of
a cold, unfeeling race,
That would rob our country's life-blood
that has naught for her but hatred,
That has left the deep wounds on her
form, the tear-drops on her face.

But to raise, erect and noble, in the
hearts of Eire's children
The lofty aspirations and the feeling of
the free,
To teach them changeless love of God,
of manhood and of freedom,
The only school in Eirinn is an Irish
mother's knee.

An Irish Mother's Knee

from Ireland's Own, April 1980
Popular images of the Irish mother and father

This poem, characteristic of many to be found in the popular weekly *Ireland's Own*, embodies most clearly Irish men and women's perceptions of the mother - strong, enduring, nurturant and an eternal refuge against the difficulties posed by the world beyond the natal domain. But this poem is more than just a tribute to the Irish mother. It expresses the belief that no values in the world are of any significance besides those enshrined in the mother/child bond. In fact, as the poem progresses, so does its expression of contempt, and even hatred of the world other than that offered by the mother, a world which is seen to be hard, foreign, imposed upon unwilling learners, and antipathetic toward values learned at "the Irish mother's knee": almost the Irish view of the father - hard, unfeeling and an interloper in the relationship between the mother and child.

Irish literature reveals that the Irish mother has great power in the family and that her children are very devoted to her, as they are to her displaced image in the Virgin mother, Mary. Well-known writers such as Frank O'Connor (1970) and Sean O'Casey (1980a & b) almost deify their mothers in their autobiographies, enshrining them as figures of such strength, self-sacrifice and heroism that they join the ranks of the great Gaelic mythical heroines. Just as the image of the Virgin or Mother (always a widow) has dominated the romantic yearnings of nationalists for many centuries, so this view of the mother may be much older than its inscription in prose and plays of this century. Yeats found in Gaelic mythical material much that captured his imagination, and both he and Synge were much inspired by the mythical heroine Deidre, and created modern plays in her honour - or perhaps I should say, in honour of the contemporary Irish woman - *Deidre of the Sorrows* and *Deidre* respectively.

Irish writers perpetuate this image of women in their works which are other than autobiographical, thereby revealing biases formed through those writers' perceptions of their mothers, and of women in general. These images are likely to be shared by their Irish readers. The dramatists O'Casey, Synge and G.B. Shaw invested many of their women with great heroic qualities. Perhaps the quintessence of Irish womanhood as perceived by O'Casey is to be found in his Juno, of the
play Juno and the Paycock (1966). Juno was the great Roman goddess of marriage and childbirth, and O'Casey's Juno Boyle carries some of these qualities, though she is an earthy, brawling woman of the Dublin tenements. The classical Juno was always associated with peacocks as her protectors, but O'Casey used this aspect of the legend in a completely ironic way by giving her a peacock of a husband who takes his name from the common association of strutting vanity. Thus, her husband is not to be a Jupiter - the supreme deity of the Romans corresponding to the Greek Zeus - but a paycock, a parasite, living off the earnings of his wife and daughter while pretending to be the soul of generosity; a bragging scoundrel; an inveterate dreamer frustrated by his dreams which he is unable to convert into reality. Just as Juno Boyle is the prototype of O'Casey's mothers, often said to be modelled upon his own mother, so her Paycock, Captain Jack Boyle, is the male prototype for an ever-changing series of O'Casey characters. He may be found in other guises as Seamus Shields in the Shadow of a Woman (1966), and Fluther Good in The Plough and the Stars (1966).

The Irish writer and scholar, Arland Ussher observes that the Irish woman alone seems to evoke passion (1950:123).

Curiously, by a sort of polarization, the Irish woman often seems to be a virago, earthy and passionate and very male - like Queen Maeve, or the 16th century pirate-chieftainess Grace O'Malley, or Synge's heroine Pegeen Mike. Ireland is a country of great fighting mothers - of Junos, like the one in O'Casey's play, but not, certainly, of Jupiters. 2

(Ussher, 1950:138)

By comparison the Irish male - less often particularised as a father - is "a characterless, wailing and complaining figure", Ussher remarks (1950:123). Partly true, but not the full story.

As a father, the Irishman is often revealed in literature as distant, forbidding, unreachable, and often punishing, frequently drunken, and at least as often, feckless - a man who might command his family's obedience, but not their respect and honour which is all reserved for the long-suffering mother. Christy Brown depicts his father as hard-working, but drunken, and pugnacious; a bully towards both his wife and children whom he beats at the least excuse (1970). James Joyce's father was not cruel, but Stephen Daedelus describes him thus in A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.
A medical student, an oarsman, a tenor, an amateur actor, a shouting policeman, a small landlord, a small investor, a drinker, a good fellow, a storyteller, somebody's secretary, something in a distillery, a taxgatherer, a bankrupt and at present a praiser of his own past.
(Joyce, 1977:356)

And as biographers of Joyce reveal, his contempt was not unwarranted for his jovial, good-natured, but feckless father led his family from a comfortable middle-class existence to a life of poverty. Joyce held some affection for his father, however, unlike Frank O'Connor whose father is also described as improvident and feckless, and a drunkard who oscillates between bouts of temperance, followed by debauchery. O'Connor's mother kept the household together and, despite her husband's weaknesses, appeared to her son to remain fond of him, though O'Connor attributes to her the feeling of pity towards him:

I think when she wasn't entirely desperate, pity was what was uppermost in her mind, pity for this giant of a man who had no more self-knowledge or self-control than a baby.
(O'Connor, 1970:37)

And as I shall argue in the sixth chapter, this attribution to his mother may well have been correct.

Though not autobiographies as such, John McGahern's The Dark (1977a) and The Leavetaking (1977b) contain much autobiographical material. In the latter novel, his mother's death was seen to have been caused by his father's lust. His father did not live in the family house but resided in his barracks (as a policeman) and hence to some extent was a stranger to his own family. When his father came to the home, as a young lad the protagonist "started to move deeper into the shelter of my mother, away from the cold shadow my father cast" (1977b:49). Although it is written after The Dark, The Leavetaking is retrospective, so in biographical time it precedes The Dark where we find the widower reluctantly earning a living for his very alienated, motherless family. The protagonist, here an adolescent, suffers a marked dislike of his father: they work together on the farm, but the lad does so under considerable sufferance. One feels that one is reading a dramatisation of the kind of uncompanionable relationship that obtained between rural fathers and sons observed by the anthropologists Arensberg and Kimball in 1932-4 (1968). The lad's feelings waver between fear and contempt and are epitomised in his, and his sister's parody of their father's reiterated complaints and curses regarding the burden of his children:
'So you're home, are you? Where's the food going to come outa to fill extra bellies? God, O God, O God, what did I do to deserve this cross? The poor-house, it's the poor-house ye'll all wind up in, and ye needn't say I didn't warn ye'. 'Oh God, what did I do to deserve such a pack!'... 'Then such thankless bastards the sun never saw.'
(McCahern, 1977a:78)

Other Irish writers seem to have remembered little of their fathers, perhaps because their mothers fulfilled most of their emotional needs, fathers being relatively peripheral in Irish households as I shall show later. In his autobiography, Peter Kavanagh remembered little of his father, although he was a boy of twelve years of age when his father died. However, his memories are kindly (1977). But poor memories of fathers may not merely be the result of minimal interaction of children with them, but also the result of the desire to enhance the image of the heroic mother struggling in the absence of a supportive husband. The Irish nationalist Patrick Pearse rarely referred to his father in his writings. Nor did his sister Mary Brigid (1979), but their memories of their mother are constant, and unfailingly tender. Yet we know that the Pearse father was a prudent businessman and good to his family. Sean O'Casey confines his father to the shadowy realms of illness, suggesting that on this account the boy rarely interacted with him, thereby keeping the sense that his mother belonged entirely to him, a sense that pervades his Autobiographies (1980 a & b). In the three separate books that constitute the first volume, his mother cuts a very heroic figure indeed, but only one chapter is dedicated to his father who died when the boy was six years old and is entitled "His Da, His Poor Da", and it is just four pages long. It begins:

And all this time and for many months before, he who was called Michael, the old man, his mother's husband, the father that begot him, was lying in a big horseshair-covered armchair, shrinking from something that everybody thought of, but nobody ever mentioned.
(O'Casey, 1980a:26)

His father was not feckless or improvident and in being quite learned should have commanded a more respectful memory from his son. Yet the son saw him as distant and forbidding, his mother's world offering him a place of refuge against the frightening "stranger" who lived in the family house.
Do we ever see contradictions in these polarised images of parents in Irish literature? Rarely do we see Irish fathers depicted otherwise. Sean O'Faolain appears to be an exception, however. In his autobiography, O'Faolain's memories of his father are tender, and proud: "He was, so evidently, so reassuringly, a good man, a loyal servant, an upright citizen, a pious Christian, a good father..." (1963: 42). But not quite like a mother substitute:

I feel downcast that I can only remember my father like this as a figure, almost as a type, rather than as a person. He is to me more a myth than a man, a figure out of that time, out of that place, a symbol of childhood.

(O'Faolain, 1963:40).

We do sometimes find contradictions in the image of the Irish mother. We sometimes get a glimpse of evil in the power of women as in Synge's Widow Quinn of his *Playboy of the Western World* (1958), or in the lesser known protagonist of J.B. Keane's play *Big Maggie* (1966). But while overbearing and domineering, these two figures retain their dignity and have certain admirable qualities about them. Some mothers are seen to be demonic, such as one mentioned briefly in McGahern's *The Leavetaking*, but at the same time they are considered to be exceptions to the rule.

She devoured her wretch of a husband my father and all my brothers except Tom who left the house at eighteen and would have nothing more to do with her. She still hates to mention his name. All the brothers that married are in turn dominated by their wives. Poor Kevin, who stayed in the house, she trampled all over; he takes her weekends in the country, he's fifty, and she butters his bread. She halfdevoured me and would have wholly except for me developing some awareness of it.

(McGahern, 1977b:31))

This mother is implicitly contrasted with the protagonist's mother. But another of Ireland's illustrious sons, Patrick Kavanagh, reveals in his most famous poem *The Great Hunger* that the "good" and "bad" mother can coexist within the one person; or conversely, that there may be a dual nature in Irish persons' perceptions and feelings about their mothers.

Maguire was faithful to death:
He stayed with his mother till she died
At the age of ninety-one
She stayed too long,
Wife and mother in one.
When she died
The knuckle-bones were cutting the skin of her son's backside
And he was sixty-five.
Oh he loved his mother
Above all others.
0 he loved his ploughs
And he loved his cows
And his happiest dream
Was to clean his arse
With perennial grass
On the bank of some summer stream;
To smoke his pipe
In a sheltered grieve
In the middle of July —
His face in a mist
And two stones in his fist
And an impotent worm on his thigh.

(Kavanagh, 1972:36-7)

With what bitter irony does the poet convey the realisation that the very cause of "the great hunger" of the average Irish bachelor farmer, the intellectual, emotional and sexual starvation he endures, lies in those persons or things to which he is most attached! In these few poetic lines Kavanagh has imparted what I shall be concerned to demonstrate throughout this chapter.

Pictures of parental behaviour in psychology and the social sciences

It is important to note that despite the differential quality of the child's relationship with the mother and father, traditionally in Ireland

...the position of the parents is one of extreme superordination, that of the children extreme subordination.

(Arensberg and Kimball, 1968:127)

however much this situation is currently undergoing modification. Referring to the mother, the psychologist Anne McKenna of University College Dublin is not giving her a favourable image when she concludes that

One might say that the Irish mother is controlling, undemocratic, and strict and that the poorly educated working-class Irish mother is controlling, undemocratic, hostile and less strict.

(McKenna, 1979:248)

even if she does point to evidence that the contrary model of the democratised family of the Scandinavian countries and of the U.S.A. might not be wholly conducive to "healthy" personality formation. In a comparative study of American Irish and Italian schizophrenics, Opler and Singer found that the Irish men saw mother figures to be both dominating and rejecting, women who saw their sons as "'forever boys and burdens'". In only three of thirty cases was the father the
dominant figure in Irish patients' delusional systems (1956).

Schepers-Hughes represents the mother as sometimes excruciatingly cruel. In Thematic Apperception Tests she found that many of the adolescent boys in her village were prone to view the mother figure negatively (1979:159). In her monograph she makes it clear that a large portion of blame for Ireland's high incidence of mental illness and alcoholism lies in the family. She asserts:

...Irish mothers are artists at the guilt-inducing techniques of moral masochism, and the old woman wields control over the lives of her children (especially her sons) long after they can be effectively beaten with a cane.

(Schepers-Hughes, 1979:176)

While certain members of the family, usually the older ones, were given positive encouragement to do well in life, others, usually the last-born son, were subjected constantly and often publicly to trenchant ridicule, particularly around and beyond adolescence. The aim was to create at least one member of the family who would be so timid and have such a poor self-concept that he would be unable to perform on his own in the world outside the parental domain. This would ensure that someone would remain at home when the parents grew old (Ibid).

Scholars of Irish ethnography provide no information which would contradict the literary stereotype of the father as a shadowy, often disliked figure in the home. But there seem to be two kinds of image of him as father - that of regal paterfamilias who holds his family in fear and awe, and that of contemptible incompetent. They are, I believe, both correct: they are representations of the father in the respective domains of public sphere, and home. Schepers-Hughes observes that the rural Irish father is no longer the regal paterfamilias once described in the literature. At best he is humanely tolerated; at worst he is openly ridiculed by his wife and adult children (1979:172). This observation is also confirmed by Brody (1973). While Schepers-Hughes finds the picture she saw in the west of Ireland in the early 1970s unrecognisably different from that seen by Arensberg and Kimball in the early 1930s (1979:33), the two findings in my judgement are not contradictory. Arensberg and Kimball observed the father mainly in the public domain, and then, as now, he was all-powerful in relation to his family. Schepers-Hughes was more interested in the domestic situation and was more finely attuned to interpersonal relationships. If anything, she underestimates the power of
the father by emphasising her observations of him in the home. It is interesting that Eipper, a male sociologist who did research in the Dingle peninsula in 1975-6, found women to take a subordinate, meek position in the home when he visited: 'he received the impression that women were quite cowered by their husbands (1980). But visits by foreign men would in all likelihood make Irish women feel uncomfortable, especially as many of the matters discussed would be outside their interest and competence. In addition, it is common for men and their wives, when in the presence of other males, to behave far more formally and in accordance with social mores that stress the man should be dominant in the home.

For these reasons, to Arensberg and Kimball, and also to Eipper, it seemed that men dominated both the public and private domains. But in fact, it is women who rule the home and as often as not treat their husbands as little better than privileged lodgers. This does not mean that they might not be afraid of their husbands, especially when drunk. While Arensberg and Kimball found fathers were severe disciplinarians and there was a lot of latent antagonism in father/son relations which could break through when conflicts arose (1968: 52-8), they nevertheless provide some evidence that sons also held their fathers in contempt. For example, they say unmarried men shun the groups formed by the older men among whom are represented their fathers, and hold these groups in contempt (1968:168), though later in their lives these same sons will join such married men's groups themselves (see also Arensberg, 1937:118).

Humphreys' sociological study in 1951 of first generation Dubliners whose parents had emigrated from rural areas offers a not- unfavourable view of contemporary fathers, but it should be noted his study is a sociological, not a psychological one, and his data comes more from interview material than from his own observations on this matter. It was said that modern fathers were much less stern than the fathers of the previous generation, and that they had a better relationship with their children than did fathers in the past. They looked upon their children under the age of about seven years of age with affection, albeit took little part in their rearing, but they introduced a distance and aloofness into the relationship after this age (1966:145-6). But at the same time Humphreys provides quite a
lot of evidence that would contradict his own views, and it will be referred to later in this chapter. Among this is included information from mothers about fathers' relationships with sons in the work context. Here fathers are said to be extremely critical, so critical in fact that sons are loath to work for or with them, and in this matter, fathers were said not to have changed in generations. However, it would be fair to say that some of the extreme nature of Irish maternal behaviour depicted in Irish literature had already been modified in relatively cosmopolitan centres such as Dublin in 1951, and this would also have applied to some extent to the rural areas of the eastern districts.

Not all fathers are excessively authoritarian, punishing or critical, however. Some are quite affectionate and I found that many people remembered their fathers fondly, though rarely did I meet anyone who held his/her father in the same respect, love and admiration as the mother. Wherever people did remember their fathers affectionately, their memories were usually tinged with a certain quality of benign contempt. As one such woman said: "We were all very fond of Daddy, but he was always making hare-brained plans for getting rich quickly, and it was left to Mummy to keep us in house and home". From my impressions, affectionate fathers are often fairly ineffectual and incompetent: having substantially withdrawn from the world they offer to it a benign, but uninvolved facade.

The characteristic which is common to all traditional Irish families is the minimal association of fathers with their children, and since the time of Arensberg and Kimball's observations, this has been thought to be a remarkable feature of family life in Ireland. According to material available from literary sources, that of the anthropologists, and my own observations, the lack of involvement of fathers with their children takes on such an extreme form that it seems to me to have no equal in any other culture for which child-rearing practices are in any way recorded. The traditional sexual division of labour is explained functionally by Arensberg and Kimball as being due to the requirements of the rural farm management structure. This in turn might be thought to constitute an implicit explanation for the above perceptions of Irish people towards their respective parents. But rural Ireland's need for a sexual division of labour in farm management does
not differ from elsewhere in Europe, and is certainly considerably weaker than in some cultural groups, such as the Sarakatsani transhumant shepherding families of Greece. Among these people fathers are extremely affectionate and indulgent towards their young children and spend much spare time with them, despite their hard work and long periods of absence from the home. The quality of a child's relationship with the father changes as the child matures, but paternal behaviour and attitudes towards offspring differ markedly from those found in Ireland (Campbell, 1964).

Nowadays, the most modern and progressive families may appear almost indistinguishable from the average Australian family in many respects. The wife and mother does most of the cooking, domestic chores and caring for the children, but the husband may help her out a little and pay considerable attention to his children, the result being that the children might develop quite strong bonds of affection with their father. In these households the mothers encourage the man to take such an interest. In others, the wife may encourage him, but for reasons which will be revealed at various points in the thesis, he is unable to act upon such persuasion. Cognizance should also be taken of the existence of masculine norms of behaviour which still brand a man "hen-pecked" if he spends too much time in the home. But there remains a feature of Irish family life which has not hitherto been observed: that the substantial absence of the father from the home may be partly due to the fact that women do not want their husbands to become too attached to their children and may even put obstacles in the way of a husband willing to spend time with them. And children in turn, are encouraged to hold their father in some contempt, whether he be worthy of such contempt or not, in order, I believe, that those children become bonded to the mother, to the exclusion of all other persons. A comment from a female informant of Schepers-Hughes is apposite:

'The farm and the land and house down to the last teacup belong to [my husband] ... but I own the children.
(Scheper-Hughes, 1979:148)

A case study

The clearest case I saw of this phenomenon was in a prosperous family whose success was substantially due to the wife's encouragement of the husband in his business enterprises, and the husband's own
initiative, rather than to inheritance of wealth. His industriousness
was exceptional even in the eastern area. He was generous to his
family who lived more comfortably than their neighbours. He had a pleas-
ant, outgoing personality, and was deeply loved by his wife who admit-
ted she would find it difficult to continue living without him. And
yet, she attempted to hold him in contempt to some degree, and to entice
her children to do likewise. For instance, on several occasions she
attempted to humiliate her husband in my presence, quite gratuitously,
for nothing he had said or done in the whole time I had known him war-
ranted this. On two occasions she asked me if I did not think he was
a bit "slow" or stupid, in his presence. On one such occasion it was
in the context of a very pleasant conversation amongst the three of us
and her manner was matter-of-fact, rather than derisive. Laughingly
she said, did I not think he was a bit slow-thinking like one of her
sons (who definitely did fit this description), for he took so long to
"spit things out" that sometimes she felt if she did not finish his
statement, he never would? As her speech was more characteristically
Irish - fast and staccato- I replied hesitantly for fear of offence, and
with a certain touch of amusement, that her statement said much more
about herself than it did about her husband: it bespoke an impatience on
her part. This reply was well received by both who laughed at my sudden
revelation of truth. The wife was indeed aware of her impatience and
short temper and prayed that she might be otherwise.

This man sought to enjoy his children and was very willing to spend
quite a lot of time with them, given his busy life. But without explic-
itly discouraging him, nevertheless his wife succeeded in doing so cov-
ertly, to some extent. For instance, when he went to play and chat with
them before bedtime, one of the few times available to him with his
busy work schedule, she objected, saying that he was not the one left to
try to get the over-excited children to sleep afterwards. Her children
did a few jobs for her immediately connected with the the management of
the home - her domain, of course - but she put obstacles in the way of
the boys working with their father's contracting business when they
could well have done odd jobs for him, then taunted him with the infor-
mation that her relative's sons who were the same age as hers were
responsible helpers on their father's farm. To this her husband replied
with some impatience, that it was too much effort to try to get them
to work with him. And yet he showed much patience in dealing with the
two young men who were employed in his business.
A member of the county Gaelic football team, his wife went to see him play on one occasion and took me along also, but despite his and his team's admirable performance, she was so critical of him that her husband looked quite regretful that he had taken her. Her three oldest children at ten, eight and six were quite old enough to appreciate the game, and some other wives of players proudly took along their children to see their fathers play. But without being asked by me why they did not ever go, she volunteered that the long trips to the towns where they played tired the children, with a certain triumph in her tone which bespoke a victory in her aim to belittle her husband's achievements to her children. For while in many contexts she was intensely proud of his achievements, both as a businessman and in his other activities, and of the fact that she was a successful man's wife, nevertheless she sometimes demeaned the status of contractor as an occupation befitting persons who were not intellectually successful. She envisaged her eldest "white-haired" boy as being destined for a better, more prestigious occupation, the second not-so-very-bright son possibly inheriting the business, he being, as she often said, most like his father. It was this favoured older son, who at the young age of eight had taken to speaking in a very rude manner to his father on occasions, something he would have had no courage to do if it had not been for the subtle approval and lack of correction from his mother.

In small, but significant and cumulative ways, this mother attempted to alienate to some extent her husband from his children so that they would belong to her, and only her, and in this it seemed to me she was resoundingly successful. A brief anecdote will serve to introduce this interpretation. On one occasion I was witness to a quarrel between this couple over the wife's indulgence of one of her sons who came crying to her for comfort following a small accident. The husband claimed that such treatment was making "sissies" out of his boys (it was considered appropriate for the girls), but his wife responded venemously that it was such maternal affection that enabled children to grow up with a certain "softness" and sympathy for others of which more was needed in the world. She pointed to his lack of these qualities. When the husband responded that these were feminine qualities for which women were highly valued by men and he did not want to see them in his sons, she replied that it was a pity men did
not have a few of these qualities and she hoped her treatment of her sons would in fact engender in them a thoughtfulness for others. Her husband's response was to depart scornfully.

It was a telling point that this woman made. I was aware from other conversations that this so-called lack of sympathy in her husband was connected with what she felt were his excessive sexual demands which she was loath to satisfy. And her too-numerous pregnancies, cystitis in the early years of marriage and her appeals to his humanity alternated with vigorous complaints were all of little avail. It was to his lack of sympathy in this matter that she knowledgeably referred in this argument, and it is of interest that she sought to make her sons other than like her husband in this, as in other matters. She had several times asked me if I had not thought her eldest son in some ways to be "feminine". As this is a highly pejorative attribute in an Irish boy, I felt a little bewildered as to how to reply. It was not that this woman was not highly admiring of her husband's enterprise, competitiveness - both manifestations of his masculinity as she well understood - and for that matter, even his sexuality, however much she loathed its enactment in their relationship. She compared him favourably to other men who had fewer children, or whose wives produced mainly girls, and to a relative who it was widely thought was placed in "dry-dock" at all times except when his wife wanted a child.

On the second occasion that she appraised her eldest son's "femininity" it was clear she wanted me to affirm it. I still did not comprehend this observation at all, but as it seemed very anomalous, I kept it in mind to "test" in naturalistic observations. As I had replied that he seemed like a fairly typical Irish boy, shy but one who played masculine games and spoke with a certain assertiveness, she attempted to explain her statement by saying he was very gentle with the baby for instance. But my subsequent observations contradicted this to some extent for he had little time for him except on occasions when he clearly wished to impress or please his mother. On the third time that she made this assertion, she compared this son favourably to her second whom she disliked in some ways (which does not mean she did not love him) and also her husband. The statement was finally placed in a context whereby its meaning became accessible to me. Her second son and husband had qualities in common, e.g. their intractability, and
and she often lumped them together for other qualities which they did not share because of this pre-eminent characteristic. She could impose upon their sense of self or personal integrity only so far before they would withdraw from her and cease to be amenable to her manipulations. In addition, when she beat this second son - an act which she admitted achieved absolutely nothing in the way of discipline, though did, I suspect, give her some sense of emotional release for pent-up anger with either him or other children whom she was loath to beat and/or were too small to punish - he cried, an admission of humiliation. But he would not come back to his mother without her first apologising, in an oblique manner, for such punishment. As physical beating is one means of a person expressing his or her power over another, it substantially defeats the purpose if one has, in turn, to humiliate oneself by apologising for one's actions. What she found truly intolerable in this child, as with her husband, was the fact that he retained an inner core of integrity which she could not touch. Both in some ways were beyond her manipulations, but not so her "white-haired" boy.

This favoured son's attachment to his mother seemed to me to be almost frightening in its strength and profundity. It was almost as though there were some uncanny telepathy between them, for she had scarcely to utter a wish and he had fulfilled it. I was amazed, and touched, when one day after returning from school and in the middle of a game he quietly announced he had "brought up some sick at school", the consequence his mother explained in this abundantly healthy child, of the fact that he knew his mother was to go out that evening to a dinner-dance. She rarely went anywhere without the children and on one occasion when I rang to confirm an arrangement I had made to go out with her and her husband that evening, she closed the door so that this son could not hear her, otherwise he would be very upset, not sleep and probably be sick. She cherished such expressions of his need for her, a need which her second son did not manifest in such an extreme form. Her first son needed her in precisely the same way as she needed her husband, as she understood a woman needs the protectiveness of a man, a need which becomes transformed into romantic love. Her son was in the same structural relationship to her as she to her husband: it was in this sense that she perceived her son to be "feminine". And it was this needfulness, characteristic of the female's need for a man, that she tried to encourage in her children by such behaviour as pampering their small injuries, and which her husband,
anxious to produce "real" independent men of his sons, deplored.

In order to create and maintain this quality of relationship with
her children this mother attempted to discourage close attachment to
their own father - her only real competitor for their affection. I
have presented probably a gross case of maternal behaviour - gross,
because the husband in this case did not deserve the treatment imposed
upon him - so that it can be made evident that whether or not a father
does deserve to be held in contempt, Irish maternal behaviour operates
in such a way that this attitude towards the father is to some extent
inevitable in Ireland. Indeed Messenger notes that:

As a result of the mother's close ties to the male child,
the father often is alienated from familial interaction, is
hostile toward the youth, and fails to become a source of
firm masculine attachment.

(Messenger, 1969:78)

However, mothers are not alone to blame for this state of affairs, and
a counterbalance will be provided both later in this chapter and also
in the chapter on relations between the sexes where I show that many
fathers in fact invite contempt by their inadequate husbandly and
paternal behaviour.

The creation of dependence and exclusion of the father

This mother was, then an extreme example of one whose socialization
of her children directed them away from their father as a model for
 emulation. She did not, however, offer the female model as an alter-
native to her sons, despite her desire to inculcate certain so-called
"feminine" qualities in them, encouraging her boys as she did to play
with tractors and lead an outdoor life. She expressed pride in their
"rough and tumble" manner, the fact that they cursed (although she
also punished them for this sometimes, for it constituted unseemly
behaviour) and compared them in these matters favourably to some of
their more subdued city-born relatives. As argued in the first chapter,
the children's personalities were not formed by emulation, but by the
personal interactions with their mother. The kinds of personalities
they were developing were the consequence of her interaction with her
sons (and daughters) in such a manner that she and they occupied
complementary roles in what constituted a oneness, or a totality.
Anticipating my chapter on relations between the sexes, just as a man
and woman in love offer each other love which is not identical in its
expression, but whose respective forms complement each other so that a sense of oneness or wholeness results from this union, the man ideally offering protection and concern for the woman's welfare and the woman a sweet dependence upon such protection, so does the Irish mother interact with her children—be they male or female—in such a manner as to create a unity from the individual need for protection on the part of her children and succour and protection by the mother. The mother offers nurturance, the child's reciprocal dependence and gratitude in turn reward the mother with a sense of purpose and self-fulfilment. The dynamics of this model of interaction work in such a way that the mother maintains a sense of adequacy and purpose by surrounding herself with dependent children whom she nurtures, children whose helplessness provides a contrast model to herself: hence, children expressing dependence are favoured over those who, relatively speaking, tend to be autonomous. 6 The Irish father has little place in this personal relationship, except to sustain the economic conditions which will keep it viable. A quotation which I found in R.D. Laing's Self and Others aptly describes the condition:

'...more than a calf wishes to suck, does the cow yearn to suckle'.
(Laing, 1971:81)

Creation of dependence by unconscious means

From an introduction to the idea that dependence might be a conscious desire on the part of the mother for her child, I shall now turn to a powerful force which operates at an unconscious level, outside or beyond the level of desire or intention, creating anxious attachment in the child predisposing it to be dependent upon a succouring figure, this usually being the mother in childhood. However, anxious attachment generates behaviour other than dependence, and such behaviour will be looked at later.

Messages about the availability of the mother to the child in Ireland varied enormously. Some mothers were very solicitous of their infants, particularly if they were the first or second born, attempting to answer their every cry, but mothers having their fourth child or more where births were closely spaced were distinctly blasé. They tried to get away with just as little attention as the infant could survive upon. It was this minimal handling and isolation of the infant that Scheper-Hughes observed in the rural west generally, but she does not say specifically if these were all later-born infants in large families that she observed. As there had been no marriages contracted in the
three years preceding her study in the district which had produced a child (1979:35), and those few couples who had families generally had large ones closely spaced, then this may have been the case.7

Given that later-born infants in families where children are born in close succession are somewhat neglected, this does not mean that mothers are negligent. Mothers who treated their infants thus did not allow them to remain unattended for long periods of time. Few Irish mothers work outside the home, even in the cities, and I cannot even conceive of one who did not think motherhood to be anything other than an extremely important and honoured role. When such infants began to cry and it was ascertained they were neither cold, hungry or in pain, they were brought from the isolated bedroom into the living-room where their boredom would often be shorty overcome by the activities of older children who would help by rocking or amusing the infant in its pram. Failing this, mothers might pick up the infant and rock it briefly, but in this matter they were neglectful where all infants were concerned, and I shall deal with this shortly.

Furthermore, there is no doubt that the infant itself determines to some degree the behaviour of the mother. Bowlby and Ainsworth both stress the active role of the infant in evoking the interactions and relationships that constitute its social environment, and Irish infants also have this power, muted though it may be as I shall demonstrate later in the chapter compared with infants elsewhere. This area of child/parent relations has attracted a number of scholars (e.g. Lewis and Rosenblum, 1975) who all show that mothers are not able to tolerate prolonged crying from an infant without acting to relieve its distress. Thus, we might postulate that if the Irish baby is constitutionally placid and undemanding, the mother will not disturb it, but if it is demanding, she is forced to some extent to give it attention which she otherwise had not sought to do, or felt she had not time to do. This seemed to be a noticeable factor as the child matured. Although the mother may wish to neglect later-born children because she is too busy, she may find they turn out to be rather high-spirited and her attention is distracted from older ones onto the later-born. This attention may not be of a very positive kind before the child begins talking, being as it is principally directed at dealing with the cause of the infant's crying. But once physical mobility, speech and an increased repertory of adult skills in social interaction are acquired,
the mother may find the young child has such an engaging and persistent way that she directs her limited attention to him or her rather than to older siblings. I personally observed this in the last-born children of two families, one in which there were eight children under the age of fourteen years, and the other, ten children under the age of fifteen.

While acknowledging that later-born children in closely spaced families usually get off to a worse start in life than their older siblings, I would argue that the socialization of all children in the Irish family is essentially similar. While I would deny that minimal attention characterizes maternal behaviour towards children, I would, however, acknowledge Schepet-Hughes' observation that Irish mothers tend to repress, deny and ignore babies' demands for physical stimulation, including rocking and holding (1979:chapter five) is correct, and this has to be explained. Schepet-Hughes points to the importance of physical contact between the infant and its mother in the development of attachment behaviour, any substantial abrogation of which can stunt the emotional development, as Bowlby has demonstrated. Although she does suggest that its absence may be the precursor of the high levels of mental illness and alcoholism found in later life among Irish adults, she does not develop her idea in Bowlby's terms of anxious attachment. I feel she detracts from the power of her insight by positing additional sociological factors in the west of Ireland such as the high emigration rates and low marriage potential, and the loss of prestige in the small farming business as being equal contributing factors to the development of mental illness. I believe these factors do not contribute to its development in a fundamental way, but they do tend to exacerbate certain tendencies generated in the family independently of sociological factors.

Schepet-Hughes believes this aloofness both in regards to the time spent with the infant and the lack of physical touch reflects an emotional inadequacy on the part of the mother which is related to the puritanical and austere caste of Irish Catholicism, with its many restrictions on bodily expressions and indulgence (1979:152). But while Irish Catholicism stringently prescribes distance between the sexes, it makes no rules at all for physical behaviour in any other relationship. We should look elsewhere, then, for the origins of this peculiar nature of kinaesthetic behaviour, which has parallels in other non-verbal and paralinguistic communication patterns among the Irish.
It would be untrue to say that Irish mothers do not talk to and interact with their infants on an average as often as a typical Anglo-Saxon Australian mother (acknowledging that my observations here are impressionistic, not systematic), except as I have said, for later-born infants. However, Irish mothers do not engage in much kissing or cuddling or close hugging. More noticeable is the lack of personal proximity between the two as the infant becomes a toddler. Clearly the helpless infant requires a certain amount of physical attention for survival, but as he begins to be master of his own body with competent walking, he can no longer claim any basis for eliciting physical contact with his mother. Already by the age of three years physical self-restraint and bodily discreteness has somehow been "conveyed" to the child in what seems quite mysterious ways, since instructions on this matter are never passed on through verbal messages. While a three-year-old will still get cuddles in the home, they are few, and brief. From the age of three years or so in the more traditional, and five to six years in some more modern families, a child will only be allowed to sit on the mother's knee in the home, and she may roughly caress his or her arm or leg. An accident might elicit a cuddle and kiss for a six-year-old from his mother, but it would be brief, sympathy being conveyed through verbal endearments. Children are given a brief peck on the cheek from the mother as they go to bed. By the age of three most children are comporting themselves in public like little men and women in their manner of keeping physical discreteness from their mothers, merely consenting to having their hands held while walking up the street.

I would point out that I am speaking generally here for as in other matters, I observed some variation which is not due to factors of modernisation, I believe. One traditional mother caressed her six-year-old son and he would sit on my knee quite happily in his own home as would all his younger siblings who also allowed and even encouraged me to hug them, and to greet and farewell them with a kiss. This would be normal behaviour toward my Australian friends' children, but among most Irish children, it was imposing on their sense of bodily integrity to do more than affectionately touch their heads at an appropriate moment, and even unthinkable to do this to some.

Needless to say, this constraint in physical expressions of attachment has correlates elsewhere. The child's early physical detachment
from the mother and bodily self-containment is the precursor of adult bodily behaviour which is spatially conservative, no flowing gestures with the arms or body being made in conversation as one sees on the continent, particularly in southern Europe: only the contrary. When passing an object from one person to another, or setting a meal in front of a person, the movements will be swift, sharp and well-defined, rigid and tense. No gentle, gradual introduction of the object followed by a lingering withdrawal which marks the grace of French deportment, for instance. Between lovers - people who are most intimately committed to a relationship - one is sometimes likely to see caricatures of such conventional behaviour, with the couple throwing a packet of cigarettes to one another rather than passing it gently from hand to hand. Scheper-Hughes also noticed such bodily behaviour: legs crossed, arms folded, head slightly bowed is the typical west of Ireland stance - a posture of caution and guardedness (1979:123).

The country man (and woman) is equally reserved and dignified in his walk, and when working in the field he anchors his feet, with his legs stiffly and firmly together. He makes no idle or random gestures with his hands while talking, and a subtle snap of the neck or a raised index finger is his greeting. In all, the body image of the Kerryman is a study in control, understatement, and tenseness.

(Schep-Hughes, 1979:124)

Now it may be thought that this area of communication is subject to such inaccurate impressions that it is of no value to the scholar, but I would point to Irish dancing as being an institutionalised form of such bodily comportment. As Messenger (1969:120) and Honour Tracy (1953:143) point out, in Irish dancing, the dancer's arms are kept rigid and close to the body, the face is set in a dull expressionless mask, the movements which are mainly below the hips, and particularly below the knee in the case of the step-dancer, are precise. Some of my Australian friends who have seen Irish dancing in Australia at ethnic festivals commented that of all the ethnic dancing from Europe, this Irish seemed most alien because of the rigid torso and absence of sensuality. However, the absence of sensuality in dancing is no more due to the Jansenist influence of Catholicism (Messenger) than the relative absence of the physical expressions of love on the part of mothers towards their children is due to the puritanical caste of Irish Catholicism with its denial of bodily indulgence (Scheper-Hughes).
Congruent with their dancing style is the obvious inhibited performance of the Irish at marches, first made evident to me at the St. Patrick's Day Parade in Dublin in 1980 at which most of the marchers looked as though they were putting themselves forward under a suffrance which was sometimes extreme. Another ethnic group, the Bretons (who are also a Celtic people) contrasted with the Irish, as did to a greater extent the Americans, one group of whom won the prize for the best team. I felt the win was too easy, for the only competition they faced was really from other Americans. The Orange Day Protestant marchers in Belfast (12th July) provided a contrast of an extreme kind with those in the St. Patrick's Day Parade: here the ferocious self-assertion of the band drummers was frightening in its intensity. The Irish recognise the fact that they put on a rather poor show as the Irish Times's editorial of the following day indicated by saying that this year's march with its 'sparkle' [sic] showed that the Irish were learning to throw off their (possibly) Jansenist past (18 March 1980).

It is necessary to point out that such physical comportment has congruences in para-linguistic communication. Commonly, though not invariably, the tempo of Irish speech is abrupt and staccato, each phrase a clearly-defined unit with a sharp beginning and end which allows no interruption by another: if there is hesitancy or pausing, it is of a kind which admits of no uncertainty of knowledge. Even where a speaker's tempo is relatively slow — something one does find in a minority of people — deliverance of the same sharp, jerky, self-contained phrases and sentences often obtains. My characteristic Australian tendency to speak slower and more hesitantly by comparison and to make a smoother transition from one word to the next was thought by some Irish people to be attractive (highly flattering, as this was the first time I had ever heard the nasal, flat, Australian accent complimented). But it was also thought to reflect a certain naivety and even stupidity, revealing as it did the development of thought and therefore, necessarily any weaknesses in my argument or defence. It became clear that such a manner of speaking set me apart and placed me in a somewhat vulnerable position: it made people feel that, unlike their compatriots, my thoughts were not inscrutable, for they could not be concealed by this manner of speaking. Thus, I seemed to be a person unable to hide her thoughts while talking, and I felt
it was one reason I was able to gain the confidence and trust of infor-
mants more quickly than I had expected.

Now we come upon the single most notable characteristic of Irish
para-linguistic behaviour - its guardedness, its keeping the speaker's
thoughts inaccessible to others; its confident assertion followed by
a retreat into self-protectiveness. Irish repartee embodies this
cogently in its parrying with words. Its central tenet is: make
sure you get your say in as quickly as possible, then retreat before
coming out for further fray. And Hiberno-English idioms confirm this
interpretation. The widespread use of prefixes such as "sure",
"well", "arra", "ach", "bogob", "bedad", and so on, uttered with impen-
etrable confidence followed by a brief pause before the deliverance of
the sentence; the use of the suffixes such as "sure it is" as confirm-
ation of the utterance; the indisputable firmness of the assertion
"it surely is" (or "isn't"); and the widespread inversion of state-
ments such as "and didn't he say to me" etc., all render further
investigation of the veracity and authoritativeness of the speaker's
statements impossible. Oaths, imprecations and asseverations have
long been used by the Irish, and William Carleton's peasant dialogue of
the early 19th century differs from the contemporary dialogue of their
descendants principally in the diminished quantity of such speech
mannerisms. In "An Essay on Irish Swearing" he says:

When relating a narrative, or some other circumstance of his
own invention, if contradicted, he will corroborate it, in
order to sustain his credit or produce the proper impression,
by an abrupt oath upon the first object he can seize.

(Carleton, 1979:284)

Nor would it seem that these qualities of speech, and speech
mannerisms have been recently developed in Ireland. The Gaelic
scholar Robin Flower tells us that the Roman Cato observed the Celts
were distinguished for their aptitude for fighting and subtle speech
and he believes there has been a continuing tradition in both
characteristics:

Indeed, I think if one were asked what characteristic was to
be found everywhere in Irish literature from the first records
down to the tales and popular sayings current among the
peasantry to-day, the answer must necessarily be: a sharp and
homely brevity of epigrammatic speech eminently calculated
for the rapid thrust and return of contentious talk.

(Flower, 1947:110)
Non-verbal communication demands the same searching scrutiny as any other behaviour, as the large body of research available on the subject would reveal. In general I would argue that non-verbal communication at the culturally peculiar level is not the result of specific cultural (including religious) instruction, and I turn to one of the most insightful scholars in this field for support, Gregory Bateson. Bateson argues that non-verbal or iconic communication has blossomed in the course of our evolutionary history side by side with verbal communication. Far from the former being replaced by this peculiarly human form of communication, our non-verbal forms have been enriched, which indicates they may serve a function totally different from that of language, functions which verbal language is perhaps unsuited to perform.

It seems that the discourse of non-verbal communication is precisely concerned with matters of relationship - love, hate, respect, fear, dependency etc. - between the self and vis-à-vis or between the self and environment and that the nature of human society is such that the falsification of this discourse rapidly becomes pathogenic. From an adaptive point of view, it is therefore important that this discourse be carried on by techniques which are relatively unconscious and only imperfectly subject to voluntary control.

(Bateson, 1973:388).

Without realising it, Scheper-Hughes hit upon the origins of characteristic Irish non-verbal behaviour when she saw that it symbolised those ubiquitous Irish qualities involved in interpersonal relations - "reserve" and "control", "caution and guardedness", qualities of which she was only too keenly aware. The Irish mother is unconsciously conveying to her children her own caution and guardedness in her relationship with them, one which also characterises her relationships with all other persons, her children in fact least of all. The origin of this guardedness will reveal itself by and by, but I am here concerned that its effect on the child - a contingency of this maternal condition rather than the result of any deliberate or partially conscious intention - is to convey a profound message of maternal unavailability. It is not that in other ways she may not be readily available, but by her physical "keeping herself to herself" the child is forced back into himself at an age when he is ill-equipped to satisfy what are indubitably primate needs for comfort that can be conveyed only in this physical form. Any attempt to transmute this message
onto another level such as the verbal, as Irish mothers do, cannot be a very satisfactory substitute for a child under the age of about three years, although as Bowlby points out, as it matures attachment can be maintained even in the physical-absence of the parties by such symbolic forms of communication as letters and telephone conversations provided the absence is not protracted (1971:316).

The result of this maternal physical withdrawal is to make the child anxiously attached, for as Bowlby says:

When a mother rebuffs her child for wishing to be near her or to sit on her knee it not infrequently has an effect of eliciting exactly the opposite of what is intended — he becomes more clinging than ever.  
(Bowlby, 1971:314-5)

In an ethological study of Kalahari hunter-gatherer mothers and their infants, Konner makes a persuasive case for his findings that the infant which enjoys intensive contact with its mother and extreme indulgence of dependent needs is more likely to exhibit confidence in later life. This is despite the fact that this proposed relationship between early indulgence and later reduced dependency runs so contrary to classical notions of reinforcement and even common sense that even with convincing evidence it is difficult to accept. "But a major recent review of the attachment literature (Maccoby and Masters 1970) found this relationship to be confirmed by almost all the studies of human children which raised this question (p. 140)." (1976:241).

There is a marked contrast between the way in which modern Europeans and North Americans on the one hand, and Kalahari hunter-gatherers on the other treat their infants, the most notable being in the physical separation of the infant from the mother so that its dependent needs for sucking and close physical proximity cannot be met as they would have been in man's environment of evolutionary adaptedness, among Europeans. Among the Irish the abrogation of this natural way of handling the infant is extreme and causes most trauma, I would suspect, once the infant becomes a toddler and achieves competence in locomotion. For after this time he no longer has an "excuse" for demanding physical handling. The Irish mother does not so much rebuff her toddler in a gross sense as by more subtle means: she might wait some time before answering his need, then take him roughly and briefly onto her knee, verbally console him, and set him down again with the distinct implicit as well as explicit, message to be more "adult".
Some evidence of anxious attachment

What evidence is there of anxious attachment in Irish infants? Bowlby admits the difficulty of finding criteria for describing patterns of attachment. One of the most obvious is whether or not the infant protests when his mother leaves him for a brief time and how strongly he does so. But Ainsworth has found this criterion alone to be insufficient, Bowlby says, and indeed, misleading. From her observations of Ganda infants she thought that some

'...who seemed most solidly attached to their mothers displayed little protest behaviour or separation anxiety, but rather showed the strength of their attachment to the mother through their readiness to use her as a secure base from which they could both explore the world and expand their horizons to include other attachments. The anxious, insecure child may appear to be more strongly attached to his mother than does the happy, secure child who seems to take her more for granted. But is the child who clings to his mother - who is afraid of the world and the people in it, and who will not move off to explore other things or other people - more strongly attached, or merely more insecure?'

(Bowlby, 1971:396)

I would not consider the infant's fear of strangers, which does generally characterise Irish infants and children, to be sufficient criterion for the claim that anxious attachment is prevalent among Irish children. Rather, I would look at other factors such as the development of guardedness, which is a form of detachment, apart from the more obvious anxious clinging and dependence in the child. I have shown anxious clinging is one manifestation of anxious attachment: where messages of maternal unavailability are repeated, the child can also withdraw and become somewhat detached, while yet seeking the proximity of the other. In this state he may also be resentful and disobedient. Infantile guardedness is the bodily manifestation of detachment, which is only partial for most Irish children. As speech develops we find silence and sulking with varying degrees of bitterness. Hostility is quickly punished and suppressed by mothers when it manifests itself, but this forces such behaviour into other directions, or forces the child to take up alternative ways of maintaining his integrity, which I believe hostility and temper demands the other to recognise.

Evidence for anxious attachment can be substantiated not only from the response of detachment in children, but also from the fact
that some Irish children manifest signs of an inability to cope with the small demands of growing up. It is perhaps because of this premature withdrawal of physical nurturance, compounded by other parental behaviour to be revealed shortly, that children can sometimes be seen to be more dependent on the mother, even in contradiction to her ambitions for the child. Evidence for this can be found in some children's eating habits.

Mothers allow and prefer their children to feed themselves as soon as they are reasonably competent at the task, so by the age of two and a half it would be unusual to see a child spoon-fed as one can see among Greek children for instance, even up to the age of seven years. One should view Scheper-Hughes' observation of a mother spoon-feeding a four year old as evidence not so much of maternal indulgence as of quick temper and impatience - common Irish maternal characteristics - and it should be noted that this mother said she was doing so because she could do it more quickly than the child herself (1979:149). Breast-feeding is rare in Ireland now, and when it occurs it is only for three to six months, but this is a recent phenomenon, infants traditionally having been breast-fed a generation ago for up to and beyond a year (see footnote seven). So I was not able to observe any weaning traumas in this particular area. Solids are introduced as early as four months and the infant finally taken off the bottle from two to three years of age. Adult, autonomous behaviour eating habits are generally desired, and in this the aims of Irish mothers are much the same as aims of Anglo-Saxon Australian mothers. As I shall be concerned to point out throughout the chapters concerned with child-rearing practices, Irish mothers do seek to make their children emotionally, but not physically dependent upon them. (Physical dependence, of course, is to be distinguished from material dependence.)

This ideal of autonomy in eating habits can be seen to be epitomised in the statement of an Irish grandmother who took the opportunity of the mother's confinement to force her three year old mentally retarded child, who would take nothing but the bottle into which had been crushed special nutritive biscuits, to eat off a spoon in an attempt to begin the process of making an adult of him. To do this she had to hold his hands behind his back and ignore his vehement protests. This woman felt that not even a three year old could "use" the "excuse" of being retarded to behave like an infant, like an utterly dependent
being, and one has sometimes "to be cruel to be kind" to teach a child to grow up, she informed me.

Despite such general attitudes, however, I saw a lot more regressive behaviour in regards to food and sucking among Irish children than I have seen in Australia. While some mothers would not introduce a soother to their infant because it was such an obvious symbol of dependence, those who did introduce it often had some difficulty in taking it away. As we know from Bowlby, nipple sucking or its substitute has two functions, one nutritive, the other non-nutritive, the latter being, in man's environment of evolutionary adaptedness, an integral part of attachment behaviour which has proximity to the mother as a predictable outcome (1971). While no Irish mother would want to see a child over the age of about two and a half years with a soother, it was not uncommon to see four year olds take it or a bottle of milk to bed, and one could still occasionally see five or six year olds with soothers: I saw a total of three of this age with them during the day, one using it while she was playing with friends. Mothers of such children are usually embarrassed by this and apologise for the child but find it is better to put up with the embarrassment than the trauma of taking the child off it when he or she is unwilling. No doubt some mothers do put up with the traumas rather than face the neighbours' and relatives' criticisms, but friends are invited, as indeed I was, to tease such children out of this infantile behaviour, and their peers who have been weaned of such behaviour need no such invitation. However it was of no avail in the case of the five year old who was constantly warned Santa would not come unless he got rid of the soother before Christmas, though clearly teasing, combined with the child's growing sense of self-strength, must work in the long run, for I never saw a child over the age of six displaying such habits. 12

The creation of anxious attachment with all its implications from the way in which the infant is handled is achieved quite unconsciously by the mother: it is a contingency of the mother's guardedness in relationships with others. But there are other ways in which this condition is generated that operate at levels closer to the consciousness. Their practitioners' intention is not to create anxious attachment as such, but emotional dependence, which is one of its manifestations. One of these methods is physical punishment.
Generation of dependence by partly conscious means

The Irish have generally been infamous users of physical punishment on children and young adults both in the home and school. Scheper-Hughes reports that in the more traditional west in 1974, beatings of children were common for all ages and both sexes, and she points out that the Irish violate a near-universal canon regarding the application of such punishment, viz. they consider it appropriate for the very young, even as young as six months. She reports one mother as saying you should beat them while they are too young to hold it against you (1979: 154). However, attitudes had changed by 1980 in the east, for here I found physical beatings to be uncommon, although this was a very recent phenomenon everyone said. However, this pattern has been changing for some time, I should think, for Humphreys reported that by 1931 it had substantially declined among Dubliners (1966:147). While one educated Dublin woman who was aware of social issues told me that in the larger families of working-class Dublin it was still prevalent, nevertheless this tradition did seem to be on the wane not only in the home, but also in the schools, its doom being spelled by discussions in the media while I was in the field. Its opponents argued that it is shameful that Irish and British public schools alone remained the last bastions of the swishing cane in the EEC whose education policies oppose its use. Coolahan says that by 1981 it was forbidden in Irish vocational, comprehensive and community schools, and is now rarely exercised in private secondary schools (1981:202). A few families, especially farm families where traditions often die harder, still kept up this practice, now modified in severity, although attempts were made to hide actual beatings from me. It was clear that in the town popular opinion almost forced parents to yield in this matter, for one mother harassed with six children under the age of eight years and an unemployed husband, had not begun to do this until the birth of her fourth child (neighbours told me), and I felt she was distinctly embarrassed by this knowledge which she could not hide from her neighbours, some of whom were quite critical. 13

Used more to express superordination of one person over another, physical beating may have the effect of inculcating self-control, but this depends upon how consistently it is used. Carleton, who was himself a hedge schoolmaster at one time, showed that despite liberal doses of beatings often delivered with malicious cruelty, the discipline
in these hedge schools was often non-existent once the master turned his back ("The Hedge School" 1979). And this is equally true in contemporary Irish homes where beatings are given simply when the mother is in a bad temper rather than for specific acts on the part of the child. Such punishment is often justified on the basis of inculcating self-control, though more often on that of keeping order and discipline. Statements such as one in ScheppeHughes' monograph from a priest scarcely belie the principal motives of advocates of physical punishment.

'Children must be made aware of the presence of some larger force in the world. Call it fear, if you like. But without this fear of punishment, a child will grow up with a sense of being an island and a law unto himself'.

(ScheppeHughes, 1979:155)

And one such as I heard from an old man made no bones about the matter. He was brought up under a parental belief that a good "hiding" every now and then taught the child who was boss and kept him in line - a recommendation which might work wonders with today's undisciplined young, he asserted. It is an intention of which children are aware, as Austin Clarke reveals in his autobiography: the receiver of such discipline himself he says the system of school punishment makes children "aware of their own helplessness against the brute force of their elders". (1962:149).

However, I should make it clear that not all physical punishment emanates from the desire of the parent to teach the child his or her proper place in the hierarchy of people, even when it is provoked by the child's disobedience. I shall argue in chapter five that a tendency to lash out in anger and violence by some Irish people is the result of feeling incapable of solving problems when they arise. Thus, many an Irish child has found himself on the receiving end of the parental stick not for any wrong he has done, but because he was the nearest handy scapegoat for parental frustration.

Yet children do have small ways of protecting themselves psychologically against this powerful encroachment on their integrity, even if they are helpless to protect their bodies. When a child is beaten, he may cry, but if he cries unabashedly, he will be warned he will be hit again unless he stops, a warning which usually brings the results of quietening the crying a little. For crying in this way expresses defiance: "you may beat me, but you'll be sorry for it". Few though there may have been, beatings were usually kept hidden from me, although
mothers would sometimes talk about them. Nevertheless I was allowed to
witness slappings of children up to three years of age, and I inadver-
tently saw and heard a beating delivered by a very harrassed mother of her
six year old with a wooden spoon. This was a child who refused to be
contrite, who screamed unashamedly partly so that others such as myself
might hear, and was duly beaten further for it. But as the mother
had admitted at other times, it was of no use beating him, for she had
to end up (obliquely) apologising. He would never come back to her
remorsefully, and it was this inner core of selfhood that the child
kept from her that made her dislike him, and punish or blame him when
he had done little or nothing wrong at other times. It is of some
interest that when talking about the canings of boys in a Catholic
school in Belfast in his novel The Feast of Lupercal, Brian Moore
reveals that a boy who played stoic during or after such canings invited
further punishment. Only the foolhardy did not show submission and
fear by grimacing, gripping his hands under his arms etc. (1958:13).
Both unabashed crying in the child and stoic contempt by the adoles-
cent are uncontrite responses which refuse to acknowledge that the
punishing adult can completely control their personhood.

But no matter how bravely he attempts to thwart the intentions
of his punisher as he gets older, a small child so treated behaves as
Bowlby describes for the anxiously attached child: far from repelling
him, such punishment makes the child more insecure and dependent
on the caregiver, displaying clinging behaviour combined sometimes with
anger (1971). Or he may become partially detached. The message that
comes over most cogently from such parental control is that the child's
independent actions, any new steps he takes which are outside those
strictly circumscribed by the person exercising control, are liable
to be punished. Such punishment acts to make the child frightened to
do anything unconventional, and this authoritarianism becomes accepted
as being the state of the child's existence, and perhaps even desirable.
However, this outcome is dependent upon the punishment being accompan-
ied by redirection, guidance and protection. To punish without offer-
ing these "consolations" is to invite resentment, and anti-authoritarian-
ism, both of which do occur widely among Irish children and adults and
will be the subject of discussion in the fifth and seventh chapters.
Furthermore, it is of no small significance that the mother often delivers only minor punishment herself and uses her husband to deliver the serious beatings. For she runs the risk of alienating her children by frequent and severe beatings. But the already-alienated father has little to lose by fulfilling his wife’s demands, and something to lose if he does not — her anger and rejection. Of course, some husbands will not touch their children when thus requested, but we can see how easy it becomes for the child to do more than merely hold the father in contempt in such circumstances: he may even grow to actively hate him.

However, it is important to point out that while the Irish have traditionally been noted for their widespread use of physical punishment, its use has by no means been universal. A substantial minority of adults (truthfully) never remembered having been so treated, but it is interesting that two of those same adults today do beat their own children. Thus, whatever force it is that generates the tendency in an adult to beat children, it can be created in that adult through his own child-rearing experiences other than physical punishment.

Arguably the most destructive force in Irish life, criticism and ridicule are used by the majority of Irish people, often to an extreme and malicious degree. One of the forms it takes is satire for which the Irish have a 1500 year history and fame (see chapter five). In the 18th century Samuel Johnson said: "The Irish are not in a conspiracy to cheat the world by false representation of the merits of their countrymen. No sir; the Irish are a fair people — they never speak well of one another!" (O’Connor, 1971:176). Yeats said of the Irish critical capacity: "They are like a pack of hounds dragging down a noble stag". "Malice may be the premier Irish vice", Sean Connery remarks (1968:88). "We're articulate cannibals!", the head of an industrial enterprise said to Connery (1968:88). "And an editor said: 'There is always somebody trying to stop someone else doing something in this country'" (Connery, 1968:89). "If there were only three Irishmen left in the world you’d find two of them in a corner talking about the other. We’re a backbiting race!". said the great Irish wit, Brendan Behan (McCann, 1968:96).

Irish people — more especially Irish intellectuals — always strike foreigners as extraordinarily malicious. There is certainly an element of sheerly destructive and dwarf-like mischievousness in the Irish mind.

(Ussher, 1950:106)
Of Dubliners' malice, which is often evident in the contributors to Rodgers B.B.C. programme on famous Irish writers in the 1950s and 60s, Cruise O'Brien says in the Introduction:

'The daily spite of this unmannerly town', (Yeats) - has often been exaggerated, especially by writers, but it is a constant presence, electric and reductive. It is a style, a way of going on, a habit which some would like to shake off but can't....Writers have suffered from it - Yeats and Joyce especially - for several reasons....it is Dublin's unwritten law that its citizens are not, with impunity, to be allowed to distinguish themselves.

(Rodgers, 1972:viii)

Almost every noted Irish author has written of that nation's talent for verbal sabotage. It is used to obstruct, belittle, intimidate and weaken the self-esteem of others in order that those others will present a lesser threat to the precarious sense of self of the critic. The precarious sense of self is the result of his having been unable to develop a secure sense of personal autonomy during his childhood. In the community, negative statements made often remain unqualified. But in the home, and among friends and relatives, if they are often delivered, then a qualifier is imperative if the critic is not to alienate his or her victim altogether. Perhaps one of the most characteristic of such contradictory messages passes from wives to husbands, for many wives seek to place both children, and to varying degrees husbands, in subordinate relationships with them, even if paradoxically, they do ideally seek for husbands to be their protectors. Messages of contempt from wives frequently concern their husbands' sexuality. In one rather gross case, a woman who no longer slept with her husband taunted him for his attempts to satiate his desires elsewhere, sometimes publicly, but on other occasions she would, again publicly, make confirmations of his sexuality (as manifestations of his capacity for protectiveness, I think). She could afford to make such confirmations, for by far the louder of her two messages was the former. But she managed to keep her husband through this very troubled marriage despite her failure to fulfill some of her tasks in the role of wife: in fact it was crucial that she qualify negative statements or else risk losing her husband altogether.

There are all kinds of variations on the way in which criticism can be qualified. Another example could be provided by a mother - who
differed from many other mothers only in degree — who would consistently offer herself as confidante to her children's problems when they would come in from play or school looking worried or upset, the offer being made in such an alluring way that it was very difficult for the troubled children to resist telling her about a small fray with a peer, or a humiliation by the teacher. Having been seduced into telling his or her weaknesses and secrets by irresistible affectionate cajolings, the mother would as often as not, betray those secrets by taking the side of the peer or teacher when the child had clearly intended to tell her only because she promised implicitly by her tones to be sympathetic. Or even worse, at some later time she would remind the child of how foolish, stupid or unattractive he or she was by bringing up this precious little secret she had wheedled out of the child. These were not events in which the child had behaved in such a way as to warrant reprimand, for in this event they would truly have kept their secret: nor was it reprimand that they received for these revelations.

It should not be surprising then, to find that already at the ages of five and seven years both children showed marked signs of secretiveness and withdrawal, but they were too young and dependent to be able to afford the luxury of withdrawal to any degree as one can often see in adults. And even if they had felt they could put up some resistance, it was easily broken down by their mother's charm and sweet, honeyed words. The boy however, was already showing some success in this withdrawal, for on occasions when he had come in from school looking sullen, he would hold out for several hours before giving over his little problem: his personality already showed marked signs of guardedness and resentfulness. One such six year old of another family who both enjoyed the genuine love and devotion of his mother, but also suffered psychological and physical punishment (the latter I had learned from a relative he began receiving at the very young age of twelve months or so) was so socially withdrawn that even after two years in kindergarten he could still neither read nor write, spoke very little and as his father said, carried on his life as though he were unaware that there people in it. As he was regressive in matters concerning both eating — in this case he ate voraciously up to about three years of age, after which he became more moderate, but fussy compared with older siblings — toilet-training, and unusually, the motor achievements of crawling and walking, as well as speaking, everyone in the family considered him to be a bit "slow". But correctly, no one thought
him to be mentally defective. The paradox that in this culture containing the most eloquent and loquacious speakers of language Schepfer-Hughes found elective mutism in children to be not uncommon (1979:157), now becomes explicable.

The two examples I have just provided seem to constitute totally negative consequences. Their principal aim was to keep the victim insecure and dependent, while at the same time the deliverer would qualify the severity of the negative statement by offering messages of approval or love. The centrifugal forces are counterbalanced by the gestures of love or admiration which have a centripetal effect. In the second case the child learns to mistrust the mother's treachery - her promise of comfort, then her breaking of this promise - but is beguiled each time by her charm, and after all, she does not always renegue. In the first example the contradiction is more straightforward - denial then praise of sexuality. But there is no question as to which position the wife is more committed. Her failure to allow her husband's enactment of his sexuality in their relationship proclaims her "official" stand. While the victims in each case might have kept their integrity if they had been allowed their natural response and sought affirmation of their worth from other persons, they are discouraged from doing so by contradictory affirmative messages. The behaviour of the wife and mother respectively has severe effects on the victims' performances in autonomous actions, for their own belief in themselves has been partly destroyed. Compounded with a legacy of anxious attachment in early childhood, the effect is to create from the growing child an adult lacking in confidence, dependent upon authority figures for his or her sense of self-worth rather than upon his or her own judgements which have never been allowed to mature.

Not all criticism has the destructive consequences of these examples, and some instances are more subtle, as the following. Take a typical example of a mother who does not want her child to play with a particular friend. She might not like to forbid the relationship for fear of causing resentment in her own child. So she will subtly introduce criticism of the friend or suggest that when there was a problem at school in which her own child was accused of some wrong, that her friend had informed on the child - she had good evidence for it. She might back up this manoeuvre with others such as saying the child may go and play with her friend, but she'll miss a trip into the neighbouring
town for shopping (which the mother has just decided she will do) if she goes to her friend's place. The latter is a conventional strategy of a kind which might be used by mothers in many other cultures. But the former strategies involve an over-riding of the child's own perceptions so that she may come to distrust them in favour of her mother's, as I saw with one seven year old girl for example, who after a month or so of this, began to agree with her mother, find fault with the friend and abandon the previously happy relationship. And when the child is seen to be coming around to the mother's way, she is rewarded with extra attention and love. Nor can the child accuse the mother of overt criticism of her friend or attempting to end the relationship, for the mother has delivered the criticism in such a way that in this event, she could, and would, deny it: in fact, she may well take the opportunity to praise the friend. A child subjected frequently to such manoeuvres might come to feel that the ideas he or she has are less his or her own than they are his guide's, his supporter's and confidant's, his very creator's.

We have seen from the foregoing how anxious attachment is maintained as the child grows to adulthood, and that it can also characterise adult relationships. The intention of the person in a subordinate role is not to create anxious attachment per se with all its implications for defense mechanisms, but to inhibit the development of autonomy in the other. Whether they be parents, teachers or non-relatives, persons behaving thus are themselves acting in response to their own condition of a poorly developed sense of autonomy. Now Laing argues that a person in this condition will oscillate between dependence and assertions of independence, but yet he is aware that there is another means in his repertory of skills for psychological survival: he may take on an authoritarian role in which the other is forced to suplicate himself whether he wants to or not. As he says:

...the man who is frightened of his own subjectivity being swamped, impinged upon, or congealed by the other is frequently to be found attempting to swamp, to impinge upon, or to kill the other person's subjectivity.

(Laing, 1965:52)

Thus, those in the roles of physical punisher and criticiser, are taking on a position of authoritarianism. Physical punishment, at least, is often justified in the name of obedience, a desirable state
of behaviour for all persons in Ireland who belong to authority structures, which is to say, all Irish persons. As Scheper-Hughes says:

Village parents have been conditioned to expect both immediate obedience and unconditional respect from their children. If either of these parental 'rights' is violated, canings or beatings with a strap may follow to enforce the 'natural order' of parental dominance. The cardinal sin of early childhood is 'boldness', and a bold child is, by definition, one who questions orders that come down to him, or who does not do as he or she is told, or who does not demonstrate proper shy or deferential comportment before the elders. (Scheper-Hughes, 1979:154)

However it is enacted, authoritarianism as just described is but a form of dependence, a dependence upon others for a sense of self worth where that other provides a converse image to oneself. Using the same structural model as I applied to the Irish mother's relationship with her children earlier in the chapter, the person who is being authoritarian is using the person he places in an inferior role as a contrast image to himself: the mother, father, teacher or priest understand themselves to be autonomous, superior beings by contrast image to those who are dependent upon them. The authoritarian person no less than his supplicant could be said then, to be in a dependent position. The principal difference lies in the fact that there are fewer persons in a position of authority, and this gives them a greater capacity for controlling the lives of others. Equally it must be acknowledged that the higher up the hierarchy of authority relations one goes the more people have a greater sense of confidence in themselves. This dependence on others either upwards or downwards in an authority structure - rather than a reliance upon oneself whose self-image is defined through one's material or ideational creations - will be found in the spheres of religious, political and economic life, and in the domains of education and scholarship in the following chapters.

The quotation by Scheper-Hughes mentioned above reveals that she is being a bit severe on Irish mothers, at least, who do sometimes allow children some self defence in the event of a conflict of wills, and this is certainly a growing trend. But it is not an exaggeration in the case of many traditional fathers, and it can be seen especially where their sons are concerned, as sons come under fathers' control at adolescence.
Fathers' role in creating dependence

Arensberg and Kimball were the first social scientists to note the extreme control rural fathers exercised over their children in Ireland, keeping them strictly subordinate in every way. They reveal a sharp contrast between the child's relationship with the mother and father. Only when a grave breach of discipline demands restraining power greater than the mother's does the father begin to play his role in relation to the child.

Especially in the years before puberty, the father enters the child's cognizance as a disciplinary force. The barriers of authority, respect, extra household interests, and the imperatives of duty rather than of encouragement make it difficult for any intimacy to develop. (Arensberg and Kimball, 1968:58)

A father would not hand over the reins of farm management completely while he lived, even though the son may have been fifty years of age with a family, and however small and easily run the farm may have been. Adult sons were obliged to listen to their fathers and that generation's opinions without offering any of their own on political or social matters; were unable to be involved in local politics; were spatially segregated as a mark of inferiority in the home and in public places; and had their subordinate, dependent status pointed up by such gestures as being denied an opportunity to try a good tobacco as fathers handed it around to guests in the home. The very word "boy" to refer to an unmarried man whose father was alive, even though the "boy" may be fifty years of age, was belittling and degrading (1968:chapter four). It is my belief that this may also have been the symbolic intention in having boys wear the "baneen" - a long woollen petticoat which was explicitly associated with women's clothing and the maternal dominion - traditionally worn until a boy was about seven years, but sometimes worn until adolescence (see Schepet-Hughes, 1979:170), (although this is more likely to have been the mother's doing than the father's).

Arensberg and Kimball explain the son's subordination as a functional requirement of farm management, but systems of inheritance similar to those in Ireland are found all over Europe without this degree of filial subordination. Perhaps the real reason can be glimpsed from a passage in the work of a scholar cited by Streib concerning the difficulty of introducing new methods of farming techniques to Irish farmers.
'It is important to understand that the farmer's attitude is not just one of indifference. He is positively opposed to agricultural education. What is involved is not education as such, but the farmer's own status. He is the teacher and transmitter of the craft...To admit new methods which he himself does not understand and which are introduced by his sons is to resign his position of authority.'

(Streib, 1973:344)

The extreme degree of filial subordination in traditional Ireland can be best appreciated by a comparison with a comparable culture. For example, by thirty years of age a Sarakatsani (Greek) shepherd can be expected to wait for a bride no longer. At this time the initial steps of handing over the flock's management are taken. Although the father may still feel young enough at sixty years of age to continue as head of the family he knows that he will lose less personal prestige by moving into retirement than by attempting to hold onto power. He is also aware that any temporising over this problem will lead to the kind of friction with his son that is unlikely to remain private and may result in a further loss of prestige for the whole family (Campbell, 1964:162).

Despite the compelling demands on the children by these Sarakatsani families to behave circumspectly so that the family honour may be maintained, even under the pain of death for females, compared with descriptions of traditional rural Irish family life given by the anthropologists, Sarakatsani children have far more rights in relation to their parents than do Irish children. There is no playing off children against each other for the patrimony which divides them and prevents sibling solidarity against the parents. Greek children are married strictly in birth order and dowered in the case of girls, or inherit an equal share of the flock in the case of boys. The system of land tenure in Ireland since the Great Famine has precluded partible inheritance, but even so, the Irish parents could choose among their sons as they matured rather than playing them off against each other, which Messenger says can lead them all to emigrate in disgust (1969). Nor do Sarakatsani mothers bitterly oppose having daughters-in-law under their roofs to the extent that one sees in Ireland. Here inheriting sons quite often feel that it is impossible to bring in a wife while the mother is alive, and by the time she is dead, the sons at forty five or fifty years of age are too old to marry. Of course, with as many as three or four daughters-in-law under the same roof in the
extended Sarakatsani household, there can be problems, and the newly arrived daughter-in-law is everyone's "servant". But the fact remains that Greek sons would appear to put up opposition to any mother commandeering the kitchen, so that even if she is possessive in her domain, they will still marry and bring in their wives.

The rural Irish father's authoritarianism and critical manner finds its way into the city also. Humphreys reported that while there was greater camaraderie and affection between fathers and children among his NewDubliners, in some respects fathers remained relatively unchanged.

Pre-eminent among these [i.e. "the remnants of the former father-son relationship"] is the attitude of the father that his sons, even in late adolescence, are boys who cannot do any job right and to whom, in the world of practical affairs, it is folly to give any initiative.

(Humphreys, 1966:160)

So the boys would not help around the house when their father was present, though they might when he was not. Sons did not want to go into their father's trade to learn from him for the same reason. One woman said she felt fathers paid little attention and gave little affection to their children, and were severe on preventing them self-expression or initiative. As a girl she resented this very much.

'In our family, if you started to express any ideas of your own, or to take on any projects, my father would put a stop to it. He would tell you not to be ridiculous, and he would put you in your place.'

(Humphreys, 1966:146)

Of the attitude of fathers towards their children expressing initiative one woman said they still had "'the same attitude they had a hundred years ago and as the farmers still have towards the boys in the country'" (Ibid:160)

The resentment, dislike, contempt or fear of many Irish children towards their fathers revealed at the beginning of the chapter can be understood when we realise that the father has had minimal interaction with the young child, who may even be encouraged to hold him at a distance or in contempt by the mother; that he is sometimes the deliverer of severe punishment; and most importantly of all, that as a rule he does not qualify his negative statements with the kind of love a mother offers. I would suggest that fathers are behaving in this way so that their position of authority and superiority remains
unchallenged: they need it to remain unchallenged because their sense of adulthood or autonomy is so precarious they feel they cannot afford to have their children equalling or surpassing them.

And it is for this reason that authoritarianism is espoused in varying degrees by the vast majority of people in Irish society. There is an ubiquitous tendency found very early among children to subordinate others. This even tends to characterise peer groups which ideally should be groups of cooperating equals who compete with one another for certain goals. "Taking the mickey" out of others is shown by Scheper-Hughes to be an abiding feature of the behaviour of drinking mates in the west of Ireland, often reaching malicious levels. But in a peer group at least, one has the right to retaliate, so the balance of power is ultimately held by the best wit (see chapter five). However, the person who wants subordinates also needs superordinate figures to give him a sense of self-worth, to protect him, and sometimes to help him to cope both psychologically and materially.

I have shown so far how the mother's bodily guardedness unconsciously creates anxious attachment in her infant, a condition equally reinforced and maintained by physical punishment and criticism. Even after the child's need for physical proximity decreases after the age of three or so, anxious attachment is maintained by either of the two latter forces. Where these two forces are strong we might expect the person to feel a strong ambivalence towards the mother, as revealed in Kavanagh's poem. But yet the mother figure has a very positive image in Ireland generally, with negative feelings projected elsewhere as we see in the poem An Irish Mother's Knee. Such an image could not develop without love being a very strong component in Irish family life.

Creation of dependence by over-mothering

Excessive maternal attention is characteristic of the vast majority of Irish mothers, whether they are punishing figures or not. They engage in a constant stream of endearments or good-natured scoldings; enquiries into the well-being of the child in the order of, is he too cold, wet, hungry etc?, or chidings for his failure to take care of himself; queries about his goings-on at school and with friends, or good-humoured criticisms of his behaviour in these activities; commands to do small jobs for her,
encouragement, comments and advice on the work in progress, and so on. This behaviour acts to create dependence, despite my earlier assertion that the indulged infant becomes an independent child. However, this is not exactly indulgence of the child's needs; it is anticipating them: it prevents the child developing his own notions about what his needs might be. Bowlby distinguishes responsive mothering from excessively protective mothering where the child is discouraged from learning to do things for himself. In chapter sixteen of Volume II and in Volume III Bowlby refers to such a mother as a compulsive caregiver. In the clearest case I saw of this, the mother was not in the least punishing, and even indulged her two small sons' dependent needs for close proximity to a much greater degree than other mothers, breast-feeding them until they were twelve months old. Yet these two children aged two and half and four years were even more dependent than many other children of their ages and the mother was criticised for making them so babyish. She had achieved this by the constant interference in their smallest attempts to explore the world by themselves. These were quiet and withdrawn children who felt uncomfortable and unhappy in the absence of their mother for any time.

While such excessive maternal devotion is unconsciously meant to create dependence, not all has this aim. The over-dependence of the two boys in the last example was to some extent a contingency of the mother trying to live a little of her life through the things her children initiated. Living one's life through the actions of others (usually upwards in the social hierarchy) will be shown to be an abiding characteristic of Irish scholarship in chapter four.

Instead of the Irish child's needs being met by the mother, at the one time she does not answer them adequately (i.e. denies the need for physical proximity) and may even be punishing, and on the other, she over-indulges him or her. When the child has detached himself temporarily because of inadequate mothering, or to protect himself from her encroachments on his integrity, the mother can frequently be seen to use coaxing endearments to bring the child out of his depression. Scholars of all theoretical persuasions stress the importance of the development of the mother/child relationship through mutual interaction in which each of the two partners acts to influence the other. If for any reason a child does not develop a sense that he can influence his mother, in
this one-sided relationship, he cannot develop a strong sense that his existence is of any importance to his mother — though in Ireland it is in fact of supreme importance. Yet again we see an example of how the Irish child grows to feel he has little power in relation to his mother: rather she has complete power over him. Being unable to develop a firm sense of self in relation to his mother while simultaneously feeling she is all-powerful in relation to him can result in the person fearing engulfment in all his subsequent relationships. Laing uses the term "engulfment" to refer to the fear of the absorption of the self into another person (1965:43-5), an abiding fear of Irish people, guardedness and detachment being defence mechanisms against this possibility.

An excellent example of the child's response to this kind of excessive maternal devotion can be found in O'Sullivan's autobiography Twenty Years A-Growing (1935). He complains that when as a boy he was departing from the Blasket Islands where he lived, his two aunts

...tore me asunder with kisses, for women are the very devil for plamas, so that I did not like to meet them at all. Why wouldn't they take it fine and soft like a man? Not at all, they must be fawning on you every time they come across you.  
(O'Sullivan, 1933:20)

Plamas is revealed to be an Irish word for this prevalent Irish womanly tendency to use soft coaxing endearments (see 1933:2). In light of this, his complaints about their physical love may tell us less about its excesses as such, as about his attitude towards their love per se. When one put her arms around him, he asserted:

I would rather the frost than that be done to me. When I got myself free of her I slunk away to the door,...thinking still of the silly ways of women that you can't speak to them without their leaping at you.  
(Ibid:21)

And she snatched another kiss from me. I thought of telling her that it was a nasty habit of women, but I held my tongue.  
(Ibid:24)

While I would not discount the fact that the aunts may have tried to kiss and hug him, for as I said earlier, there is some variation in the degree to which these expressions of fondness are enacted, nevertheless his reaction of revulsion to just one of these kisses and hugs would be characteristic of many a contemporary Irish child I knew.

Furthermore, both excessive love and generosity act to place the receiver in a position in which he is obliged to fulfil the giver's
wishes at the risk of offence, and a sense of guilt. Much Irish generosity for which they are justly famous, is the result of genuine sympathy for the person who is less well-off than themselves, people with whom they may never have any personal interaction as in the case of private donations to overseas Catholic Missions for instance. But at the same time the compulsive generosity surrounding Irish social interactions (e.g. in shouting drinks at the pub) undoubtedly represents almost frenzied attempts by peers to prevent others from putting them in a subordinate role by means of excessive generosity.

The child's defenses against controlling parents

I have said that partial emotional detachment is commonly used as a means of self-protection for the child in relation to his mother in Ireland, but that the disobedience which Bowlby shows characterises the response of anxiously attached children is usually suppressed in childhood and in the home, at least. Outside the home it finds expression where it can, and adult anti-authoritarianism is rife in Ireland (see chapter five and seven). But even so, there is another form of disobedience that the Irish infant uses which is punishable, but such punishment usually only acts to make the behaviour worse. The means is that of the refusal of the child to be toilet-trained, an oblique form of disobedience whose function, like that of anger in the anxiously attached child, forces the mother to become aware the the subject she is dealing with has an integrity which she may not wholly infringe.

Both Scheper-Hughes (1979:150) and the Irish anthropologist Eileen Kane (1979:155) report for various areas of the west of Ireland that toilet-training begins at about the age of two to three years and usually lasts until the child starts school. But it is not clear to me what these two scholars mean when they say that it takes several years to complete: do they mean the child still requires help and reminders during the day that he should relieve himself on the toilet, without which reminders there will be "accidents"?; does it mean he will wet or soil himself unless his mother physically places him on the toilet?; or does it mean he only wets the bed during the night? I personally saw no child over the age of three in nappies during the day, but the mother of one little lad of three apologised for him as she placed him in nappies at night. And she still had difficulty preventing him wetting and soiling himself during the day despite her admonishments and
and appeals to his sense of shame. But she admitted impatiently, that it seemed he still wanted to be "the baby of the family" though there were two "real" babies younger than him, meaning that he was doing this to get the kind of special attention that the babies got. But many mothers had early success with toilet-training, i.e., by the age of two or so the child was fully trained, though it may have continued bed-wetting sporadically until five or six and sometimes longer. And girls were commonly thought to be easier to train than boys.

The first attempt to toilet-train a child does not begin until April with the advent of spring, for it is thought to be dangerous to his health to begin training a toddler during the winter months when he would be exposed to cold draughts as he spent the relatively long periods of time on the potty. Ideally beginning from twenty to thirty months, a child should be successfully trained by the end of that summer. I noticed that the mothers of children who successfully managed this were usually patient, attentive, and not quick to punish "accidents". It is possible that the failure to be toilet-trained is due to the mother's failure to fulfill the child's basic needs for physical comfort, resulting not in his becoming self-controlled and independent, but rather more dependent as Bowlby says of the anxiously attached child. But it should also be noted that a few babies are toilet-trained late owing to mothers not beginning to train them late, treating them as "babies" longer than is generally thought desirable, and otherwise making few demands on them.

But I would suggest that the majority of cases of late toilet-trained children may comprise those who have refused to obey their mothers' wishes for them in this matter in order that they might indirectly assert themselves against the controlling, superordinate caretaker: by this means they mitigate the possibility of engulfment by the mother. This interpretation receives some support from behaviour similar to the child's presently found in Northern Irish prisons among adults, where from 1976 to 1981 prisoners, who are almost as much controlled by prison authorities as the child is by the mother, have engaged in "dirty protests" - the refusal to use toilets or to wash themselves (see chapter five).

There is yet another form of prevalent and obvious protest among Irish children that also has adult manifestations: it is the most powerful tool a child has for forcing his mother not only to compromise her power over him, but to indulge his desires. I am speaking of the
tendency of Irish children to develop very early in their lives an antipathy to certain foods, behaviour which is a nascent form of adult hunger striking (see chapter seven). Observed also by Schepner-Hughes (1979:149), foods which the child will not eat are often staples in a traditionally very restricted diet, and this behaviour can cause a lot of inconvenience in a large family with unsophisticated facilities and storage capacity, restricted finances and often an unvaried diet (see Harris, 1972 for just how restricted is the traditional Irish rural diet). Mothers however, often grudgingly give in to these childhood protests perhaps because they fear the child may be determined to starve himself into illness. Certainly some mothers, particularly in the past, did not indulge these whims, the child going hungry if he or she did not eat what was cooked. Some people remembered being forced to eat whether they wanted to or not. In these circumstances a recalcitrant child might have no alternative but to obey, but this does not mean the tendency to assert him is thereby controlled. Such discipline may only mask or suppress such behaviour which will manifest itself in other forms at other times, such as we shall see in chapter five on anti-authoritarianism, and it may leave him with a smouldering resentment that his small claims of individuality are being suppressed.

Conclusion

It is the creation of anxious attachment by unconscious, partly conscious or deliberate means that inhibits the development of autonomy and engenders dependence in the individual which is the starting point at which I have begun to explain how so much that is characteristically Irish is generated. Anxious attachment developed in Irish children and maintained in intimate attachments in adult life as well as by the society in general and its institutions, generates authoritarianism in people, as well as the tendency to supplicate themselves to authority figures whose protection or succour they seek. It also generates a tendency to suppress the autonomy of others by such means as criticism, ridicule or satire, and a wide repertory of skills to protect the self against the encroachment of others upon one's own integrity. And not least of all, it generates an inhibited sexuality. Apathy and despair are also the consequences which follow from anxious attachment as Bowlby shows, and we find these qualities widely expressed in areas of adult life. In the following chapter we see them in the domains of political and economic life; in chapter five in some specific forms of withdrawal; and in chapter seven in nationalist politics where apathy
has been a very significant factor in Irish history.

Whether a mother uses all, or only some of the described child-rearing patterns, she will nevertheless produce a child who is characteristically Irish, that is to say, a child, and an adult who has a failure to sustain a sense of himself as a person with the other, and a failure to sustain it alone. As Laing says: "It is a failure to be by oneself, a failure to exist alone" (1965:52). Yet contradictory though it may be, there is also a fear that other people will deprive him of his existence, and the two attitudes exist side by side within the one person (Laing, 1965:52). The negative feelings may be projected out onto figures other than that of the mother, such as to be found in the poem which opens the chapter, or the ambivalence can be contained within the one figure, as seen in Kavanagh's poem The Great Hunger. In the former case, the whole world other than offered by the mother is seen to be alien, unattractive and even hostile. Refuge is by "the mother's knee", in humble submission to her as conjured up in an image often seen in religious pictures of the child Jesus praying by Mary's knee: it is a commemoration of her importance to the well-being of her children that is expressed in An Irish Mother's Knee.

Perhaps most characteristic of Irish child-rearing practices is the alienated or ineffectual father about whom some questions may be raised as to whether his children are attached to him at all in the sense meant by Bowlby, for some of the more traditional families. Where he is a punishing figure, his punishments act to drive the insecure child back towards the mother for protection.

I have not at any time meant to convey the idea that such child-rearing practices as described are engaged in with equal enthusiasm by each mother, are identical for each member of a particular family, or that all children suffer equally under similar treatment. Some seem to be so little affected that when they emigrate to a society which does not act to suppress the autonomy of individual adults, they can achieve a reasonable degree of self confidence and perform quite successfully in competitive enterprises. Traditionally this was not easy for an individual in Ireland to do for there were many forces and institutions which inhibited the growth of autonomy, as we shall see in the following chapters. Where people did achieve confidence in Ireland, it was usually not by engaging in competition with equals for a particular
goal so much as by climbing their way up the authority ladder where their sense of self-worth was dependent on those below seeking protection. Like the mother, they gained a sense of their own superiority by contrast conception to those needing their assistance.

While in this chapter I have, for practical purposes, assumed both girls and boys are subjected to similar child-rearing practices, their treatment does differ in degree, and their responses are different to the same treatment. Boys are generally subjected to more intense love, but also, quite often, more severe punishment. It will be revealed why mothers subject boys to more intense love at the end of chapter six, but their more severe punishment is due to the fact that they tend to respond to anxious attachment with a more serious degree of detachment and resentment, disobedience and rebellion. This, and the fact that girls tend to respond more by anxious clinging, confirms Bowlby's findings on the matter (see chapter one). Detachment and disobedience can only occur with a degree of self-confidence, I believe: that girls tend to lack this more than boys will be supported by evidence from cross-cultural studies of child behaviour and sociobiology in chapter six. In their state of anxious attachment Irish girls try very hard to please the other, be it the mother, teacher or priest, and so tend to be very obedient, and very conservative adults. This becomes particularly evident in their behaviour where the Church and priests are concerned. While they have developed quite sophisticated defense mechanisms, detachment as a semi-permanent state from which there are rare and brief emergences for engagement of the self in social interactions as one sees among a sizeable minority of adult Irish males, was seen by myself only in the case of a woman who suffered severe depression. That men would seem to be made more vulnerable by Irish child-rearing techniques is evident in their higher rates of psychiatric illness and alcoholism (see Scheper-Hughes, 1979:67-9).

Despite my emphasis on child-rearing practices as being formative of the personality and culture, I do not want to engage in child-rearing reductionism. A person affected by the practices described can, in another culture, consciously act to restore a measure of self-confidence and autonomy. For example, there was one Irishman I knew in Australia who emigrated to escape a mother a little like the one described in The Leavetaking, who engaged constantly in efforts to build up his self-confidence by relying not upon others, nor by forcing
others to rely on him, but by putting all his efforts into objective competitive creations, i.e., into learning a trade, trying very hard to do it well, and ultimately achieving a good, responsible job. Furthermore he engaged his (sympathetic) English-born wife in a conscious effort to release himself from sexual inhibitions by such means as their reading mild pornography together, and going naked about the house. But perhaps he achieved this less by the conscious means, than by one which I suspect was less conscious - that of marrying a non-Irish woman who did not suffer the same psychological problems as himself. The sixth chapter will show how significant are the persons with whom the Irish man or woman creates a new attachment in adult life - a wife or husband - in maintaining the conditions that were generated in childhood. This emigré did not alter his personality by this means, for as far as I could see the tendencies to dominate, and destroy the autonomy of others, to seek protection yet to detach and guard himself from the control of others, and to lack confidence in his sexuality still remained, but in a muted form.

Some Irish persons seem to have managed to transcend their culture while remaining in Ireland, although it is not at all clear that they have managed to make any change in their personality. Sean O'Faolain is one such person whose observations on Ireland and things Irish are often referred to in the thesis. However, he received part of his adult education abroad. From the glimpses I can receive, Conor Cruise O'Brien would seem to be "Irish" in personality, but he too seems to have transcended his culture: but though a Catholic, he received a Protestant education. James Joyce perhaps constitutes one of the best known examples of an Irishman who tried to transcend his culture, and the effects that his socialization had on his personality. His motto "I will not serve" referred to everything that had shaped him towards the personal need to obey, and he spent his entire adult life in rebellion against Ireland. But however successfully he transcended his culture and its demands, Joyce's personality remained in many respects, quintessentially Irish.  

While some of the child-rearing practices which I have described as characterising the Irish are engaged in by people of other cultures, particularly related ones in north-western Europe, few are engaged in with the same intensity, and rarely would the whole constellation of factors - lack of indulgence of the child's needs for physical proximity,
physical punishment, criticism, excessive maternal interference in the child's autonomous actions, and an emotionally absent or alienated father - be met in any particular family. However, the validity of this statement will be tested by the following chapters dealing with adult Irish behaviour and culture which will be shown to have its origins not in the economics or the political experiences of Ireland, but in the personality. Irish culture and personality will be shown to be congruent, to be unique in Europe, and to display an historical uniqueness that has transcended invasions, colonisations, wars, recent self-government, and even the multi-nationals and membership of the European Economic Community.
NOTES – CHAPTER TWO

1. It is noteworthy that Synge, Shaw and O'Casey (and also Yeats) were Protestants in predominantly Catholic Ireland. The tendency of Southern Irish Protestants to have "Irish Catholic" personalities will be discussed in the following chapter.

2. Queen Maeve was an early Gaelic mythical figure who involved several Irish provinces in bloody war in her attempt to gain possession of the most superior bull in Ireland.

3. I qualify the use of the word healthy here for McKenna is concerned to make some kind of social evaluation of child-rearing practices.

4. It is necessary to point out that this is definitely not a "typical" Irish statement. Nor would this mother have made such a comment to any Irish person. But in this and other families I was often privy to information which was not given to others once trust developed, because I was an outsider who had shown herself to be "harmless". This is an instance of lapsed guardedness which will be explained in chapter five as a strong need to "confess" or reveal the self, despite guardedness.

5. The role of the husband as protector and its relation to romantic love anticipates a full discussion of the matter in chapter six.

6. This kind of structural relationship which will be used to understand other kinds of relationships operates in the same way as Foucault argues that Europeans in earlier eras maintained their sense of sanity and normality by separating and maintaining certain kinds of people such as lepers, criminals or madmen, whose existence emphasised by contrast conception, the "normalcy" of the wider society (1967).

7. Schepers-Hughes does note, however, that lack of maternal care was not characteristic of the past when mothers were not the sole caretakers, the paternal grandmother usually being available to give her more time for the needs of her children. But this is not necessarily so. As sons in rural areas have married from their thirties to late forties during the past 100 years, then paternal grandmothers would sometimes have been too old to give the daughter-in-laws much help when they most needed it, i.e. after the birth of the third child or so. And I feel that some of Schepers-Hughes' sources of information on past child-rearing practices are not altogether reliable. For one thing, she was told by the district nurse that the cessation of breast-feeding occurred around the turn of the century. But this seems to be most unlikely. For even in the more affluent and less traditional areas of Ireland,
the introduction of bottle-feeding is only a phenomenon of the past generation or so. Even in Dublin, which, as Humphreys says, contains people who are most receptive to modern ideas coming in from the western world (where in the 1950s and 1960s there was a trend away from breast-feeding), the mothers he interviewed in 1951 said that obstetricians at the time generally insisted that mothers breast-feed their babies, and that mothers themselves preferred to do so (1966:145). In my district breast-feeding was no longer practised and when I broached the topic most mothers either said they felt it was vulgar, or they had not the time for it (see analysis of this in chapter six). But it was prevalent up to twenty years ago or so, some mothers doing so until the infant was quite advanced, for one mother told me how the little one "once he got a bit hardy" would go and fetch the stool on which mothers sat for this purpose as a cue to her about the infant's desire for the breast. It is worth pointing out however, that "the practice of breast-feeding offers no guarantee of maternal sensitivity to a baby's signals" (Bowby, 1969:410). And some of Scheper-Hughes' literary sources are dubious providers of accurate information on child-rearing. She alludes to several autobiographically-based novels written by Blasket Islanders, and it would seem that she may be taking some of their memories about their childhood too literally. Later in this chapter I shall show that some of O'Sullivan's memories (1939) might be better interpreted symbolically than literally (p. 77).

8. This does not imply that I am disputing Scheper-Hughes' argument about the differences in treatment between the first and last born children of west of Ireland families. Both are the victims of anxious attachment, I would suggest, but the several independent forces which I will show generate this condition are differentially applied with differential emphasis to individual children within any one family.

9. However, this is inconsistent if Scheper-Hughes believes Irish mothers earlier in the century were more adequate than contemporary ones, for at that time, the clergy had even more grip on the people than it had in the 1970s.

10. Northern Irish Catholic marchers in political rallies, particularly those in para-military attire, often appear from television to be less inhibited than their southern counterparts, perhaps because they are not so much putting themselves forward, as opposing themselves to a group who have set up a challenge.

11. I have discussed this tendency towards hostility which coexists with anxious clinging in the anxiously attached child in chapter one. Bowlby believes that to some extent it may assist in overcoming such obstacles as there may be to reunion and also that it may discourage the loved person from going away again (1975:286). But it is not clear to me how the second case is operating on the phenomenological level. I would suggest that anger functions to make the parent more acutely aware that there is a subject in their care who is insisting upon attention. Anger is an assertion of the child's integrity.
12. I have used the word "regressive" to describe this behaviour, when strictly speaking I should not have, given my adoption of ethologically-based theories of child development. For in their environment of evolutionary adaptedness, children would seem to have been born about every three to four years, so weaning would not have taken place until the age of about three in many cases. Among the contemporary !Kung, children may be seen to take the breast until the age of six years if there has been no intervening birth (Howell, 1976:145). To call the Irish child's behaviour regressive then, is to view it in light of the mother's ambitions for her child, rather than in any absolute sense. While denying the child nipple substitutes at the early age of two years might reasonably be argued to invite increased dependency upon the mother in light of my foregoing arguments nevertheless other cultures do wean their children of nipple substitutes successfully (i.e. Australians) without such traumas, and it is this success which I compare with the Irish mothers' failure on this score.

13. The origins of this new view on the matter derive, I suspect, from the general trend towards democratisation of the family in Ireland, one whose origins I speculated upon at the end of chapter one.

14. This was not a traditional village family.

15. Although I have referred to a study by Konner of the Kalahari hunter/gatherers (1976) earlier in the chapter where he shows a positive correlation between early indulgence of infantile needs and later self-confidence in the child, at this point I would like to qualify some of my enthusiasm. In this volume there is an article by Shostak, "A !Kung Woman's Memories" (1976) whose contents raise serious questions about indulgence of !Kung children beyond the infant stage. This article provides us with a superb vision of a !Kung's view of childhood, and it is one of an unfailing sense that dependent needs have not been sufficiently met, despite the parental indulgence all the anthropologists observed. This woman's memories constitute a litany of complaints against her "negligent" parents; she felt she was weaned too soon, given too little love and food at all ages; felt the responsibilities of life were placed on her prematurely and that she was not allowed to be a child for long enough. She even recalls being physically punished and ill-treated by her parents. And Shostak says her memories are not atypical of !Kung people. As all these memories are in marked contrast to the anthropologists' observations of how the !Kung treat their children, we must suppose these views arise out of a subjective discrepancy between what is expected and what is objectively given, a discrepancy which must be the result of the !Kung child not feeling confident in an independent role. This volume (1976) does not provide us with enough evidence to answer the questions raised by this woman's memories, but it would appear that indulgence of the child after the stage of infancy may create dependency, not independence. The question of course, that remains is: how do we know what constitutes indulgence?
16. There is a massive amount of biographical material available on Joyce that would enable the scholar to make an analysis of his personality, without having known him personally. There is, unfortunately, no room for the analysis in this thesis, but elsewhere I intend to analyse the personalities of both Patrick Pearse, the nationalist "martyred" hero who appears at various points in the thesis, particularly in chapter seven, and James Joyce, considering them as mutual inversions of Irishness: as two different ways of responding to the condition of being Irish.
CHAPTER THREE

AUTHORITARIANISM: RELIGION, POLITICS, ECONOMICS
and MATERIAL CULTURE

Let us pray for our Holy Father, Pope John-Paul, that God who chose him to be bishop may give him health and strength to guide and govern God's holy people. Almighty and eternal God, You guide all things by your work, you govern all Christian people. In your love protect the Pope you have chosen for us. Under his leadership deepen our faith and make us better Christians. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Let us pray for ... our bishop, for all bishops, priests, and deacons, for all who have a special ministry in the Church and for all God's people. Almighty and eternal God, your spirit guides the Church and makes it holy. Listen to our prayers and help each of us in his own vocation to do your work more faithfully. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

(A set of untraditional Catholic prayers from an Irish church service, Easter 1980)

Oh God, our heavenly Father, bless and help us while we are at school. Help us to use our minds, to think and work and learn. We thank thee for all the happiness that comes to us through our school. May we try to live more like Jesus Christ, our friend and brother. Amen.

(A prayer created by the teacher and recited by pupils in a Protestant primary school in Ireland, 1980)

In these two comparable sets of prayers which seek God's blessing in the mundane world - the first, untraditional Irish Catholic prayers, the second created by an Irish Protestant primary school teacher for her pupils to recite daily - are crystallised the fundamental differences
between the two religions. In the first of the two Catholic prayers, relationships are more hierarchical. Here, God rather than the people, is seen to have chosen the Pope through whom he governs the world: his good leadership will make good Catholics. In the second Catholic prayer, God similarly governs benevolently. His help is sought not for his worshippers to fulfil their own worldly tasks, but to fulfil the tasks that God sees fit. However, in the Protestant prayer, Jesus Christ is addressed as "friend and brother" and exhorted to help the prayer to use his skills to fulfil his own chosen worldly duty or task. Relationships are more horizontal here as the prayer seeks inspiration and guidance for his own form of self-realisation, unmediated by higher succourant authorities. In these two different ways of realising the self, the Catholic through others and the Protestant through his worldly tasks, lies the basis for the long and bitter separation of Catholics and Protestants in Ireland.

In this chapter I want to show how the tendency to realise one's existence through others - both upwards and downwards in a hierarchy of persons - created through child-rearing experiences, expresses itself in religious, political and economic behaviour, and in institutions relating to these domains. In both this and subsequent chapters, the Protestant tradition is contrasted with the Catholic, and in particular, the Irish Catholic tradition, either explicitly or implicitly in that the former enjoins self-realisation by means of competition among equals for the production of material goods, services and ideas, whereas the latter, with its demands of obedience and acceptance of one's position in a hierarchy of persons, encourages self-realisation through persons. It is suggested that in Ireland, Catholicism has not so much needed to demand such behaviour as people have sought to behave in "Catholic" ways, owing to the needs arising from their personalities. The basic incompatibility between the Catholics and Protestants in Ireland is commonly attributed to politically/religious differences of the past. Boyce's statement is characteristic:

The religious divisions of Ireland were not primarily rooted in clashes of private religious belief (though anti-Catholicism and anti-Protestantism for their own sake were certainly to be found), but in the results of the politically/religious divisions of Ireland's past which had left Protestants, a minority in Ireland, with a firm and apparently unyielding grip on the management of the country, and with a decided sense of superiority.

(Boyce, 1982:164)
My position is the diametrical opposite. The fundamental and irreconcilable cleavage that obtains between the two groups, especially in Northern Ireland, is due not only to their radically different religious ideologies, but to their different personalities which, in the case of Irish Catholics, act to generate their religious and political beliefs and actions. We can best begin to comprehend this incompatibility by an understanding of Protestant ideology, as I would analyse it.

Religion

In *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Max Weber considers to what extent religious forces had taken part in the qualitative formation and quantitative expansion of the spirit of capitalism. While acknowledging that some forms of capitalistic economic systems preceded the Reformation, nevertheless Weber argues that the essential elements of the attitude which we call the spirit of capitalism - acquisition, industry, frugality, this-worldly asceticism - were formed by the Protestant Reformation and survive today without their religious basis. He acknowledges that he is tracing only one side of the causal chain connecting Puritanism to modern capitalism, and specifies a number of fundamental socio-economic factors which are preconditions for the emergence of modern capitalism: i.e., the separation of the productive enterprise from the household; the development of the western city; the inheritance of Roman law with its rationalizing of juridical practices which made possible the development of the nation-state administered by full-time bureaucratic officials; and the series of changes which freed the mass of wage labourers from monopoly over the disposal of labour which had existed in the form of feudal obligations (1976).

Despite such concessions to the non-ideological domain of human existence, Weber's bold thesis whose research extended beyond the confines of sociology, has attracted many critics in the seventy years since it was first formulated. The criticism which I would uphold involves the centrepoint of his thesis - the degree to which Calvinistic ethics actually served to dignify the accumulation of wealth. Weber believes that its doctrine of predestination whereby only some humans are chosen to be saved leaves the believers with a feeling of unprecedented inner loneliness. It became obligatory for the Calvinist to regard himself as chosen - a lack of certainty being indicative
of insufficient faith - and the performance of "good works" in worldly activities became the medium whereby such surety could be demonstrated. Thus the Calvinist was impelled to capitalistic-style enterprise in order to combat the problem of theodicy. Calvinism, Weber argues, supplied the moral energy and drive of the capitalistic entrepreneur, and while the pursuit of worldly success by the ethic of frugality and industry was also advanced in other Puritan sects, they lacked the dynamism of Calvinism.

It may well be that the specific sect of Calvinism had a less significant effect on the spirit of capitalism than Weber believed. Be this as it may, it does not detract from Weber's fundamental insight that at the centre of the Protestant Reformation was an orientation towards the worldly, towards realising the self in this, rather than the next life, if you like. It is this which Weber finds expressed in new biblical exegeses such as John Milton's *Paradise Lost*. In this interpretation of what had been hitherto seen as man's great primal loss, Michael guides Adam with the advice that when he leaves the Garden of Paradise he shall possess a paradise within himself, far happier. Here Weber observes is a powerful expression of the acceptance of life in the world as a task not found in any medieval writer, an expression which is the essence of the Protestant ideology (1976:87).

Although Weber frequently states that in the spirit of modern capitalism "Man is dominated by the making of money, by acquisition as the ultimate purpose of his life" (1976:53), and it is this idea which seems to prevail in the mind of his critics, it can be shown that Weber believes that at the centre of the spirit of capitalism lies something more fundamental than this. It is something which is more implicit than explicit in his writings, something I would "translate" as self-realisation through the creation of worldly goods, ideas and services. We see it for instance in his discussion of Franklin's recommendations for the proper behaviour of a capitalist.

He gets nothing out of his wealth for himself, except the irrational sense of having done his job well.
(Weber, 1976:71)

And the joy and pride of having given employment to numerous people, of having had a part in the economic progress of his home town in the sense referring to figures of population and volume of trade which capitalism associated with the word, all these things obviously are part of the specific and undoubtedly idealistic satisfactions in life to modern men of business.
(Weber, 1976:76)
Indeed Weber says:

On the side of the production of private wealth, [Puritan] asceticism condemned both dishonesty and impulsive avarice. What was condemned as covetousness, Mammonism, etc., was the pursuit of riches for their own sake...asceticism looked upon the pursuit of wealth as an end in itself as highly reprehensible; but the attainment of it as a fruit of labour in a calling was a sign of God's blessing.

(Weber, 1976:172)

Rational conduct on the basis of the idea of the calling, a secular life-task, was one of the fundamental elements of the spirit of capitalism and of all modern culture, implying a concept which we do not find in Catholic theology nor in classical antiquity (1976:79). The "calling", I believe, can be understood as a form of self-realisation through the competitive creation of material goods, ideas and services. It may or may not generate money for its practitioners. Indeed one could go so far as to say that the intention of the Protestant philosophy was not the accumulation of wealth, but wealth was a contingency of an ethic which sought to urge men to realise their sense of self through their creations.

We shall see in the course of this chapter that the Puritan's insistence on its believers having exclusive trust in God, without mediators, and its opposition to trust in the aid of friendship of men (Weber, 1976:106); in its attempts to control their impulsive emotions and spontaneous enjoyment (most of which take place in the company of other men), in order to bring order into the conduct of its adherents so that they could pursue their worldly tasks unimpeded by distractions (Weber, 1976:119), may well be understood to be attempts to allow its adherents' sense of self to be attained through competitive worldly enterprise, rather than through the alternative which prevailed in the Catholic world - a sense of self dependent upon other people. We shall see that in the case of Irish Catholics whose sense of self derives from other people that we have an extreme manifestation of behaviour prevalent in Catholic cultures, one which is inimical in varying degrees to the development of material goods, services or ideas.

My interpretation of Weber's characterisation of the Protestant ethic can be found in a somewhat similar form in McClelland's book The Achieving Society (1976). McClelland considers that the psychological component Weber perceived in the spirit of capitalism might be better understood as the need for Achievement (called $n_Achievement$) more
than a desire to make money. "Need for Achievement" refers specifically to the desire to do something better, faster, more efficiently and with less effort, McClelland explains (1976:New Introduction). Although Protestant cultures constitute a particular expression of \( \kappa \) Achievement, this psychological characteristic is to be found elsewhere in the world, in some cultures which also stress individualism and which have like Protestant cultures, forgone priestly mediation between men and God in preference to direct individual communication.

Thus the connection seen by Max Weber between the Protestant Reformation and the rise of the entrepreneurial spirit...can now be understood as a special case, by no means limited to Protestantism, of a general increase in \( \kappa \) Achievement produced by an ideological change. The profit motive, so long a basic analytic element among Marxist and western economists alike, turns out on closer examination to be the achievement motive, at least in the sense in which most men have used the term to explain the energetic activities of the bourgeoisie. The desire for gain, in and of itself, has done little to produce economic development. But the desire for achievement has done a great deal...

(McClelland, 1976:391)

McClelland believes that the Protestant Reformation may have been responsible for a change in child-rearing practices which increased people's need for achievement, which in turn led to the rise of modern capitalism (1976:47). In considering child-rearing practices cross-culturally and across social strata in light of this possibility he has found that standards of excellence imposed at a time when sons can attain them, a willingness to let them attain them without interference and real emotional pleasure in their achievements short of over-protection and indulgence facilitate the development of \( \kappa \) Achievement (1976:356-8). Mothers who encourage self-reliance and mastery at an early age in the context of affective support produce children who are relatively self-reliant and independent in their activities. In cultures or families which emphasise "caretaking" roles, i.e. authoritarianism and control over others (rather than over one's material creations), low \( \kappa \) Achievement is promoted (1976:344). He considers whether Protestant parents do in fact differ consistently from Catholic parents in their attitudes towards life and child-rearing, and states that in the U.S. early results do suggest that Protestants favour earlier independence and mastery training than do various Catholic groups (1976:358). He also takes his research to Catholic and Protestant groups in other countries and concludes that in the survey contrasting the values and child-rearing practices of the two groups, that more traditional
Catholics do appear to have some of the values and attitudes that would be associated with lower \( n \) Achievement (1976:361).\(^1\)

Hence, Protestant colleges in America produce more eminent men of science relative to Catholic colleges (McClelland, 1976:359). And after considering and measuring Catholic and Protestant countries' economies in a comparative context, he concludes...

...with reasonable confidence that, as of 1950, Protestant countries are economically more advanced on the average, even taking their differences in natural resources into account, than are Catholic countries.

(McClelland, 1976:53)

In a culture and personality study of the Japanese, De Vos echoes McClelland's emphasis on socialization experiences as a means to understand how high \( n \) Achievement is developed in the individual in a culture where the ideology stresses achievement, although in Japan, unlike the Protestant U.S., he finds both a high need for personal affiliation, for responsive relationships, and also for achievement. He contends:

...neither sociological theories about discrimination nor economic theories, by themselves, can explain the acculturation of the Japanese-American in the United States and in such Latin American countries as Brazil, nor can they explain the economic development within Japan itself. A complementary psychological theory related to the socialization of human motivation is also necessary.

(De Vos, 1973:180)

In light of De Vos' contrast of "achievement and "affiliation", and of the contrast I have brought out in my presentation of Weber's argument between realisation of the self through others, and realisation of the self through competitive achievement - an argument which itself is informed by and anticipates my perceptions from my Irish material - I would suggest that McClelland's concept "need for Achievement" perceived among Protestants, and some other cultural groups, be modified accordingly. And I would also suggest that it is peculiar to Protestant culture, as De Vos' work among the Japanese - a people who are characterised by strong \( n \) Achievement and also a strong need for affiliation (which implies that others are also very important determiners of one's sense of self) - would suggest (see also De Vos, 1973:181-186).

However, we should not suppose that the relative lack of competitiveness in the sphere of the creation of material objects, ideas and
services implies that Catholics, and specifically Irish Catholics, have no desire for self-realisation by these means. Unfortunately, many of the child-rearing practices to which they are subjected are not conducive to satisfactory self-realisation by this means, for when they do not result in withdrawal, depression and no activity at all, they tend to engender a large repertory of skills designed to protect the individual from loss of autonomy when searching out protective figures on the one hand, and to diminish the possibility of others developing self-confidence which might rival their own, on the other. These defensive/offensive strategies might be argued to be the inverses of constructive competition between individuals in groups for certain material or ideational goals.

Where there is a creation of material goods and ideas in Ireland they are conceived of less as desirable ends in themselves than as a means of controlling others. Let us see if an understanding of the Irish system for self-realisation throws any light upon what it may have been in the personality and culture that the Protestant Reformation sought to emancipate its believers. In taking this approach, however, I am not implying that either the child-rearing practices, personality or culture of contemporary Ireland are the same as those of pre-Reformation Europe, although clearly there are some parallels in culture.

While many Irish children are positively encouraged to do well in school, children's learning at home is mainly in relation to the mother. The father's attitude revealed last chapter is such that generally, sons do not want to work with him, nor does he wish to teach them. It is not authoritarianism as such which is responsible for the failure of boys to be "apprenticed" to the material world where the creation of objects obtains (as distinct from the home where "subjects" are created). Rather, it is critical authoritarianism of the kind that forces the boy to be subordinate without offering him any means for self-expression within that position. Most traditional societies tend to be fairly authori-
tarian, but in their subordinate positions, sons are taught the skills that their fathers once acquired while in the same position. But this system of "apprenticeship" exists in very few domains in Ireland: if a son learns from his father it is usually under sufferance, and more often than not, in spite of his father, as I showed last chapter. Indeed the poem An Irish Mother's Knee reveals a strong antipathy to any learning that takes place in the man's world: the only knowledge thought to be of
value is learned at the "mother's knee". There is no desire on the part of the father to teach the son a sense a excellence in his task, for if this were to occur the youth might learn to define his sense of self-worth independently of the father who would lose some control over him in this event: perhaps the son would even excel the father. Consequently in that position of subordination, a person can only maintain some integrity by mechanisms that would limit the superordinate's control over his personhood, or by forcing another in turn to be his subordinate, thereby defining his own superiority by contrast image. The validity of this claim can be measured by the substantial absence of a traditional material culture in Ireland, to be discussed later.

The aim of both the Irish mother and father is to keep the child highly sensitive to their control of his personhood, and in this they seem to be highly successful, judging from the prevalence of sensitivity to criticism among children and adults. Frank O'Connor reveals in his autobiography that he was morbidly sensitive as a child and adolescent, terrified of strangers, and found it hard to make friends (1970:159), and my observations of many children reveal this would not be an atypical experience. The boy described early in chapter two who became sick when he knew his mother was to go out that evening was also such a child, extremely attuned to his mother's messages of approval and of her desires, and he was assiduous in his desires to please her, not just because he needed her approval, but because he so feared her reprimands. Like Frank O'Connor, he too was quite unable to make friends because, I think, of his excessive sensitivity to any rebuffs he might receive in the attempt. (This is not to say, of course, that most Irish children are not able to make friends.) One committed bachelor I knew whose behaviour was characterised by a substantial degree of self-protective detachment, but yet exquisite sensitivity and vulnerability in his social interactions, revealed that it was not easy for others to hurt or insult him, but when he was hurt, he "was hurt for life". It is for such reasons that Honor Tracy observes:

It is remarkable how the Irishman shirks from being seen in different lights and considered by standards different from his own. His reason may tell him that Ireland has no more to be ashamed of than any other country: and that outside opinions of her may be no juster than those internally accepted: but it is no good, he winces at the very idea of inspection.

(Tracy, 1953:12)
In considering Irish forms of Protestantism and Catholicism I would like to attend firstly to the paradox that confronts one in Ireland of the high incidence of southern Irish Protestants with "Irish Catholic" personalities. Such an individual has been termed "A Protestant with all the vices of a Catholic" by Frank O'Connor. What we are seeing in southern Ireland among the Protestants, are not the "pure" descendants of the Puritans as exist in modern America, where, as McClelland has shown there is a high need for achievement without a correspondingly high need for affiliation (as among the Japanese, for instance), but rather a composite of the two needs within the individual. No doubt this is due to the long association of Protestants with Catholics in southern Ireland whereby, despite substantial social segregation, the two communities have enjoyed much better communication than they have in Northern Ireland (see Leyton, 1975).

It would seem that until recently, Catholic servants have been involved in the household maintenance of even lower middle-class Protestants, from what one informant now in her mid-forties told me. Over the generations, this itself would probably have been sufficient to create in the Protestants a personality not unlike that of the Catholics. The probability that childhood experiences rather than later cultural contact is the predominant factor is suggested by the fact that friendly social intercourse among adults of the two groups has been very limited except among very poor Protestants. Even now when people say integration is better than it has ever been, most Protestants still maintain fairly exclusive social networks. Nor could inter-marriage, which has been not infrequent in southern Ireland, contribute to this creation of the Catholic personality in Irish Protestants, for the offspring of such unions are mostly Catholic, owing to the Church making this demand of any Protestant marrying a Catholic.

Southern Irish Protestants do not constitute an example of a people who have created their religion more than their religion has created them, as I shall argue to be the case for Irish Catholics. Southern Irish Protestants are heirs to a cultural tradition "foreign" to the Irish personality. For this reason there is a strain between what their personalities require in their religion to meet their needs, and the imbibing of an ideology which in some ways is ill-fitted to the personalities of its believers. Southern Irish Protestants venerate the mother or mother figure, for instance, as seen in chapter two in
the cases of O'Casey, Shaw and Synge, but do not worship her image in
their religion, or seek succour from her as do the Catholics from the
Virgin Mary. Rather, to quote a Catholic journalist's vision on the
matter, they submit themselves to a

...man's religion - stern, unyielding, unbending, patriarchal,
based on the Word alone - and leaving no room whatsoever for
the mystical, the emotional and the feeling functions of faith.

To be fair, this Catholic is describing fundamentalist Protestantism,
but she would probably describe the Church of Ireland doctrines only
a little less harshly. Interestingly, this denomination to which the
majority of southern Irish Protestants belong recognises the "Irish
Catholic" personality needs of its members by allowing them some "conces-
sions" which the reformed churches sought to do away with. Unlike other
Protestant faiths, it holds to the belief in the immaculate conception
of Mary and accommodates the need of any individual who wishes to make
a private confession. However, these compromises are played down, for
when a minister of the faith appeared on the Late Late Show on Radio
Telefís Eireann (RTE) in March 1980 revealing these facts, some Pro-
estants were as surprised to learn it as were Catholics. But one
Church of Ireland woman said, while she was unlikely to avail herself
of the private confession, nevertheless she often wished she could
confess her sins so that she might get them "off her chest".

I did not know nearly as many Protestants as Catholics, but I
did know three Protestant families whose members were so thoroughly
"Irish Catholic" in their personalities and behaviour as to be socially
indistinguishable from them, and two of these were poor farming families
some of whose children married Catholics, and mixed almost exclusively
with them. On the other hand, some Protestants showing some evidence
of an "Irish Catholic" personality attempted to create in their children
a kind of self-reliance such as that described for the rearing of
American children, and which characterises modern Australian child-rearing
patterns also. One of these children, a twelve year old boy, kept his
own garden - the only child in the town to do so - and sold the veget-
able to his mother, to the disapproval of Catholics. They felt that
the introduction of a mercenary element in respect to one's family so
early in life was unbefitting the altruistic, personal, familial ties
which should be without calculation by either parent or child. His
mother was aware of this disapproval, but was proud of her son's
achievements and his independence, and felt that if he wanted a monetary reward for his efforts, he was worthy of it, and it helped to encourage him to continue with such constructive projects. This lad's independence and enterprise would have made him feel very much at home in Australia, his Irish brogue notwithstanding, but a couple of Catholic women felt him to be too "grown up" for his age.

Regardless of whether self-reliance is inculcated in Protestant homes or not, it was encouraged in the small, one-teacher Protestant primary school in my town. While the Catholic school teaching system has moved from extreme authoritarianism towards an encouragement of individual thought and self-responsibility in pupils, I felt that the emphasis in teaching at this Protestant school differed noticeably from that in the Catholic schools. This was particularly evident in religious instruction which is the only subject that differs to any extent in content from those taught in the Catholic school system. For instance, one religious lesson concerned talent, and it seemed to me that God had a place here only in as much as he meant students to use it, in whatever direction it may lie. Another was drawn from a parable from the gospels — the Parable of the Talents (Mathew 25) — concerning the investment of money. Typical of questions asked by the teacher were: why did Jesus condemn the servant who simply buried his money and did not put it to good use?; what are banks for?; what uses does money have? As the teacher said to me, religious lessons were as much "general knowledge" lessons than anything else.

But general knowledge and worldliness have little place in the teaching of religion in Catholic primary schools. Rather, the emphasis is on inculcating the personal qualities of obedience, love, succour, benevolence, self-sacrifice, even preparedness to die for other, mostly by drawing positive pictures of others who have such qualities. However it has to be acknowledged that religious teaching has changed dramatically over the past fifteen years, as teachers say, as have the methods and content of other subjects. The black and white, right and wrong concepts conveyed in catechism, for example, are no longer in the syllabus. Children are taught to consider for themselves what might constitute a wrong-doing, and why. This is a general trend of democritisation in the schools reflecting one which is characterising the whole of modern Irish society. One mother expressed the new conception of God by saying that he was no longer "up there", but "down here around
and among us" thereby distinguishing the new conception from the old
in horizontal, equalitarian terms as distinct from vertical, author-
itarian terms.

At a parents and teachers meeting though, it became clear that
there is some contradiction between this kind of teaching and extant
Catholic rituals such as Confession. Mothers of children making their
first Confession pointed out to the visiting priest who had come to
advise parents on the new religious teaching methods, that since children
no longer learned their catechism, they were not certain what constituted
a sin, and so were faced with difficulties not known in earlier
generations.

The reduction in authoritarianism and the increased importance
given to the individual's own conscience are, I think, the principal
forces behind what the Catholics mean by assertions that their religion
is becoming more like Protestantism. These changes have met with quite
a lot of approval among people under the age of about fifty or sixty
years. Quite a few over that age feel regretful that the religion they
once knew and relied on is changing so rapidly. But it must be said
that Irish Catholicism has a long way to go before it gives its members
the individual freedom of conscience that most Protestants can take
for granted.

An article reporting on a lecture by the Provost of Trinity College
Dublin, F.S. Lyons, given in London, reveals this essentially felt
distinction between the two religions and traditions in southern Ireland
as far as the southern Irish Protestants have been concerned.

The maintenance of the traditional university values of freedom
of thought and of expression was all the more important because
for much of the first 50 years after Independence Irish Government
and society had tended somewhat towards authoritarian modes.
Protestants, though secure in the practice of their religion,
had from time to time been irked by the compulsory aspect of
the teaching of Irish (though numbers of them contributed notably
to Irish studies) and also by the much publicised issues of
censorship, divorce and contraception. What was at stake here,
Dr. Lyons suggested, was not a different code of conduct (for
between [sic] Protestant and Catholic attitudes towards these
matters were probably not markedly divergent) but a fundamental
question of principle - the right of the individual or of the
family to freedom of choice untrammelled by the interference of
external authority in what Protestants would regard as an area
of private conscience. Because of these pressures Protestants
long thought of themselves as a race apart and were so regarded by others—so much so, said Dr. Lyons, that they retreated into a ghetto mentality. If in recent years they had so largely emerged from this state of mind this was chiefly due to the rise of ecumenism, to the greater exposure of Ireland to the outside world, and to the emergence of a new generation which regarded the shibboleths and prejudices of their elders as 'vestigial remnants of a past that was gone forever'....'The stand... [is] for freedom of speech and of thought, for the liberty of conscience, for the importance of private judgement in the individual's conduct of his own life. The great and significant change that has happened is that they [i.e. the Protestants] are no longer voices crying in the wilderness. At various levels, but especially among the young, we find an awareness that what Protestants too long and perhaps too arrogantly took to be their special birthright which no-one else was interested in sharing, is now of common concern to all who care about the kind of Ireland we bequeath to our successors'.

There is a gentle prod contained in this speech that is meant to encourage the Catholic Irish to continue the current trend away from authoritarianism. Both his tone and moderation are characteristic of the self-effacing attitude of the small minority who find themselves confronted by the huge monolithic Catholic majority in the Republic. But his moderate and optimistic position is not shared by the Protestant majority of Northern Ireland whose sentiments are more in the tenor of this speech made by the Reverend Ian Paisley recently.

...'I say to Charles Haughey ... that guardian of the IRA whose murderers have darkened 60 Fermanagh homes with death ... that you will never get your thieving, murderous hands on Ulster because we're determined to fertilise the ground of Ulster with Protestant blood before we enter your priest-ridden banana republic...'  

Or a statement by the Reverend Martin Smyth, in a public speech at the Battle of the Boyne march of July 12, 1980:

Charlie Haughey can hand out divorces by the score and sell contraceptives on street corners by the bucketload, but there is more than divorce and contraception issues separating us from the Republic.  

One of the principal issues which an Orange Lodge member would feel separated the two states would be that of authoritarianism: for despite the stratification of Northern Irish Protestant society, the Orange Lodge has an explicit egalitarian policy among its members, one which in a village situation described by Harris is felt to be largely realised by its members (1974:194-5).
What the Reverends Paisley and Smyth fear most is the loss of liberty which is their Protestant inheritance, expressed in this characteristic diatribe against Catholicism in the *Protestant Telegraph*:

'Liberty is the very essence of Bible Protestantism. Tyranny is the very essence of popery. Where Protestantism flourishes, liberty flames. Where popery reigns, tyranny rules.'

(in the *Belfast Bulletin*, 1980:49)

I have so far been concerned principally with the Protestant tradition as it contrasts with the Catholic, and that contrast is thought to be largely in the area of authoritarianism which takes away the individual's liberty. But the contrast goes considerably further than this and the reason for introducing this discussion of Protestantism has been to make it possible to understand not merely Irish Catholicism, but much else in the Irish Catholic culture that contrasts with what we know of the Protestant ethic. The Protestants have a point that Catholicism is authoritarian, but nowhere more so than in Ireland. The social historian Connell brings together a large number of comments over the past 200 years which reveal that, as one American priest commented: "In no country in the world ... are the clergy so powerful and influential as in Eire!" (1968:144). John Henry Newman who came to Ireland to establish a Catholic university in the middle of last century, but left after four frustrating years, said:

'It seems to me that no small portion of the hierarchy and clergy in Ireland regard it as a mistake and a misfortune that they have any of the upper or middle classes among them ... in fact, that they think then only will Ireland become again the Isle of Saints when it has a population of peasants ruled over by patriotic priests patriarchally.'

(Cronin, 1980:34)

Blanchard's book *The Irish and Catholic Power* (1953) deals with many abuses by the Irish clergy of their power.

In his excellent study of the relations between the Church and State in modern Ireland, Whyte shows that while the Irish State is not a theocratic one, the constitution does recognise a special place for the Catholic Church, and in practice it has had great influence in legislation concerning social issues such as those involving birth control, adoption, censorship, divorce and education. While the State has formally held itself aloof from the Church, it has conceded substantial power and independence to it in the domains of education and the social
services. In these matters, few if any lay-persons are consulted, yet Catholics have paid public respect to their bishops' promulgations, the only exception being on matters where national feeling is involved (see chapter seven). And unlike the situation in other Catholic countries, the Irish do not criticise their clergy in public. (Some anti-clericalism does exist in Ireland and it will be discussed in chapter five). And the Hierarchy's opinions have been remarkably monolithic on most matters of Church belief and practice (Whyte, 1971: chapter one). As the term "Hierarchy" implies, the structure of the Church itself is very authoritarian. O'Faolain says it is an old joke among Irish curates that "the Irish bishop stands on ceremony and sits on everybody" (Blanchard, 1953:69). However, despite the monolithic appearance of the Church, Lyons points out that there have always been divisions among the bishops themselves, and between the bishops and priests, but the Church has always managed to present an imposing front to the world, especially when led by strong personalities such as those of Cardinal Cullen from 1852 to 1878, and Archbishop Walsh from 1885 to 1921 (1971:8).

In the domain of education the Hierarchy "has carved out for itself a more extensive control over education in Ireland than any other country in the world " (Whyte, 1971:21). Whyte points out that Ireland is the only country in the world where the Hierarchy has applied the principle of separate education at university level. Where Catholic universities do exist in other countries, the Hierarchy does not insist that all Catholic students attend them. Demanding more control over education than in any other western country where there are denominational schools, the Church controls the primary schools not by an elected board, but through a single officer, the school manager, who is usually the parish priest. Secondary denominational schools are equally free from elected local control. And even the mildest proposals from the Irish National Teachers' organisation until the early 1960s met with severe opposition from their employers, so that there were few reforms until 1963 when a certain degree of democracy began to creep in (Whyte, 1971:16-21)(see chapter four).

There is considerably less priestly domination in Ireland now than even a decade ago, and many people have taken on the new thinking which allows freedom of conscience about sexual matters, to some extent. The Hierarchy has had to give way to this movement, but it shows a lack of readiness to grant the freedoms which Vatican II has given to all
Catholics since 1968. Following explicit condemnation of pre-marital and extra-marital sex, contraceptive intercourse, masturbation and homosexuality, the religion reporter for the Irish Press said that the Irish bishops' response to this new thinking might be argued to be "not so much a contribution to the theology of conscience, but a contribution to the theology of authority".

Before the impression is gained that the promulgations of the Irish bishops have been imposed upon unwilling believers of the faith, we should consider the possibility that the Hierarchy is more authoritarian in Ireland than elsewhere because the people have allowed it to be, and perhaps even desire it to be. Irish Catholics are, of their own free will, extremely religious, and readily supplicate themselves to religious figures, both human and supernatural. Authoritarianism on the part of the Irish priest is only one side of the coin of religious behaviour. A Catholic bishop at the Vatican Council is said to have remarked in 1870 that:

'...the Irish people believe in the Pope's infallibility; but they also believe in their priest's infallibility - and not only do they believe it, but they beat with sticks any who deny it.' (Blanchard, 1953:254-5)

Let us look more seriously at how Catholicism is expressed and practised by the Irish. Whyte says:

The figures show that Ireland is overwhelming, and increasingly, homogeneous in religion. Yet the census figures by themselves might not mean much. There are other countries where probably an even higher proportion of the population is Catholic at least in name - Italy, Spain, Portugal and some of the Latin American countries. But in these other countries a large proportion of nominal Catholics have lost all contact with the organised Church. Ireland is unusual in having a large majority, not just of Catholics, but of committed and practising Catholics. Observers from every point of view [have been] struck by the piety of the people. A French writer, Louis Paul-Dubois, commented as follows:

'No one can visit Ireland without being impressed by the intensity of Catholic belief there, and by the fervour of its outward manifestations. Watch the enormous crowds of people who fill the churches in the towns, the men as numerous as the women; see them all kneeling on the flagstones, without a sound or gesture, as though petrified in prayer! Go to early Mass on Sundays in Dublin and watch three or four priests simultaneously giving the Sacraments to throngs of communicants too great for the size of the churches.'

Paul-Dubois was a sympathiser with Catholic Ireland; but his views are echoed by a hostile observer who described himself as neither Protestant nor Catholic. 'It is a fatal mistake to begin
by under-estimating the piety of the Irish, or by representing it as an unreal or insincere thing; nothing could be more absurd. It is thoroughly real and sincere...No other country in the world, I believe, can boast of such piety as Ireland; they are of all people the most completely drilled and absorbed in the Christian religion, as it is distorted by the churches.' (Whyte, 1971:4)

Half a century later, observers are still making the same kind of comment. Paul Blanshard, whose book The Irish and Catholic Power is a sustained attack on Irish Catholicism, concedes at the outset that Ireland is 'the world's most devoutly Catholic country' and, speaking of the domination of the Catholic outlook, he adds that 'the majority of the Irish people do not resent this domination. They accept it as an organic and established part of Irish life'. A French Catholic visitor, Jean Blanchard, finds Ireland 'an outstanding country owing to the depth and unity of its faith'. (Whyte, 1971:5)

Whyte cites figures of 80-90% of Dubliners as being regular Mass-goers in the 1960s, and since rural practice rates are generally higher than urban ones, Whyte says one may guess that the figures for other dioceses are, if anything, higher. One unpublished survey is said to have shown that almost 100% of the Catholics in the villages and rural areas studied were weekly or more frequent Mass-goers (1971:6). In 1973 MacGréil found that of 2076 Dublin Catholic respondents, 90% attended a church service once monthly (1977:392).

It is not merely regular Mass attendance for which the Irish are famous, but for the pervasiveness of religious ritual and sentiment in on-going life. Whyte cites Connery on the high evidence of members of religious orders in Ireland, of religious books and icons in shops, of the hats-off for the men on the bus as it passes the Catholic churches and so on (1971:5-6). Although there are now fewer members of religious orders per head of population than in the sixties and people are generally less prayerful, religiosity in the eighties has far from vanished. I observed that some young households still maintain the fish- or eggson-Friday ritual, although it has no longer been obligatory for a decade: virtually all women over the age of about thirty five, and many younger ones could be seen to make the sign of the cross on passing Catholic churches or cemeteries; religious pictures, icons, beads and books still adorn the shops as they do the houses; and daily newspapers allocate far more space to explicit religious discussion or instruction than do any equivalent dailies in England or Australia.
Retreats and pilgrimages have not lost their popularity. Although the Lenten retreat has disappeared now, an article in the Irish Times in April 1980 entitled "Retreats are not on the way out!" brought to my attention the fact that 100,000 people from the West of Ireland and midlands made a Novena in the last weeks of March 1980, and many other such Novenas, anticipated to be as popular, were planned in other districts for the remainder of the year. Retreats for young married couples which involve counselling, prayer, meditation and group discussion have become the rage even amongst "trendy" Dubliners. I heard an organiser of pilgrimages to places such as Lourdes say on radio that for many people this is a kind of holiday, and for at least one woman in my parish, the only holiday she ever took. A national Rosary procession converging on Clonmacnoise starts from the Aran Islands, Dublin, Derry and Armagh each year in summer. In 1980 the procession lasting from the 11th to the 16th July moved in the form of a cross through the major towns in the four provinces. All-night Eucharist vigils were held in the churches en route. The Rosary procession was being held to implore the protection of the Immaculate Heart of Mary for Ireland, and in thanksgiving for the visit of Pope John Paul in 1979. Some pilgrimages have been updated in their mode of transport, such as the flights to Lourdes and Fatima, but the rigours of Croagh Patrick and Lough Derg still appeal to the self-punitive tendency of many Irish Catholics.

It was estimated in the media that over 80% of the Republic's four million people saw the Pope personally on one of his four public appearances, despite the fact that no public holiday was given for his visit. Prayers and Rosaries were said during work hours in some factories by female employees in the weeks preceding his arrival (Torode, pers. communication). All newspapers of course, devoted a substantial portion to photographs and commentary and as early as November 1979, two months after his visit, complete replays were being made of his visit on television. People said it was as though the whole country was mesmerised during his visit. Needless to say, books and calendars commemorating his visit were quickly printed as has been a set of records and tapes containing every word he spoke publicly during his visit. To the horror of some of their fellow brethren, even a couple of Protestants I knew in the Republic admitted they turned up to see him in Phoenix Park, and one old woman of the Anglo-Irish ascendancy displayed his photograph above her fireplace. As though all this were
not adequate testimony of their loyalty, a group of 1000 young people who had attended his very popular ceremony in Galway in honour of the youth of Ireland went to Rome in September 1980 for an audience and concert and gift-giving ceremony to celebrate the first anniversary of his visit to Ireland.

MacGrell's sociological study reveals a high degree of internalisation of Church dogma and doctrines and a very high degree of orthodoxy in Ireland (1977:392). For this reason, and because of the frequent attendance to ritual, and respect for ritual figures, one cardinal felt able to say in 1935:

'Because so many people receive Holy Communion in Ireland they are living therefore very close to God. Consequently with the exception of political outrages the people are crimeless people. The Ten Commandments are before them every day and all day, not just once a week.'

(Coogan, 1975:61)

While the cardinal is not considering non-criminal, unchristian behaviour which we see quite well represented in certain kinds of Irish behaviour, traditionally speaking, he is correct. From 1864 when criminal statistics were first presented in a form comparable to those of England, they have shown that traditional crimes such as forgery, crimes against property or rape, have been lower in Ireland than in England. It is only in the field of political crime that Ireland has needed much more policing than England (Rose, 1971:140). I shall show in this chapter's antithesis - chapter seven - that some political crimes have their foundation in a desire of the Irish to prove that they do not submit themselves to authorities, spiritual or temporal.

The cardinal's statement is of some value in showing us his recognition of the pervasiveness of religion in Irish life. But it is more than the Ten Commandments that is pervasive in Ireland. Most evident is a searching for protective, succourant figures, either real or supernatural, to whom the Irish readily submit themselves. Father Michael Cleary writing in the *Sunday Independent* on the desirability of this behaviour expresses nicely what I have discerned:

The first Commandment obliges us to have 'Hope' in God. An act of hope is an expression of our complete trust in God as an all-wise, all powerful and all loving Father. It is the kind of trust expressed by a child who says 'My Daddy will fix it'. 
The relaxation and tranquility which comes from this enables saints to remain calm and confident in the most difficult situations, he says.  

Last chapter I mentioned that Irish wives ideally seek to find protectiveness in their husbands: so in the same way do children, and this will be discussed further in my chapter on relations between the sexes. However, owing both to their mother's attempts to alienate the father from his children and his own inadequate paternal behaviour, this ideal suggested by Father Cleary does not often obtain in Ireland. God as an abstract supernatural power, has many manifestations through anthropomorphic figures, the principal embodiments of which are Mary and Jesus. Although the figure of Jesus and the Sacred Heart can be seen everywhere in Ireland, it would seem that godly power is mediated more substantially through Mary, and this would also be true in a number of other Catholic countries. Note how one priest looks upon the male figure whom I think it could be fairly said the Irish literally worshipped - Pope John Paul II. He says that the Pope is part of the Fatima message and

It is reasonable to regard him as given us by Christ through the hands of Mary. That he has all his life been her devoted son was made clear in the very first words he spoke in public immediately after his election. Further proofs have been multiplied during the subsequent months.  

Although St. Patrick is the patron saint of Ireland and two of the oldest and most important pilgrimage sites, Croagh Patrick and Lough Derg are dedicated to him, the most important in contemporary Ireland is Knock which is dedicated to Our Lady. Pilgrimages to this site differ from those to the St. Patrick sites, the latter requiring extreme arduousness and asceticism on the part of the pilgrim, the former only prayer and humble submission. It is as though help is elicited from the mother figure much more readily than from the male figure. It would seem that the Irish seek succour and protection from the Virgin, also known as Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, more readily and frequently than they do from male supernatural figures. The Pope addressing her as "Mary, bright Sun of the Irish race", entrusted to her the "great affliction of Ireland". He addressed her as "Mother", "Mother", over and over again and with great evocative power which met in the Irish a profound and heartfelt response; he implored her protection and asked her to help us "to hear from your motherly voice what Christ wants".  


The Virgin Mary's symbolic significance, easily anticipated from the arguments of last chapter, is described by the journalist Mary Kenny:

For the Virgin Mary symbolises, in the most exalted sense, the essence, the character and the deepest values of the feminine aspect of life, and when we honour and glorify the Virgin Mary, we are honouring and glorifying the highest possible values in the feminine nature of the universe...[represented by] love, reconciliation, tenderness, mercy and relationships.

The Pope, she says, is a man of exceptional tenderness in relationships, which is symptomatic of his own devotion to Our Lady

...because he himself has developed his feminine side through his relationship with Our Lady; he has developed his 'feeling', his 'emotional' nature. 13

The cult of female worship is at least as old as Christianity in Ireland. Corish says that St. Brigid had a national cult second only to St. Patrick and she became "Mary of the Gael" or an hibernicized Mary in the early Irish Church. She was patroness of the province Leinster and was said to have founded a great ecclesiastical centre there (1972:66; see also Lehane, 1968:87).

In an article entitled "British Historians and Irish History", Lebow says that since the time of Cambrensis of the 12th century, the view of Irish Christianity has remained fundamentally unchanged. This Welsh-Norman historian who came with the Anglo-Normans knew little of what we would now consider to be academic objectivity. He dismissed the Irish claim to Christianity as pretension, for what was practised in Ireland bore no relationship to Christianity. It consisted of a series of pagan practices designed only to secure the ascendancy of the bards and "priests" over the uncivilized masses. Like their predecessors, most Elizabethan writers were careful to distinguish Irish Catholicism from its continental counterpart. Edmund Spenser, author of what is the most significant Elizabethan work on Ireland, is a case in point. No admirer of Rome, he conceded that Catholicism possessed a codified body of dogma and had some concern for spiritual values. But Irish Catholicism was dismissed as barbarous superstition, the people being ignorant, and the priests scarcely less so. And the priests were highly desirous of power. Several other writers felt the priests, with their ambitions for power, were the central villain in Irish political and social life, and this view remained until Victorian times when they were replaced by the agitator. Throughout Victoria's reign Englishmen manifested a growing tolerance of Catholics, Jews and other minorities.
But while English and continental Catholicism became more respectable, Irish Catholicism did not and the priests were seen to "stand between civilization and the Celt". Continental Catholics were called "Catholics": Irishmen were "Papists", riddled with superstition and at the whims of imperious papal legates. Catholicism was a religion which produced a lasting culture: "Papism" on the other hand, was equated with all that was undignified, shameful and unchristian (1973).  

Much of the criticism of the Irish Catholics we see here has stemmed from the fact that they kept some indigenous traditions, such as the separation of marriage from Church regulation, until considerably later than elsewhere in Europe. It is evident from Lebow's article that much personal prejudice has its origins in the "primitiveness" of the Irish religious beliefs and practices, and it is quite true that superstition in some parts of Ireland remains obvious even in 1980. But it does so in other unindustrialised parts of Catholic Europe also. However, at least as important in these prejudices are the subjugation of the people to the priests and the latter's "imperious" arrogance, which was out of keeping with the sentiments of even the feudal Normans it would seem.  

This kind of relationship between the priests and people has also crossed the Atlantic with the Irish migrants. Discussing the greater control of the Irish priests over their flocks than those of other Catholic immigrants in the U.S. Levine cites an American priest who says it has been remarked that Irish Catholicism is not a bond with the Church as an organisation, and still less with the church as a place, but rather it is a personal bond between the Irish people and their priests (1966:78).

It is noteworthy that among Northern Irish Protestants, some of whose extreme religious behaviour is in opposition to the power of Catholicism, there is a stress upon biblical teaching as an alternative to interpretation of the text by personal intermediaries, such as the Pope and the Hierarchy. Paisley can frequently be found beseeching Protestants to be guided in their spiritual life not by people, but by the non-personalised set of instructions to be found in the Bible. Typical are such statements as:

It is time Christians not only woke up to Rome's advances, but also their lamentable doctrinal ignorance which makes
them easy prey to any cultist or controversialist that knocks at their door.16

These dual aspects that we have seen in Irish religious behaviour - authoritarianism on the part of the priests and supplication by the people - can be found even in times when there were very few priests in relation to the people. Although the clergy in Ireland were subjected to harassment and suppression by the English in varying degrees from the time of the Reformation until the end of the 18th century, resulting in a disorganised Church and a scarcity of clergy, George Berkeley commented in 1752, during the penal era, that:

'No set of men upon earth have it in their power to do good on easier terms, with more advantage to others and less pain and loss to themselves. Your flocks are, of all others, most disposed to follow directions, and, of all others, want them most'.

(Connell, 1968:144)

Connell comments that:

Berkeley's was a prescient definition of the secular power of the Irish priests: it has echoed into the present century on an even sharper note: 'they enjoy a prestige and occupy a position among the majority of people, which finds no exact parallel in any section of the Christian clergy in the world.'

(Connell, 1968:144)

Writing eighty or so years after Berkeley, William Carleton observed the extreme arrogance and self-importance of the priest and his peremptory manner on the one hand, and slavish respect of the priest by the peasantry on the other. (This peasant behaviour has to be distinguished from their ingratiating to their landlords which one could argue was engaged in under sufferance). Carleton described the enormous crowds that a rural Christmas service attracted, so large in fact, that it could not be contained within the church, so was held in the frost on a hill-side.17

One of the concomitants of an extremely authoritarian religious system is a strong penitential tradition. When one fails to maintain one's proper place in the spiritual hierarchy, one can only apologise and make atonement by penance, after which one can expect to be forgiven. Confession is the formal mechanism through which this ritual is enacted and re-enacted throughout the individual's life. A measure of the early Irish priests' desires to have their parishioners submit to them (and obversely, of the parishioners' willingness to do so which will be discussed in chapter five) can be made from the
fact that Irish monks introduced the private confession onto the continent in the 6th century replacing the system of public confession of which an individual was permitted only one in his life. Among many others who have complained that confession on a regular basis takes away the confessees' moral and personal independence and places it in the hands of the confessor is William Carleton ("The Station" 1979).

One might expect that the greater a culture's need for God's help and benevolence, the more penitential will be its people. Irish asceticism will be discussed further in chapters five and seven, but at this point I would like to consider the penitential tradition and its correlate, the admiration of suffering as an end in itself; as a form of self-realisation, the inverse of that found in the Protestant tradition.

Ireland is well known for having the most severe penitential tradition in Christendom.

Irish discipline was austere, far harder than that which prevailed in most other churches.... Their attitudes to ardours was that of the martyr; and love of martyrdom was often mentioned in Irish writings as a sacred quality. (Lehane, 1968:193)

Even the early Roman Church raised objections to what was seen as the pointless peregrinations and penances of the early Irish Christians. Lehane says that the Roman Church put out a code forbidding monks to go into the desert and their extreme emphasis on self-punishment aroused rancour among members of the Roman Church (1968:193). Extreme forms of penance such as religious martyrdom have been sought after when available in the early Church, and although St. Patrick did not die in this way, his Confessions reveal that he longed for the crown of martyrdom (Bieler, 1967:69). The most severe pilgrimage in Christendom in modern times at least has been that of Lough Derg, which has been much opposed by the Protestants since Ireland's conquest by the English in the 17th century. Although it was razed once, and closed several times, pilgrims continued to return. An Anglican clergyman with a knowledge of the subject of holy places and pilgrimage sites said in 1836 that:

'Out of hell the place is matchless; if there be a purgatory in the other world, it may very well be said, there is a fair rehearsal of it in the county of Donegal in Ireland.'

(Turner, 1978:108)

The sentiments of the penitent are that out of suffering comes release and joy. Victor Turner cites Alice Curtayne on the subject of Lough
Derg supporting this view:

'Most pilgrims develop for this rocky island and its harsh routine an affection that really defies explanation. Again and again they return to it with a gaiety, an uplifting of the heart, a profound sense of relief...'

(Turner, 1978:124)

This attitude still exists among contemporary pilgrims three of whom I knew. These women said they felt purged and rejuvenated after their pilgrimage and its deprivations.

But the Protestant Reformation sought to do away with the peni- ential tradition, with its self-perpetuating cycle of obedience, rebellion (or disobedience), and atonement being the hallmarks of a rigidly authoritarian system. People were urged not to sin at all, and to attempt to ensure they did not, the reassuring confession was abandoned. Now God was to be seen not as a source of unremitting power, goods and solace, but as a source of inspiration to help people to help themselves, as the children's prayer that opens this chapter reveals. And it was to be through the creation of material things and ideas rather than by the supplication to authority and acting in turn as an authority figure over another in the social/religious hierarchy that God's help would be needed for the individual's self-realisation. Competition with others may have been limited to one's exclusive status group, and society was still structured hierarchically, but no longer in the rigid medieval conception of a Chain of Being so to speak. Just the same, social mobility was made possible following the Reformation until it has reached its extreme modern form in which everyone in countries such as the U.S. is believed to have the right to compete for the most prized possessions society has to offer, be they of a material or ideational nature.

Politics

As anticipated in the foregoing material, the supplication to author- ity figures and authoritarianism are not confined to religion in Ire- land. These two conditions, the two sides of the one coin, can be found throughout Irish life, for as long as historical records can be relied upon. Chubb says "Authority in Ireland - whether in the church, school, university or family - has until recently gone unquestioned" (1970:55). It may even be found in sporting bodies such as the Gaelic Athletics Association which has banned its members from taking part in or attending "foreign games" (Ibid), yet did not lose membership because of it.
In a section headed "The Authoritarian Strain in Irish Culture" of his first chapter, Whyte points out that authoritarianism is not confined to the Catholic Church.

Ireland is a curious mixture. On the one hand, it is a genuinely democratic state, with a government answerable to a freely elected parliament, a competitive party system, freedom of speech and of association and an independent judiciary. And yet on the other hand, an autocratic style in the use of authority has been noted by commentators on many different aspects of Irish life.

(Whyte, 1971:21-2)

But he adds, authoritarianism, whether it is found in the family, government or in the school does

...from time to time arouse resentment among those to whom [it is] applied, but on the whole the remarkable thing about Irish life has been how far people have acquiesced in being thus treated by those who have authority over them.

(Whyte, 1971:22-3)

Authoritarianism is one of the principal concerns of Schmitt who makes its incongruous appearance with democratic institutions the title of his study *The Irony of Irish Democracy*. In a perverse argument, however, he suggests that the irony of Irish democracy is that authoritarian norms increase support for organised government and produce a willingness to accept regulation (1975:54). 20

While Chubb's excellent study of Irish government and politics stresses the fact that the legacy of British democratic institutions and government remain in Ireland, there are a number of things which detract somewhat from this tradition. There is on the one hand a bureaucracy with a near-monopoly of information and a governmental and parliamentary system based on conventions that inhibit the parliament from extracting information and thereby debating it; and on the other, a failure of people to participate in political life, tending to leave decisions to leaders. As well, there is a stress on the political representative as a contact man (a broker) with the administration of government which has consequences not helpful to representative government because it produces parochialism in the character and outlook, and renders them poor legislators (1970). These two strands of behaviour — authoritarianism/dependence on authorities — can be seen in the following statement by Chubb. Loyalty to the party can be seen in Fianna Fail (dominant of the two major political parties since independence) representatives and active party workers where an attitude of unquestioning
support had led to an almost complete separation of roles between a few top leaders charged with policy making, and their parliamentary and other followers who have had little or no positive part in policy formation, and have expected none. In recent years it is the party leaders themselves in Fianna Fail and other parties who have attempted to induce discussion of policy among their followers, only to be met with apathy (1970:56). In saying that "When I want to know what the Irish people are thinking, I look into my own heart" (Chubb, 1970:77), de Valera, independent Ireland's greatest and most charismatic leader is revealing how intimately connected are authoritarianism and the willingness of Irish people to accept this condition.

Although there are some weaknesses in establishing people's attitudes by means of questionnaires, nevertheless MacGréil's study reveals that among his 2000 or so Dublin informants there was a strong belief in the value of authoritarianism (1977). In a survey conducted in 1966, 71% of those questioned agreed with the statement that "a few strong leaders would do more for the country than all the laws and talk" (Schmitt, 1975:51)

In view of this authoritarianism, the interpretation of the data acquired by Pfretzchner and Borock (1976) may be reinterpreted, I believe. In their study of about 1312 Irish school students in the early 1970s, they found that they displayed an Hobbesian notion of the uses of government. Most felt that if left to their own devices, men would be wicked and permit their basest passions to run rampant and the world would soon become chaotic. Therefore, they felt institutions were needed to give them known rules to live by, laws to govern their behaviour and leaders who would direct them towards the path of righteousness. Pfretzchner and Borock interpret this as evidence of bleak pessimism about the fate of mankind living outside an organised political system (1976:99), but I would suggest it is simply an expression of the need for strong leadership.

In a study in the same volume by Raven and Whelan of 1226 respondents, the Irish emerge as rather low in "subjective political competence", that is, they feel there is little they can do to influence government decisions. If they do feel they can have influence, they are far more likely to approach an authority figure, their member of
parliament, than to use any other method. They are found to compare poorly with north western Europeans and Americans in their sense of political competence, at all levels of education, albeit the most politically competent are the best educated (1976:26). This sense of powerlessness is reflected in the widespread political apathy of life.

Of participation in politics at the level of local party branches Chubb says:

Although some city branches in particular are very active, almost everywhere it is an uphill fight by a few enthusiasts in the face of considerable apathy.

(Chubb, 1970:91)

About one percent of the electorate may be said to be active in party politics, with another 2.5% of the electorate inactive members. The party branches of the two main parties, Fianna Fail and Fine Gael are almost inactive, and some moribund, except at election time when they come to life for a brief period (1970:89). There is a general lack of participation in and discussion of political and general issues by the electorate (Ibid:185). It will be shown that a similar degree of apathy has obtained among Irish Catholics in Northern Ireland until 1968 and the Civil Rights movement, in the seventh chapter. In that chapter I will also show that one of the principal intentions of Irish rebels, who have only ever constituted a small minority of the people, has been to redeem their compatriots from their apathy and fatalism which has allowed them to accept subjugation by a coloniser or superior foreign power.

As a result of both a low sense of political and personal competence, and political apathy, I believe the Irish seek to use intermediaries or brokers in tapping the sources of power, a tendency which is echoed in religious life as we have just seen. And conversely, those seeking the power that comes from being a broker are seeking out the role of an authority figure who realises his sense of superiority by having helpless clientele dependent upon his services.

Despite democratic institutions the Irish have organised their political system in an hierarchical structure usually termed a political machine. Considering the vast literature on the subject of political machines elsewhere in the world, Bax says it may be best considered as an ego-centred interaction system; a vast network in which the leader is located at the centre. The total machine is a prize-producing, and
prize-consuming system, to wit, it operates on the basis of patronage (1976:70). Patronage is a system whereby capital is bestowed upon particular areas and people as a personal favour, a prize of government bringing jobs and profits to those who have supported the winning party. The public treasury can become a private preserve for whoever controls government. This manner of running government crossed the Atlantic and surfaced in Tammany Hall politics, in the urban councils of larger cities where there was a substantial Irish population, and seriously corrupted them (see Levine, 1966). But while every scholar remotely concerned with Irish political life has commented upon the existence of patronage and some have dedicated entire studies to it, there is less opportunity and room for corruption in Irish national politics than there has been in American urban politics. Bart suggests that Irish politicians are not patrons as such because they do not directly grant favours. Rather they tend to act as brokers between citizens and those administrators who actually control resources. And Sacks says that what is engaged in should be considered "imaginary patronage" for the actual resources for patronage use available to any T.D. (Teachta Dáil) is limited owing to the fact that the bureaucracy automatically and impartially grants benefits and services when certain conditions are met by those needing them (1976).

And yet as Sacks says, despite the lack of any effective monopoly of the distribution of material resources the local political machines in Ireland have survived. But there is no "real" function for them. And while the T.D. acts mainly in the role of messenger and errand runner to the authorities on behalf of aggrieved constituents, the constitution however, does not acknowledge that he should be a consumer representative more than a legislator (Chubb, 1970:216). Why then does patronage or brokerage continue to exist in the Irish political system? Bart believes it is exacerbated by the electoral system of proportional representation (in Ireland designed to protect minority parties) where fellow party candidates compete with each other for preferences, so woo the voters by rendering them as many services as possible (1976:52). But apart from the obvious weakness of an argument which considers only one side of the matter, i.e. that of the politician's behaviour while neglecting the fact that the electorate actively seeks his services, this interpretation is made more inadequate when it is considered that in Northern Ireland where proportional representation does not exist "The
bread and butter of Catholic politicians remained patronage and brokerage" (Bew et al., 1979:169). Chubb and Whyte both believe that brokerage has an historical foundation i.e., that personal approaches to a sympathetic landlord or priest were the only system available with an unrepresentative and antipathetic government. And Sacks points out that the preferential access enjoyed by the Protestants reinforced the countryman's impression that the beneficiaries of public goods and services were chosen on a particularistic basis (1976:48). But even if these views were correct (and I think this view of history is not adequate as I shall argue in chapter seven), they do not explain why patronage still exists, two to three generations after the formation of the Free State.

Bart says many scholars of brokerage and patronage believe that they develop with the partial penetration of the country's central authority into the rural areas. The local population does not know how to reach the centre's bureaucracy and consequently needs the help of intermediaries. But this argument cannot be used for Ireland where the bureaucracy does reach the peripheries. Bart considers that integration of peripheries is not just a one-way process: it does not automatically follow that increased centralisation results in the population making direct use of the services at the centre. People may still feel the need for intermediaries (1976:194). But the crucial question is why do Irish people feel this need for brokers or patrons, and to answer it I would use a quotation from Raven and Whelan regarding their findings on the low sense of political competence among the Irish.

It is possible that many Irish people are less prone to seek solutions to life's problems by grappling with them themselves than by recruiting to their aid the problem-solving power of more powerful figures or authorities, including supernatural entities.

(Raven and Whelan, 1976:53)

Having said that politicians lack any effective monopoly of the distribution of resources, the impression should not be received that all claims of patronage in Ireland are without real basis. We find patronage quite prevalent in the area of job acquisition. Sacks says that in conversations with high civil servants during 1968-9 he got the clear impression that recruitment into public service jobs followed rules of open competition and non-partisanship selection. However, many
local politicians insisted that jobbery on local authorities was rampant, a claim difficult to substantiate, but not unfounded, Sacks thinks (1976: 84). But, however, says there is covert influence by politicians in appointments to the civil service: there are ways of influencing appointments to the bureaucracy once minimum education and experience levels have been established, including the senior civil service (1976:74-5). Schmitt says that there is some evidence that appointments to state-sponsored bodies, especially to governing boards, are made on the basis of party connections rather than professional competency (1975:15). Furthermore, he says that it has been standard procedure for sons of leaders who fought in the war of independence to receive ministerial posts. Personal connections of this sort weigh far more heavily than parliamentary experience in determining one's prospect for political success within the parties (1975:61). Eipper reveals jobbery is more prevalent than any of these scholars claims. In Bantry Bay he found that politicians got jobs for certain constituents in the areas of rate-collector, sub-postmaster, county council foreman, ganger or labourer. Professional jobs could also be acquired through patronage - teaching appointments, nursing positions, clerical jobs in the civil service and even positions in banks. Sometimes brokers wrote references, and sometimes they actively canvassed. In addition he points out that the eligibility for contracts with government bodies, grants and planning permission was often dependent upon bending the rules more than on objective criteria. Larger farmers sometimes secured government grants that were originally not intended for them at all, by means of patronage. Even jobs on the multi-national Gulf Oil project were acquired by patronage. Nor were patrons exclusively politicians at the local or state levels. Priests and influential business men also played this role in the acquisition of jobs for clients (1980:151-3).

And on the other side of the coin are the authoritarian personalities, the T.D.s and their assistants, hierarchically structured, whose aim is to encourage this feeling of dependency on them for the people's needs in the above-mentioned areas. As Sacks says:

...the bulk of government services would more than likely have reached the citizenry without a political machine, and it was the machine's great talent to have reinforced the public's belief in its own necessity.

(Sacks,1976:216)

Eipper says politicians tried to make it look as though they were responsible for getting things for the community when the government had
done so, and they mystified and concealed the bureaucratic process (1980: 152-6). Politicians can make a person feel he must seek his patronage. Bart says that temporarily employed persons in local government especially are dependent upon the politician not only for their entry into the service but for their continuation, so they try to make themselves indispensable in the eyes of the politicians so that these will do their utmost to keep them there (1976:77).

A classic case of a person being forced to seek patronage in order to get his job can be found in that of Sean O'Faolain when he sought the Chair of English at University College Cork in the early years of Ireland's independence. O'Faolain found himself having to seek the patronage of three different bodies of people whose individuals numbered 120, a task which made him feel very foolish and earned him only two votes (1963: 334). The job was given to his rival Daniel Corkery whose credentials were far inferior to O'Faolain's: he had never been to any university, nor had a degree (though he had bestowed upon him an honorary degree), and his only previous teaching experience was in a primary school. McCaffrey says Corkery's appointment was a tribute to his many years of service as a teacher, artist, patriot and creator of Irish nationalism (1973).

But patronage can be of an impersonal nature. For instance, to a government concerned to maintain nationalistic fervour, people who are nationalistic may be given preference over those who are less so in the allocation of some jobs. Peter Kavanagh who was a high school teacher in Ireland points out that with the nationalistic mood up to 1960 and even beyond, it was the custom to give teaching scholarships only to those very competent in the Irish language. In fact, when doing an examination, if you answered in Irish you received 10% added onto your marks. It reached the stage finally of absurdity when a good knowledge of Irish would get you your place no matter how illiterate you were in other subjects (1977:25) (see also Akenson, 1975). It will be shown next chapter that people who are religious are favoured over those who are not by the Catholic Church for teaching jobs.

While my fieldwork allowed very limited access to the interpersonal relationships of the political domain, in other areas of life the search-out of of protective figures was clearly evident. This was not confined
to the familial situation, nor to the relations of parishioners to clergy, but extended to behaviour involving students with teachers and academics, and patients to doctors. From what I could glean, the local general practitioner in my district was a thorough, efficient, authoritative man who took the absolute role "doctor knows all" and did not explain to patients their illnesses, nor tolerate self-diagnosis. Demanding a totally passive role of his patients in their treatment, he simply gave out instructions for cures, diets, or prescriptions. But the majority of people "owed by" him, for they felt, I suspect, that they were in authoritative hands and he could be guaranteed to solve the problem for which they sought a remedy.

However, I learnt of several people who felt unable to go to this doctor because of their failure to obey his instructions: one man with cirrhosis of the liver who could not control his drinking; one woman with high blood pressure from being over-weight; and another woman with gall bladder problems. None of these people were able to stick to his diets. All had to seek treatment elsewhere, so great was this doctor's anger at what he perceived was a lack of respect for his instructions.

Some people felt they could approach this doctor for some matters, but not for others, the most common being that of contraception which he would not make available to women under any circumstances. It was not legal for doctors to prescribe contraception before November 1981 to anyone, though many doctors ignored this and were not prosecuted. I found two cases involving this matter very interesting. Two women in their late twenties decided to call a halt to their burgeoning families after the sixth and seventh babies respectively were born in about as many years. Although one had recently suffered from a prolapsed womb, the doctor said he would only prescribe the pill if the woman first asked the priest's permission. She duly obliged, with some hesitancy and shame at discussing such a delicate sexual matter explicitly with a celibate male, and he agreed that she may use the pill, but only for one year, after which she would have to try to make natural methods work for the limitation of her family size. The other woman, however, would not subject herself to this humiliation, and sought the services of the Family Planning Clinic in Dublin which sent her the pill through the mail. It is noteworthy that the woman who was prepared to submit herself to the orders of these authority figures was also far more authoritarian with her children than the woman who refused to consult
or obey these authorities.

In my town I observed what I felt to be an excessive use of medication for minor complaints by women. The Irish government is so concerned about the high levels of medication used by the people that there are regular television advertisements to dissuade both patients and doctors from over-medication. It may well be that Irish people, or rather Irish women (and their children) use the authoritative figure of the doctor as much as, or more than, the priest to help them to solve personal problems. The doctor in turn responds to this plea for succour by, among other things, providing them with prescriptions for medication, the prescription itself embodying an acknowledgement that the patient is in some way in an ill or vulnerable state. Men can usually only be persuaded to go to a doctor when they are in extreme discomfort or pain (see also Scheper-Hughes, 1979:84), and this accords with certain authoritarian trends to be found in Irishmen (see chapter five).

A politico/cultural scenario such as I have described implies that there will be some blind following of political leaders, and to some extent I found this tendency recognised by some Irish people, such as a village shopkeeper whose hobby was an interest in local history. This man told me that at the time of the formation of the Free State, people in this valley were anti-treaty, whereas those in the adjacent valley were pro-treaty, owing to the fact that these were the respective political leanings of the two strong men who were leaders in the two areas. The political affiliations reveal themselves in the contemporary topography: the followers of the anti-treaty political figure would not give their land to the government for forestation, so that the gaps now to be seen in the thickly planted pines on the mountain sides and tops are not due to their having been deforested. This would not happen nowadays, he felt, because young people do not so readily follow a leader unthinkingly, but are more inclined to make up their own minds about things.

If the seeking of protection from supernatural entities is an old tradition in Ireland, we might also expect to find it so in the political arena and social domains of Ireland's past. The old Gaelic and Anglo-Norman families gave patronage to the famous poets of Ireland, in return for which, among other duties, they would write eulogies of their patron's family: or if he were ungenerous in his patronage, satire. The kinds of
elaborate panegyrics on patrons and benefactors constitute a great deal
of the Gaelic poetry that has come down to us (Bergin, 1970:15), and
this is a form of ingratiating on the part of the poets, institution-
alised though it may be. O'Faolain holds many of the 17th and 18th
century poets in unmitigated contempt for their servility in relations
with both the native and Anglo-Irish aristocracy. He deplores the way
they looked nostalgically to a long dead Stuart King, "Bonnie Prince
Charlie" and memories of by-gone eras for help rather than attempting
to restore their political integrity themselves (1980:32-8) (see chapter
eight). The historian Maclysaght has this to say of the people's attit-
dudes towards leading Gaelic and Old English (Anglo-Norman) families
in the 17th century.

There is abundant evidence of the affection and loyalty of
the people at that time to the families which should have been
their natural leaders and counsellors.

An extract from one observer's notes in 1674 reads:

'...the commonalty are extremely aye'd by their superiors, in
such sort, a tenant fears as much to speak against a lord of
the manor, or their next powerful neighbour, as wise men
would dare to speak treason against a prince under whose
allegiance he lives and hath sworn to.'
(Maclysaght, 1969:87. my emphasis) 22

O'Faolain points out that the old Gaelic society was not democratic,
as some modern nationalists would like to believe, but rather "Tradition
and practice held firmly to that structure ranging slowly downward from
King to slave" (1969:39). He adds that the first people to proclaim an
interest in the Irish people's conditions were not the native Irish but
the invading English who were shocked at their conditions and the fact
that they were so caught up in a web of oppression by the native chiefs,
although he admits they did have some independence and rights under the
old Gaelic system (1969:75). All modern Irish political institutions
and the system of government came from the democratic British inheri-
tance, he says (Ibid). Rose's caption for his chapter five of his
excellent study of contemporary Northern Irish politics is:

'Bourgeois democracy and the national state are recent develop-
ments in Ireland and their traditions do not run deep, in con-
trast to the tradition of armed insurrection or revolution as
as a means.'

(Rose, 1971:179)

In a traditionally undemocratic system which has continued to some
extent in spirit, if not in fact, since independence, and a tendency for people to look to authority figures for protection and guidance, we might expect to find admiration of, and sycophantic behaviour towards authority figures and symbols, both indigenous and foreign in contemporary Ireland (despite many statements and gestures to the contrary which will be dealt with in chapters five and seven). Streib demonstrates that there are many indications that the lifestyle of the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy in the pre-independence period remains the yardstick for the evaluation of status in modern Ireland

...except in recent short-lived reprisals to demonstrate sympathy with the plight of Northern Irish Catholics, many symbols of the ancien regime are not normally offensive to the modern Irishman. This position contrasts with that of other Catholic countries which have experienced revolution...

(Streib, 1973:347)

Of these symbols one I found common was the emulation of a BBC accent in favour of the Irish accent, though these same emulators would, at times, deplore the Irish lack of pride in their own culture, and had, like most Irishmen, nationalist sentiments. Douglas Hyde, leader of the Gaelic League and promotor of all things Gaelic at the end of last and beginning of this century, and one of whose aims was to purify the Irish of degenerate English customs, complained that while the Irish apparently hated the English, they nevertheless continued to imitate them (Lyons, 1971:224).

Many Irish newspapers and magazines keep the Irish as up to date on British royal events and people as the Australian Women's Weekly does for the Australians. In my district a golf course was opened on the "repossessed" large historic and prestigious Anglo-Irish landlord's estate, and the local people who became elected to the committee which managed it gave themselves landlord-like titles, behaved in pompous and arrogant ways befitting the old Irish landlords, but at the same time made it be known through the local paper that while the golf course may have been the inheritance of aristocrats, it was now in the hands of the "natives" who were equalitarian in spirit. For whatever it may be in practice, the nativistic movement ideally has been a movement of the people.

The most incongruous instance of such behaviour can be found in the tendency of some Irish republican rebels to have a hankering after
aristocracy, when their very movements were attempts by the peasantry to overturn imperious, unrepresentative government by a foreign aristocracy in their midst. Thomas Davis of the Young Irelanders of the 1840s had a hankering after an ideal aristocracy, the notions of which found a response in Catholic Ireland where the aristocratic spirit was always strong, says the nationalist historian Cronin. Even in the most famous and important rebellion of modern history in 1916 we see similar behaviour. In the General Post Office headquarters there was talk of naming a German prince "King of Ireland" by the rebels, including the most famous of them, Patrick Pearse (Cronin, 1980:76-7). But this was not the first time such discussion had occurred: Lyons says it had also been discussed in January 1915 (1971:370). Furthermore, Pearse, that great lover of the peasantry and everything they stood for, had a strong desire to be a person of consequence, his biographer says.

The snobbish house names and the pretentious notepaper which he always affected were symptoms of a personality which clung obdurately to many of the trappings of gentility. (Edwards, 1979:170)

He had no understanding of the social injustices of Ireland in 1913 despite his love of the peasantry. And an apt anecdote reveals this: his sister dressed as a rough old peasant woman for her part in a play which Pearse was directing was so effectively disguised he was angry that such an unpresentable person should be in the company of the actors backstage (Ibid).

The sycophancy and servility of the Irish towards their superiors - their own churchmen, politicians, doctors, teachers etc., as well as towards the Anglo-Irish ascendency - is frequently dramatised in the 19th century literature, particularly that of Carleton, and is a central feature of the stage-Irishman to this day. In contemporary Ireland one sees a perfect reproduction of the cringing servility of old in those itinerant people who beg, children being as adept as adults. Elsewhere it appeared to me to be much diminished though it remains only a little muted in form in the behaviour of many people towards their clergy, particularly the older fashioned priests. Protestants remark upon it and indeed I almost found myself behaving like this in respect to a priest on one occasion in order to get him to answer some of my queries. For some priests also expect this behaviour, though no doubt modern ones feel it acts as a barrier in communication between them and their parishioners. Eloquence and hypocrisy both have their parts to play in this
behaviour, the latter of which provides protection against total loss of integrity.

One of the national peculiarities of the Irish which can be frequently seen in stage-Irishmen productions, is the figure who will pretend to be irredeemably stupid and incompetent in order to gain some advantage from this, though he may suffer the contempt of his benefactor and be reviled by him. Having got what was sought - more time from a creditor to pay a debt, charity, or whatever - he will "fall about" laughing and mocking the benefactor when the latter has departed. This is the means by which he restores lost integrity by his manoeuvre. Wrongly ascribing the behaviour to a hang-over of colonialism, the distinguished Gaelic scholar E. Estyn Evans noticed that servility among the Irish is usually accompanied by boastfulness (1967:6), the inverse of servility, which is a defense mechanism against loss of integrity. Crying, playing, or putting on the poor mouth is an Hiberno-English idiom to describe the act of making a pretence of being poor or in bad circumstances in order to gain advantage from one's creditor or prospective creditor: equally it refers to wider behaviour than this. One may cry the poor mouth over any matter at all - the bad weather, one's poor state of health, inability to be organised, tidy, clean etc. in order to elicit the sympathy or help of one's listener.

One of the best known venues for this behaviour has been in court, and particularly in the speech from the dock which is unsworn. In the mouths of Irish persons these speeches often become very effective pieces of rhetoric in colonial, no less than in independent Ireland. But crying the poor mouth is most evident where Ireland's national history has been concerned. Although they had been self-governing for forty two years when O'Faolain wrote his autobiography, he points out that Ireland's dearest symbols are Our Broken Chains, The Silenced Harp, The Glorious Dead, Seven Centuries of Slavery, the tears of the Dark Rosaleen and others (1963:186). Much of Irish literature is that of lamentation and recently a book of such poems has been collected and entitled Poems of the Dispossessed 1600-1900 (O Tuama and Kinsella, 1981). Irish rebel songs which are sung everywhere in Ireland are drenched in sorrow and beg for sympathy from the listener (see chapter seven). But as G.B. Shaw said when discussing the debate in the First Dail over the acceptance of the Anglo-Irish treaty in 1921: "Ireland has a wonderful power of magnifying herself and her affairs in the eyes of the world (1962:250)."
It is this common behaviour of magnifying one's problems as eloquently as possible to elicit sympathy from others (of which we shall see further instances in other chapters) that is brilliantly satirised in Flann O'Brien's novel *The Poor Mouth*. Here are two characteristic examples:

In one way or another, life was passing us by and we were suffering misery, sometimes having a potato and at other times having nothing in our mouths but sweet words of Gaelic. As far as the weather in itself was concerned, things were becoming worse. It seemed to us that the rainfall was becoming more offensive with each succeeding year and an occasional pauper was drowned on the very mainland from the volume of water and celestial emesis which poured down upon us; a non-swimmer was none to secure in bed in these times. Great rivers flowed by the doorway and, if it be true that the potatoes were all swept from our fields, it is also a fact that fish were often available by the wayside as a nocturnal exchange. Those who reached their beds safely on dry land, by the morning found themselves submerged....It need hardly be said that the local people became peevish at that time; hunger and misfortune assailed them and they were not dry for three months. Many of them set out for eternity gladly and those who remained in Corkadoragh lived on little goods and great littleness there.

(O'Brien, 1975:99-100)

I did not prosper very well. My senses went astray, evidently. Misadventure fell on my misfortune, a further misadventure fell on that misadventure and before long the misadventures were falling thickly on the first misfortune and on myself. Then a shower of misfortunes fell on the misadventures, heavy misadventures fell on the misfortunes after that and finally one great brown misadventure came upon everything, quenching the light and stopping the course of life.

(O'Brien, 1975:60-1)

Seeking the sympathy of others may be directed to fellow Irishmen or internationally. In the former case it would seem to have been often successful. Since the 17th century there have been numerous reports of the prevalence of begging. As beggars cannot live without the charity of others, so we also find mentioned in the literature the generosity of Irish people towards such beggars. De Tocqueville frequently refers to begging in his *Journeys to England and Ireland* before the Great Famine remarking that it was the very poor who gave to the destitute (1958).

Synge said he did not think a beggar was ever refused at even a humble cottage at the turn of this century (1912:125). The reforming landlord Lord George Hill considered the prevalence of begging and charity (before the Great Famine) to be a problem because it encouraged destitution and brought disease (1971). But it is to the everlasting praise of the Irish that they kept alive about two million of their people each year for part
of the year by charity for several decades before the Great Famine (Christianson, 1972). Such charity remains today and we can hear radio programmes which involve many, often eloquent and touching requests for help responded to by Irish individuals.

There can be no doubt that crying the poor mouth was exacerbated by British rule, and it does seem to be used most when circumstances are bleakest. Thus, in contemporary society it finds its most powerful expression among its poorest members, the itinerant people. But whether it is used internationally, or was used in relation to landlords and the courts during British rule, crying the poor mouth is essentially a mechanism developed by the Irish to elicit sympathy and help from fellow countrymen. Many of the rebel songs and poems (and the national symbols) mentioned above do not have an international audience, and many are written in the Irish language so are not accessible to non-Irish persons. Indeed, O'Brien's novel is parodying, among others, an autobiography written originally in Irish - O'Crohan's The Islandman (1929). The calls for charity made both in the past and in the present are generally made not internationally, but to fellow Irish persons. And one of the most successful speeches from the dock occurred during the Arms Trials in Dublin in 1970 concerning the trial by the Republican state of its own ministers of government (Cruise O'Brien, 1974:240).

Economics

In the sphere of economic behaviour we tend to see the same overriding interest in personal relations that characterises religious and political behaviour, to the cost of economic productivity. There is much evidence of apathy and lack of interest in material creations in Ireland generally speaking, but among those few persons who are acquisitive, traditionally this acquisition did not arise from any competition among equals for excellence as one can see in many traditional cultures in Europe, but in acquisition as a means to gain control over others.

It will be shown next chapter that Ireland's 1916-21 revolution was a very "unrevolutionary" affair, involving no radical social or economic changes. Certainly there was a major redistribution of land, but large and small farmers remained, and the concept of the rights of private property remained very strong. As social services began to improve in the 1950s, income became more equitably distributed. So in
these circumstances, it may be a little unfair to argue that an old Anglo-Irish elite of prosperous entrepreneurs was replaced by a new one in the countryside, as Eipper has said of the Bantry Bay area (1980:123). But it is not totally untrue.

Gibbon and Higgins say that the gombeenman, patron in the economic, political and ideological domains, arose among the Catholics after the Great Famine. Originally gombeenmen were shopkeepers, either practising usury as a sideline or integrating orthodox commercial and usurious relations of exploitation. In the west especially, the gombeenman became not one entrepreneur among many, but the effectual ruler of large tracts of the country and hundreds of "subjects". This status was frequently reflected in their acquisition of the title "king" or "lord" (1974), and they existed in the Blasket Islands, Aran Islands, and on Tory Island - all small, self-contained, and virtually self-governing traditional Catholic communities. These were often rapacious figures who engaged their clients in forms of debt-bondage. Their attitudes were implicitly recognised in (British) government reports to be as Weber analyses pre-capitalistic money-making activities operating without the guidance of ethical norms:

...one of the strongest inner obstacles which the adaptation of men to the conditions of an ordered bourgeois-capitalistic economy has encountered everywhere.

(Weber, 1976:58)

Although debt-bondage has now disappeared, gombeenmen still survive in the form of small businessmen/landowners. In the Bantry Bay area, Eipper shows that they tried to minimise competition with others, took advantage of unemployment so that they could pay low wages to employees, and resisted trade unionism. They could do this because they relied on patronage-style methods of recruitment and promotion to construe paternally the provision of employment as a charitable act (1980:124).

Yet we must consider the other side of the coin - that of a lack of interest in competition in the material domain, poor management and industry on the part of the majority of Irish people which we shall see shortly, and the preparedness of people to allow this exploitation. Brody found that people of Inishkillane complained of the greed of their local entrepreneur, but did not try to compete with or emulate him: they resigned themselves to his exploitation and continued to patronise his business (1973:204-209). Similarly, in my town, people complained of
the greed and unscrupulousness of a particular real-estate agent, but
continued to patronise him, though there was another in the town.

One could say that these entrepreneurs are able to potentiate
themselves with the somewhat unwilling or at least grudging, assist-
ance of their demoralised and resigned customers: they have received
their wealth not by competition with equals for the same services but
by dominating and controlling others in a way analogous to other auth-
ority figures in the political and religious domains. But these entre-
preneurs are more than money-makers. They are usually brokers acting
as intermediaries between the farmer and villager, and the outside world.
Many become local or state politicians. Chubb shows that ¾ of all T.D.s
are small business men (1970:208). In 1960, 32.5% of county councillors
and 42.4% of urban district councillors were small businessmen: in 1967
the percentages were 30.4 and 41 respectively. As there are comparat-
ively few shopkeepers in the community, as a group they are over-
represented in councils, Chubb remarks (1970:288). 34% of the T.D.s
and 20% of ministers in the Fianna Fail government immediately before
1974 were small businessmen (Gibbon and Higgins, 1974:35). Eiper says
that the upward mobility of the ambitious entrepreneur was one of the
key features of Irish machine politics, both with respect to the patron-
age the government dispensed and the policies it pursued (1980:170).

These pre-capitalistic entrepreneurs who have taken over commercial
life from the Anglo-Irish appear almost everywhere as among the most
authoritative figures in the community, Gibbon and Higgins claim. They
have a monopolistic or semi-monopolistic position in interpreting ideas
about commercial life and policies to the community, and of interpret-
ing back to the party and state, local-level economic and social griev-
ances (1974:36). And it seems that those who are not ambitious seek
their patronage and allow them to take this monopolistic role, albeit
not without some grumbling. It could be those those entrepreneurs who
are politically ambitious - which does seem to be a majority of them -
are less interested in the acquisition of material goods per se than in
the opportunity money gives them to have power over and to manipulate
other people. Interestingly, in American urban politics which the Irish
dominated in many cities, those Irishmen who had acquired wealth always
played it down, unlike, for instance, the Italians. While they corrupted
urban councils through their use of patronage (which involves control
over others) they did not use their power to acquire personal fortunes (see Levine, 1966).

The apathy and lack of initiative in the sphere of material creations of most Irish people on the one hand, and the unethical acquisitiveness of the small businessmen on the other, are not conducive to the development of industrialisation. While Chubb acknowledges that independent Ireland started out with serious economic hardships following colonisation, with little private capital available and an economy still dependent on Britain, nevertheless he remarks that "private enterprise was distinctly unenterprising" after the formation of the Free State (1970:253). The government was obliged to initiate many essential enterprises because it could not arouse sufficient private interest. These were not acts of socialism, or even nationalism of industries, the very concept of socialism being anathema to most Irish people in the first half of the century. Nor were they accomplished in any pre-planned way, but on an entirely ad hoc basis as the needs arose. The public did not respond, or when it did so, responded poorly, to the government's initiatives to set up essential organisation and industries engaging in trading, marketing and economic development (1970:252-3). Lyons says:

The lack of private capital, the timidity of private capitalists, the necessity to supply some public services and rescue others - these were the fundamental reasons for the formation of the state-sponsored bodies.

(Lyons, 1971:609)

While the number of people the state employs in these state-sponsored organisations is low compared with other countries which have nationalised industries, because they are fairly capital intensive, the percentage of gross fixed investment held by them is among the largest in Europe (Chubb, 1970:251-2). Kennedy contrasts the economies of the comparable states of Denmark and Ireland, pointing out that in the post-war period industrial transformation was accomplished in Denmark by native enterprise with little direct state aid. To explain the contrasts between the two countries' economic development, he plays with the idea of the possibility of the Protestant work ethic in Denmark being responsible for greater industriousness before settling on historical and political explanations (1977).
Even the established agricultural sector showed no noticeable increase in gross volume of output between the years 1925 and 1950 (Humphreys, 1966:57; Lyons, 1971:593). Nor did the Irish seek new markets for their agricultural products which formed the bulk of their exports. The vast majority of products have gone to Britain, and in 1972, Ireland was still exporting 66% of her agricultural products to Britain: this fell to 33% in 1977 after joining the EEC.  

Lyons says that the percentage rates of increase in the economic growth between 1926–38 may have been no more than 1.2% per annum, although this is a tentative figure. During the war and up to 1947 it was apparently nil (1971:614). In their economic study of Ireland, Kennedy and Dowling reveal that over the post World War II period as a whole, Ireland's growth rate was low by European standards. While it was not a stagnant economy, the volume of GNP grew at an annual rate of only 2.9% (1975:3). In the period 1950–61, the growth rate of the Irish economy was well below that of fourteen other OECD countries which were considered. Of these fourteen countries (which include underdeveloped agricultural countries such as Greece and Portugal) Ireland ranked lowest in the growth of GNP, while the mean rate of growth of GNP was over twice that of Ireland (Ibid:19). The period 1961–8 showed an improvement, but the Irish growth rate of the GNP was still less than that achieved by most other OECD countries (Ibid:21). While many useful measures were implemented in the 1960s there was little co-ordination of those measures and no comprehensive vision of the final shape of things. There was an absence of an over-all sense of direction which generated gloom and a "national malaise" which Chubb and Lynch (1969) said had "'symptoms...resembling the 'death wish' of a society'" (Kennedy and Dowling, 1975:253-4).

The independent Irish state was profoundly committed to the concept of self-sufficiency, and her exports of goods and services being the second lowest of the OECD countries in 1950–61, and her imports the lowest (see Kennedy and Dowling, 1975:46), reveal she achieved some measure of this ideal. But the fact that from the years 1926 to 1966 approximately 26,000 persons in a total population that averaged three million in that period emigrated each year shows that even while maintaining low living standards, self-sufficiency was not realisable. Following the post-war (II) economic depression and the gradual replacement of the old guard of republican politicians who had
fought in the war for independence, a new government under Sean Lemass seemed to switch from the pole of self-sufficiency to the other pole on Laing's continuum - that of economic dependency. For they now contemplated entry into the EEC where, as Eupper says, the major decisions of financial management are now made in Europe. By a power sharing arrangement of some piquancy for a nationalist government, Brussels-based bankers control the State's finances, while the Dublin government puts the policies into practice and takes political responsibility (1980: 121). There had been some signs of this dependency earlier, however. Although Ireland remained neutral during World War II and suffered no encroachment of her sovereignty by hostile nations, and therefore no damage to cities, nevertheless in her poor economic state after the war she sought, and received, financial help in the form of 150 million dollars from Marshall Aid in grants and loans (Lyons, 1971: 579).

By virtue of being an under-developed member country, since joining the EEC in 1973, Ireland had received 2000 million pounds by 1980, with that year being the best, says Dr. J. O'Connel. But perhaps certain long-developed Irish personal skills mentioned earlier have also played their part. In Magill it was said that Ireland "has played the poor mouth in Brussels with consummate skill, even when it has not been entirely justified".

Ireland may feel the pinch when its funds from the EEC are reduced, but perhaps a more dangerous form of its economic dependence has been its reliance upon the multi-national investors who were invited to develop industry after 1958 with government incentives and tax concessions. The same problems of multi-national investment obtain in Ireland as they do in the rest of the world, i.e., they do not always invest in industries best suited to that country's needs; they are usually capital rather than labour intensive; much of their profits go out of the country; and they can pull out leaving a vacuum when a depression faces their industry. Eiper has shown just how dangerous and exploitative multi-nationals can be in his study of Gulf Oil in Bantry Bay (1980).

Although there would appear to be much more initiative and enterprise among Irish people now than ever before, economic improvements that have come to Ireland in the last two decades have not come primarily from within that country. Rather
The industrial drive, spearheaded by the multinationals, combined with the benefits farmers are gaining from the European Economic Community...had changed the face of Ireland.

(Cronin, 1980:200)

Lyons' foreboding about Ireland's economic health expressed in his statement that as his book goes to press there was a

...real danger that the Republic may be faced with membership of the European Economic Community at the very moment when its own competitive efficiency must be regarded as seriously in doubt.

(Lyons, 1971:623)

is at present being shown to have had some foundation. Her present economic position is unhealthy, even in a situation of world economic depression. In January 1982 Magill devoted substantial space to the seriousness of the economic situation in Ireland to which a number of people, including scholars and economists contributed. It said that Ireland was forecast to have the lowest growth rate in the economy of all the OECD countries for 1982. At the moment only Britain, Belgium and Spain have higher unemployment; only Greece has a higher rate of inflation; and no country has a worse balance of payments situation. And it pointed out that Ireland has invested £2000 million in agriculture since it joined the EEC yet during this time there has been no increase in agricultural output. The gap between Irish and European inflation has grown steadily since 1979. In that year the rate was 13.2%, 3% above the EEC average. In 1980 it was 18.2%, 4% above the EEC average; in 1981, 19.7%, 7.1% above the EEC average, and the latest figures in November 1981 show 23.3%, 10.8% above the EEC average.

This lack of economic initiative can also be seen in the history of Irish emigration to the New World. In the first place, the Irish waited until they were struck by disastrous famines in which a million people died of starvation and disease before embarking on large-scale emigration to solve their problem - one shared by many other European countries at the time - of overpopulation (see conclusion). Once in America the first couple of generations imbibed little of that American spirit of enterprise and expansiveness which gave impetus to immigrants of other cultures fleeing circumstances of hardship and political (and religious) oppression often equal to those found in Ireland in the middle of the 19th century. The Irish tended not to create new enterprises but to exploit the
existing power structure in the form of urban government which they quickly began to dominate in some cities. In these pre-existing structures we find they excelled in wielding power and offering patronage to supplicants to an extent that horrified American Protestants with "right living", democratic ideals. The Irish did not use their new-found power to ameliorate the bad living conditions of fellow Irishmen, or any other groups, or to make any reforms at local government level. And in doing this, as well as sometimes living a drunken, brawling life in the case of some men, they earned for themselves a deeper alienation and prejudice from Americans than most other immigrant groups, for many generations (see Levine, 1966). However, this is not by any means to imply that the Irish in America did not work or contribute to the building of that nation. On the contrary: they provided a lot of the hard physical labour required for the construction of railways, roads, bridges and buildings in many areas in the United States.

In a valuable article on the lack of industry and enterprise and initiative in Ireland, Hutchinson considers that there may be factors in the family, and in traditional society that presented obstacles to industrial development without dismissing the colonial inheritance which involved a system of land-tenure whereby a tenant was not compensated for any improvements he made to his property. The principal factors he suggests may derive from the father/son relationship wherein the father guards his status jealously against his sons; the mother/son relationship whose forces are designed to secure filial dependence; and a society which generally acts to enforce conformity and dampen initiative (1970).

While a set of forces outside their control did not contribute to industry, tidiness and cleanliness, nevertheless the large number of references provided by Hutchinson whose writers complained of these features in Irish life in the 18th and 19th centuries would indicate that the Irish themselves may have contributed to the conditions in which they lived. Even cabins had no gardens with flowers, as one could see in England, and poverty could not really be blamed for this. Although the peasant might have had no capital, he was slovenly in his lack or arrangement, and so too were richer farmers who lived in domestic squalor (1970). References to this condition are readily available to the researcher, being found in general books giving impressions of Ireland, such as Frank O'Connor's (1971). Here is a quotation from
Rinucinni in 1641:

'No nation in Europe is less given to industry or is more phlegmatic than this. They do not concern themselves with ecclesiastical or political amelioration.'

(O'Connor, 1971:176)

This is a reference to an apathy which affects economic and political life alike, more of which will be seen in chapter seven. Maclysaught says:

In the reign of Charles I they are spoken of as 'the most improvident people in the whole world', and about the same time the Earl of Cork expresses the opinion that idleness was the 'very national disease of this island'.

(Maclysaught, 1969:38)

The ultra-nationalist Daniel Corkery admits the pictures drawn by the great writers of the 19th century leave us with the impression of a land of extraordinary slatternliness and recklessness, and while sorrowing, one cannot help laughing. It was as characteristic of the typical Big House of the Gaelic lord as of the cabin.

The slatternliness of the Big House was barbaric: there was wealth without refinement and power without responsibility. ...the Lord of Misrule governed everything; and did so with merely a recklessness and daring gesture; at his behest it was that everyone lived well beyond his means.

(Corkery, 1967:25) 31

What Corkery is describing amidst squalor and sometimes poverty, are warm welcomes, hospitality, generosity and a lively interest in other people, behaviour also noted by those other writers who complained of the squalor. This is testimony to an abiding concern by the Irish in relationships. A more recent example of such behaviour is given by the novelist Honor Tracy in her description of Patricksville's only hotel.

The amenities of Mangan's Hotel were more of a spiritual than a material nature. A visitor could be sure of a warm welcome, a lively interest in his personal affairs, sympathy in his disappointments and excellent advice in his perplexities; on the other hand, he could not depend on the bath water being hot, his bed being aired or his meals being any more than just eatable.

(Tracy, 1967:153)

Indeed Hutchinson says there are numerous reports that the worker took any opportunity to leave his work and engage in social intercourse (1970: 516). And conversely, Harris reveals that the Catholic stereotypes of Protestant farmers in a rural area of Ulster in the 1970s were that of hard working, but greedy people with no time for anything but work. Hence, they were thought to devote little concern for neighbours. It was
tendency for ambitious people is to realise their ambitions through dominating and controlling others: they conceive of those who depend upon them as mirror opposites to themselves, as dependent persons by whom they define themselves by contrast-conception. These dominators comprise a small minority of the population: the majority, even less confident of themselves, look to and depend upon those who would seek to control them. But as I would interpret the matter, both sets of people are dependent and lack a sense of their own autonomy. However, it is among those who look to others for help and protection that we have seen various degrees of apathy, resignation to fate, and despair, in political, economic and for that matter, religious life. And more evidence of these tendencies will be revealed in the fifth and seventh chapters. A lack of organisation and cleanliness is frequently to be attributed to apathy and despair which characterise the state of depression, a state which is one of the conditions of partial (or total) loss of the attachment figure, and hence, anxious attachment. Bowlby points out that the person who has been unable to develop confidence in the availability of an attachment figure is consequently unable to develop confidence in his own importance and ability to affect others, and confidence in his ability to control his own life. He asserts:

Seligman (1973) draws attention to the ways in which a person, having failed to solve certain problems, thereafter feels helpless and, even when confronted with a problem that is well within his capabilities, is liable to make no attempt to tackle it. Should he then attempt it and succeed, moreover, he is still liable to discount his success as mere chance. This state of mind, which, Seligman aptly terms 'learned helplessness', is responsible, he suggests for the helplessness present in depressive disorders. The theory he proposes is highly compatible with that advanced here.

(Bowlby, 1980:246-7) 33

Yet not all disorder and uncleanliness is to be attributed to depression and despair. Some is the result of more positive action to prevent the dominant figure encroaching too heavily on one's integrity. In some places which lacked cleanliness and tidiness I found the preoccupation in and intensity of personal relationships often matched the disorder: perhaps one could say disorder reigned because relationships were transcendental. This was the powerful feeling I had in the "late-closing" hotel in my town into which I moved shortly after arriving in Ireland, there being no alternative accommodation available at the time. Here everybody was extremely busy going to and fro - not
with the task of running the hotel so much as with the maintenance of relationships. Enveloped in a dizzying, bewildering, ethnographic context, I felt I was living in a dramatised version of a J.B. Keane story. But I consoled myself for the lack of comfort and cleanliness with the knowledge that I was at least acquiring first-rate anthropological information.

Anticipating my chapter on anti-authoritarianism, some of the disorder and consequent inefficiency one finds in the domestic and public domains is the result of people reacting to attempts by others to put them in subordinate positions where their integrity is felt to have been imposed upon. This reaction can express itself in a wide range of manoeuvres aimed at thwarting and even punishing the other. Such manoeuvres may be aimed at creating alternative methods for work and its organisation, and for self-realisation; they may result in withdrawal and even solace in alcohol; or they may simply be enacted as ends in themselves, meant to restore injured pride. However, even in the first event from which positive consequences might be generated, there follows a counter reaction by the person who has been disobeyed, further insubordination by the disobedient, ad infinitum, resulting in a chaos guaranteed to try the patience of a contemporary Job.

Material Culture

The lack of initiative, interest, application, persistence and thoroughness in their work is reflected in the fact that compared with other peasant cultures in Europe the Irish have a distinctly impoverished traditional material culture. Considering the importance of the cow throughout Ireland's history, it would seem curious that the Irish do not have an indigenous cheese. Irish cuisine has been extremely restricted (see Harris, 1972 for just how restricted in a traditional rural setting in that decade), and while the famine years of last century may have inhibited variety, this excuse cannot hold much beyond these eras. So too is the Irish sense of aesthetics very poorly developed in material culture. In a consideration of all the aspects of the material culture surrounding marriage - the domain above all others which, in Europe at least, if not elsewhere, is the object of aesthetic interest - which was derived from historical engraving, paintings, written descriptions and actual surviving materials, Ireland was the only country in Europe to have virtually nothing to offer the editors of their fine arts publication.
In no other section of this richly illustrated ethnology of material culture did the editors have to apologise for the lack of material (van Nespen et al., 1975). In a consideration of some of Ireland's traditional crafts, Justin Keating's four television programmes entitled "A Sense of Excellence" (shown on RTE I in April-May 1980), could find only sufficient Irish excellence to fill about half of the allocated time. Half of each programme concerned the excellence of traditional crafts of other European countries, and it seemed to me that in three of the programmes the second half was connected to the first only by subject matter. I felt Keating had been unable to fill a total of four hours with praise of Irish craftsmanship. Keating was, in fact, rather critical of the Irish material traditions, or lack thereof. Patriotic though this T.D. may have been, he found bad taste and neglect in even the best. The RTE Guide introducing his programme quotes him as saying:

'We're very good at words and music, but not at 'material' cultures. We weren't reared to admire the work of the carpenter or the blacksmith. We need to be manually oriented, skill oriented, to complete ourselves culturally'.

Needless to say, Keating saw the Jansenist Catholic shadow behind "'the antipathy in our culture to the pleasures of the senses'"(Ibid).

Keating is echoing here what a team of six Scandanavians looking at Ireland's development in 1961, summed up about their findings. They remarked that Irish culture had developed a distinct leaning toward literature, theatre and the spoken word rather than creating by hand or machine and the visual arts, the other side of human activities in civilization (see below). And they suggested that the education system would need to be radically altered for such skills to be developed in her population. Ireland would have to concentrate on building the personal skills and creativity in her own people rather than on mere physical investment, they advised (Kennedy, 1977). In 1970 Chubb said:

While there can be no doubt that Ireland is viable i.e. above the minimum size and minimum education and experience levels, there are signs that it is not very far above.

(Chubb, 1970:321)

Chubb says there is a shortage of talent and skills in Ireland for the effective running of a modern country (see also Coolahan,1981:165). But as I will discuss in detail next chapter, an education system which has been insular, extremely authoritarian, anti-intellectual and over-concerned with developing certain personal qualities rather than
technical skills in its students does not create graduates who can readily compete in an industrialised, technological world.

Of course one does see evidence of fine material culture in Ireland, but it is usually the legacy of the Anglo-Irish. When talking of this lack of material culture among the native Irish Sean O'Faolain says that Irish life was pastoral and warlike, and up to the 17th century and the completion of the English conquest they remained a regionalist people who never developed a commercial sense, and elaborate husbandry, or a town life. The Norse, Normans, and later Tudors founded every Irish town that exists. The Irish created only monastic settlements which did not generate townships. When the Irish took towns right up to the 17th century, they burned or abandoned them (1969:60), which is to say, they did not make constructive use of them to enhance their own positions of power or status. O'Faolain continues, that the new ascendancy of the 17th century, the Anglo-Irish, brought to Ireland a greater concentration of civil gifts than any previous or later colonisers: "one may, indeed, be done with it in one sentence by saying that culturally speaking [sic], the Anglo-Irish were to create modern Irish-thinking, English-speaking, English-writing Ireland". The grace of Dublin buildings and the country mansions are all their work (1969:88).\(^{35}\) In pointing to a continuing tradition of lack of commerce and material culture, O'Faolain is properly recognising that some contemporary Irish behaviour is not to be attributed to earlier British domination, or a later Jansenist tradition which is said to be antipathetic to the material arts.

It would appear that Ireland's material culture of the past had periods of relative richness, although what objects it did produce of beauty were in very few domains, and not for everyday use, as for instance in aesthetically pleasing cottages. Despite the intensely religious society that Ireland was, the native-style churches or ecclesiastical dwellings that do survive are very simple in design, being little more than rudimentary. Certainly artistic interest was expressed in stone crosses of which some fine examples remain. The Anglo-Norman invasion did not destroy the native style of art, but rather enhanced the decorative style of churches with the continental Romanesque style. In fact the cathedrals that were built following their invasion, some of which remain today, were usually at the behest of the Anglo-Normans, for unlike the native Irish, they followed the territorial diocesan system instigated from Rome in which the cathedral was the centrepiece
(Watt, 1973:121). Some of the Irish were the descendants of the Celts who are thought to have come to Ireland during its Bronze Age, making their contribution to an old, well-established culture with an indigenous art style belonging to a native people who were neither eliminated, nor at first, conquered. The Celts had developed skilful decorative patterning in jewellery and other ornamental items which in the Christian era found expression in chalices and other ecclesiastical objects. Quite a deal of this material has been discovered in Ireland. The indigenous Irish pattern of abstract art, enhanced by Oriental and Germanic ideas, was developed to its finest point in the illuminated manuscripts, which are thought to be the most elaborate and beautiful of their genre in the world. But it will be shown in the following chapter that the artistic patterns of these illuminated manuscripts have a symbolic congruence with those found in Irish literature, and might therefore have been serving the same function - not so much that of competing with others for the production of a beautiful object, but of displaying one’s superiority over others, very few of whom were in fact allowed to compete.

All these works were those of specialists whose numbers we can assume were small. There is little evidence of a general aesthetic trend through the culture as a whole in the material domain, and some evidence of its absence. For reasons not yet known, most of these art forms came to an end before the English conquest of the 17th century, though this was not due to the presence of the Anglo-Normans. Irish art was not representational, but abstract and decorative, and therefore very substantially lacked what might be called a sensual content. It is not surprising then to find no evidence of portrait or landscape paintings until the 17th century when the Anglo-Irish brought this art form to Ireland. However, perhaps owing to a climate not sympathetic to such art forms, all the examples of such art from the 17th to the 19th centuries I have seen compare rather poorly with other famous European works produced in comparable times (see Harbison et al., 1979). In the 20th century, Sean O’Casey complained in his autobiography that:

It was odd that the Ireland Sean knew had no great painter. ...In Ireland there wasn’t even a shadow coming through the sun of work done by such men as Renoir, Manet, Picasso, Cézanne, or Van Gogh. All the Irish painters had halted at the halfway house of art, and most of them hesitated to take the first step from the beginning...

(O’Casey, 1980b:159)
However, Ireland has been as rich in its literary tradition as it has been impoverished in its material culture. I would suggest that the very forces which inhibited the development of material culture, and the production of material goods as an end in themselves, were those which generated an interest in the oral and literary skills. Far from such parental and societal behaviour as described that inhibit the development of material culture suppressing the generation of verbal skills, rather, they enhance them. For verbal skills are acquired to defend one's autonomy against encroachments upon it, and in turn, to diminish the growth of autonomy in the other. Hence, the Irish are singularly distinguished in the production of folklore, literature and songs, and a very strong aesthetic element informs these modes of self-expression. Interestingly, de Blacam says that while the Irish lacked material skills and a tradition of commerce and manufacturing, they had a rich literary tradition: the Anglo-Normans with a rich material culture, lacked a vernacular literary culture. In four centuries the latter people in Ireland produced few works of literature in their own tongue, although they had skills of building, commerce and organisation (1973:100).

In support of my argument I shall cite a passage from an Irish folklorist whose nativist sentiments are very strong:

It has been said of us as a people that the thrust of our creative genius has always been into words rather than, say, visual images and forms like paintings or sculptures, though it must be admitted that such statements are generally made in mitigation of our allegedly poor sense of visual taste. Witness the shocking colours and colour combinations in which so many Irish houses are painted. The curious thing is that within many of these garish memorials to bad taste you will find people whose ears are keen and appreciative beyond belief to nuances of narrative style, and whose tongues can bend and twist the languages of Ireland - Irish and English - in a bewildering fashion. The act involved in putting a good skin on a story is not lost in Ireland on listeners nor is there a lack of good narrators to supply stories or skins for them.

(O Cathain, 1980:81)

Story telling is in fact a competitive exercise: competition is one of the reasons for the elaboration of traditional story telling, I believe. Revealing this Flower describes a story teller thus:

At times the voice would alter and quicken, the eyes would brighten, as with a speed which I would have thought beyond the compass of human breath he delivered these highly artificial
passages describing a fight or a putting to sea, full of strange words and alliterating rhetorical phrases which, from the traditional hurried manner of narration, are known as 'runs'.

(Flower, 1947:105)

And story telling is as old as Irish historical records. One of the important functions of the *fili* (learned man) was to have a large repertory of stories from which he could draw in order to amuse his patron, and his patron's guests.

While the traditional story teller, the *seanchais*, may be rare now, the art is still alive and well in a less traditional form and content, I found. Poetry, both written and oral, and traditional songs in which people told me the words are more important than the melody, are abundant for all periods of history. Ireland in fact had the first written vernacular language among the northern European peoples. While short story and play writing has not been traditional, and novel writing is only a recent invention in western history, since the 19th century or so for short stories and novels, and the 20th century for plays, Ireland has been disproportionately represented in world literature. While it will be shown next chapter that the writing produced by the Catholic writers has not generally been of great intellectual value, it has nevertheless been very interesting and pleasant regional literature. While quite a lot of these writers were Anglo-Irish, it has been argued that there is a tendency for this sub-cultural group to take on some of the qualities of the dominant Catholic culture.

It is to this native literary and scholastic tradition that I now turn to demonstrate that here there can be found expressed transformations of the theme elaborated upon in this chapter. Here we have seen that in neither the person who has authority, nor the one who willingly subjects himself to it is there a self-realisation through enterprise and objective creation of the kind aimed for by Protestants: rather, self-realisation is largely through other persons. On the one hand, the person in authority needs submissive and obedient subjects for self-realisation perhaps even more than subjects need protection and help. On the other, most persons in authority belong to a hierarchy where they themselves are subjected to yet a higher authority to whom they turn for protection. For instance, the mother needs her children to be dependent upon her so that she can have some sense of herself as a fully independent adult, but she in turn seeks help, advice and
emotional support from the priest who himself belongs to a rigid hierarchy. I shall cite the same words from Laing as in the second chapter in reference to this Irish situation wherein no matter what position in the hierarchy a person finds himself, as he has inherited this poorly-developed sense of personal autonomy, he needs their relationships to sustain his sense of self.

In this lesion in the sense of personal autonomy there is both a failure to sustain the sense of oneself as a person with the other, and a failure to sustain it alone. There is a failure to sustain a sense of one's own being without the presence of other people. It is a failure to be by oneself, a failure to exist alone.

(Laing, 1965:52)
NOTES - CHAPTER THREE

1. However, McClelland qualifies this statement about traditional groups with information on those Catholic groups which appear to have assimilated into the dominant Protestant culture. He says that Catholicism today comprises complex congeries of sub-cultures some of which are traditional, and others modernist (i.e. more Protestant) in outlook (1976:362).


3. F.S. Lyons "Mixed marriage threat to Church of Ireland emphasis" Irish Times 14 March 1979.


5. At the time of speaking there was much discussion of a possible change in the Constitution to allow divorce, and of introducing some kind of legislation which would permit the sale and use of contraceptives in the Republic. The former came to nothing, and there was much dissatisfaction with the resulting restrictive legislation concerning contraception (see chapter six).

6. See Harris for reasons stated by Protestants in a Northern Irish village for prejudice against priests - their authoritarianism, and their keeping the people under their control and in ignorance (1972:171).


9. This is not unusual it would seem, for the Irish Times reported that the 350 workers at the Janelle factory in Finglas, Dublin, say the Rosary every morning at 10 o'clock and have been doing so ever since the factory, which makes women's coats, opened in 1968 (A.Hamilton "Haughey boosts workers' faith" Irish Times 23 July 1980). Although I would presume the majority of employees were females, nevertheless some males are referred to in this article.


14. Giraldus Cambrensis made complaints about the Irish laity being the most uninstructed in the elementary principles of the faith, their deficient matrimonial law, non-payment of tithe, failure to catechise before baptism, laxness in burial rites, and some other matters (see Watt, 1973:156).
15. Lebow believes that these historians were all simply relying on previous historical studies without investigating the matter thoroughly, especially on the 12th century Cambrensis. It is possible that owing to the British difficulty in conquering and pacifying the Irish, some historians may have taken on these opinions because of personal and national prejudices. But surely, not all, with the exception of those who, last century, began to adopt a revisionist stand? And if prejudice determined the historians' attitudes, why was French Catholicism exempted when the relationship between England and France has historically been that of tension if not indeed, war?


17. "The Midnight Mass" 1979. See also "The Station", "Denis O'Shaunessy goes to Maynooth" and other stories by Carleton on the peasants' profound respect for the priests.

18. This does not deny the fact that there were serious problems involved with the system of public confession prevailing on the continent which would have made the private confession seem somewhat more attractive. Since confession there was a "once in a lifetime" event, there were problems for recidivists which the Church was aware of. In addition, there can be no doubt that many sinners never engaged in this form of confession because of its public nature. It must also be acknowledged that private confession was practised in Wales and Britain. It was, however, the Irish missionaries who were the most responsible for its spread to the continent (see the New Catholic Encyclopedia Vol. 11 pp.73-8 section on "Penance").

19. See Bieler (1963) for a list of some of the early Irish Penitentials.

20. This is quite possibly true, but according to this argument, one could also acclaim Nazism and other forms of fascism.

21. Proportional representation also exists for the Senate in the Australian electoral system, but there is no difference in the way Senate candidates and those seeking election to the House of Representatives conduct their campaigns in regards to patronage systems.

22. Note that this observer is not referring to the English overlords of whom the Irish might be expected to be afraid.

23. Although stage Irish caricatures are often cruel and racist, nevertheless, like all caricatures, they contain within them an element of truth, which can be sifted out from exaggeration if there is a "live" model by which to compare such portraits. Furthermore, I tend to feel that it is no coincidence that the stage Irishman should have crossed the Atlantic and so flourished in America, if in fact, he had borne no relationship to the American vision of types of persons emerging from the tight and segregated Irish communities in their midst (see Shannon, 1966). I share the opinion of Connery on this matter: "Every time I am solemnly told that the stage Irishman does not exist I meet one the next day". (1968:91).

25. From figures provided by the 1979 *Census of Ireland* Vol. 1 1980:xiii.

26. In 1951 the total number of persons at work was only 12,000 more than in 1926. The increase of 159,000 in industrial employment over the period had been almost wiped out by a decrease of 147,000 in agricultural employment (Lyons, 1971:566).

27. Dr. J. O'Connel "Is Ireland fed up with the EEC?" *Sunday Independent* 27 July 1980.


29. "Will the last TD to leave the Dail please switch off the light at the end of the tunnel" *Magill* January 1982.


31. Of course, a lack of concern with cleanliness and tidiness is by no means peculiar to Ireland. Hutchinson gives examples of other cultures in which this is also a characteristic (1970:511).


33. Citing several scholars of primate behaviour and one of human infant behaviour, Tiger and Fox show a connection between primate confidence in the availability of the attachment figure and physical and intellectual initiative and adventurousness in exploring, creating and coping with the social and technical (or geographical) world (1971:153).

34. Keating "...getting it wrong...getting it right" *RTÉ Guide* 18 April 1980.

35. O'Faolain's conception of culture is not the same as the anthropologist's. What he is referring to here are certainly not the traditions of literature, folklore, song, the peculiar style of learning or scholarship that characterised the native Irish; Catholicism, the specific practical form that government takes and other native Irish cultural creations. Nationalist though he is and proud of some native Irish achievements, he is not proud of the Catholic heritage, Irish practices in government - as distinct from formal government and its institutions which are inherited from the Anglo-Irish - and other behaviours which set the Irish apart in Europe as being somehow "backward."
CHAPTER FOUR

AUTHORITARIANISM: EDUCATION AND SCHOLARSHIP

...the slavish caution of my whole forever overmastered race...
(McGahern, 1977b:174)

Ireland has clung to her youth, indeed her childhood, longer and more tenaciously than any other country in Europe, resisting Change, Alteration, Reconstruction to the very last.
(O'Faolain, 1969:168)

The argument of this chapter is that certain authoritarian trends in Irish education and scholarship existed prior to colonisation and have continued uninterrupted to the present time. In schools, extreme authoritarianism begets a dependence on figures of authority, even among Irish Catholic scholars, who, instead of striving for creativity and innovation, tend to slavishly follow the traditions of precedents through which they realise their scholarly existence. Conversely, authoritarianism has generated a lack of self-confidence resulting in an excessive tendency in Irish scholarship to prove one's superiority over others. Scholarly activity in traditional Ireland has constituted not an end in itself, but more a means of controlling relationships. Transformations of these tendencies can be seen over 1500 years of Irish scholarly tradition.

This behaviour was seen to characterise the religious, political, economic and material cultural domains last chapter, and where possible I revealed this tendency transcended historical epochs. But nowhere does my argument that this preoccupation with the control of persons rather than the competitive creation of goods or ideas receive better support than in the domain of scholarship. In presenting material on education to demonstrate its principal concern with creating certain personal qualities rather than skills which would help students compete in a technological world, I shall at the same time be concerned to support my argument on economics and the lack of interest in material culture of last chapter.
Educational Institutions

I shall begin with an introduction to education before 1900, about which we know little, but in which the authoritarian trends can be clearly recognised. Various disciplines enforced obedience from students and extensive memorisation and repetition of facts in the absence of critical analysis. Spartan regimes with rigorous discipline have been described for Irish schooling, secular and religious alike, throughout its history. Atkinson tells us that the twenty or so Irish seminaries on the continent created in years when education at home was difficult to acquire (between the years of 1582 and 1681 (Dowling, 1935:15)) provided for a more rigorous programme of religious observance and learning regime than non-Irish Catholic colleges and universities (1969:51-5). The constraints under which students in the ancient schools suffered matched the linguistic and metrical constraints in which Irish poetry was constructed. Atkinson says that the chief characteristics of Gaelic learning throughout the tradition were

...extensive memorisation, accurate repetition, and severe penalties for even a minor departure from the generally accepted tradition.

(Atkinson, 1969:44)

and he provides us with eye-witness accounts of this as late as the 19th century. Sixteen to twenty years is the figure sometimes given for the period of training required for the filid (learned men, singular fili) sometimes called poets or bards (McGrath, 1979:56). Although we do not know much about the kind of training required for the artists producing the illuminated manuscripts, their extreme intricacy and refinement would have demanded that it be long and intensive, probably like that of the poet, Henry suggests (1947:204)

Although Dowling considers Carleton's literary descriptions of hedge schoolmasters in relation to their students reveal a lack of severity in discipline in the hedge schools of the 19th century (1935:55), it is not clear how he arrives at this without neglecting much contrary evidence in Carleton's writings. "The Poor Scholar" concerns a student who was unjustly and cruelly treated by a master. Masters who behaved this way sometimes found themselves visited by a group of the student's male relatives who inflicted like punishment on the master. Carleton reveals there is an oscillation between severe discipline and liberality which often results in chaos, particularly when the teacher's back is turned, or when children are let out of class. Akenson, the best informed and
most critical scholar of Irish education for the period beginning in
the 19th century thinks Carleton is a reliable observer of the hedge
school tradition in which he was himself once a master (1970:46-8).
This behaviour in the hedge schools is exactly reproduced in modern Irish
children whose school is authoritarian, but I found it diminished in
one country two-teacher-school where the teachers were not authorit-
arian but tried to train the children to be self-reliant in their study
methods, and self-disciplining in their behaviour. I found in many
families where there was an oscillation between fairly arbitrary discip-
line and indulgence, that there was an oscillation between resentment,
sulking and/or bad temper on the one hand, and anarchistic high spirits
on the other among the children.

The methods of teaching in the secular schools before the 12th
century were oral, although the vernacular language had been written
since the 6th century. Hence, this learning process required much use
of memorising. In the middle ages there were parochial or cathedral
schools, but not much is known about them, or their teaching methods
(McGrath, 1979:180). Dowling tells us that little is known of the
system of teaching in the hedge schools of the 18th and 19th centuries,
but much time was spent "rehearsing" things learned by heart, and copying
headlines set out by the teacher. He speculates that the emphasis on
the oral level may have been due to a shortage of text books (1935:58).
But if oral teaching has a long tradition in Ireland, it is worth consid-
ering that this method which allows for a much greater personal inter-
vention in the learning process by the teacher may be the result of
his desire to have a stronger position of authority over and influence on
his students than if they relied on the more impersonal and universal-
ised text; and obversely, a desire on the part of the students for strong
personal guidance. This hypothesis receives some support from the fact
that the Gaelic schools from the earliest times were grouped around the
personality of the teacher rather than any one place or group of build-
ings (Atkinson, 1969:43; Corkery, 1967:96), and the fact of the very
personal nature of the teaching system in the hedge schools which we
shall see later in the chapter.

It is no coincidence that teaching, the one position that gives
considerable scope to authoritarianism, has been popular in Ireland when
many other professions and skills seem to have been absent. From the
7th to the 10th centuries McGrath says that the Irish were the school-
masters of Europe (1979:105-7), and the export of teachers from Ireland to the continent continued into medieval times. Dowling states that most Irish poets of the 18th and 19th centuries also appear to have been schoolmasters (1935:118). Catholics were barred from entering professions (except medicine) in the 18th century, but in the 19th century when there seems to have been few professional occupations which they took up, one of them was school teaching, the other the priesthood, both being occupations which allow the incumbent to have direct personal control over people. Both were held in very high esteem by the Catholic people. In modern Ireland non-Catholics are disproportionately represented in well-paid prestigious occupations requiring tertiary education, but this is considerably less true of the teaching profession (see Streib, 1973:345). In a consideration of four immigrant groups in New York, Baynor found that the Irish were slower to learn skills and professions than the Germans and Jews and that among second generation Irish, labourers were still more common than among the total second generation population of American immigrants (1978:23). But of the elementary teachers classified by national background in New York in 1908-9 first and second generation Irish constituted 20.7% of the 14,900 teachers; Germans 8.7%; Jews 11.3%; Southern Italians 0.12% (1978:26).

The information on Irish education in the 19th century is much more extensive, partly because a national system of public schooling at primary level was set up in 1831 by the British administration, earlier even than in England, Scotland and Wales. It is evident that from this period until recently education controlled by Catholics has not been primarily concerned with producing individuals with skills for competitive activities in a technological world. Rather, the emphasis has been on the development of certain qualities desired or admired in the Irish tradition, be they obedience and supplication to authority as stressed by the Church, or nationalist sentiments as desired by the State. In his study of education in the Free State, Akenson says:

Thus, medieval theology, nineteenth century economic orthodoxy, linguistic nationalism, and social conventions all led to the same result: nearly universal agreement that education was not an end in itself, and that the educational process should shape the child to the measurements of his masters.

(Akenson, 1975:101)

The schools were used as a means to an extra-educational end,
and schooling was directed not at developing the potentialities of the individual pupils for the pupils' sakes, but at developing certain cultural traits for the nation's sake.

(Akenson, 1975:41)

Not that education is not always a vehicle through which flows the values of the culture all over the world. It is just that Irish Catholic values help to maintain the conditions of their society, some of which they themselves are not happy with, not the least of which is a lack of technological skills.

It was mentioned last chapter that the Church has sought and gained monopoly of education at all levels in Ireland, because it has realised that this secondary socialisation of the child, however brief it may often be, will help to mould him or her in certain directions, ones which I would argue receive their foundation, and reinforcement in the home. While the State determines in a large degree the secular curriculum in the schools, the interpretation of that curriculum is almost entirely under clerical control (Akenson, 1975:108). However, it is not at all clear that there has been much conflict of interests between the two bodies, for the State has behaved in precisely the same manner as the Hierarchy in dealing with education. It has been authoritarian and distrustful of representative institutions or parent or teaching bodies, and treated any submissions made to them in an authoritarian, peremptory manner (Akenson, 1975:34). The first minister for education in the Free State, Eoin Mac Neill said: "'The chief function of Irish educational policy is to conserve and develop Irish nationality'" (Ibid:39).

The principal instrument for achieving this has been that of obliging children to learn the Irish language. Akenson says that as the vast majority of children have spoken only English, it has been unpopular and opposed by parents as well as by the Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO). However, their views have been over-ruled in the same authoritarian manner that the State assumes in many other matters (1975:60-1). For the emphasis on Irish and the teaching of infants in other subjects through this medium in some schools when children spoke only English was found to be very detrimental. A sophistical empirical study published in 1966 revealed that at age twelve plus, Irish children were about seventeen months behind British children of the same age and background in their English language skills, and this was directly related to the amount of time spent teaching Irish (Akenson, 1975: 58). Later it will be shown just how dismal has been the failure of
these attempts to teach the children to learn Irish.

The curriculum was set by the State, and Akenson says that among many Irish educators there seems to have been a flight from educational freedom, with a rigid curriculum not designed for the needs of the 20th century.

The curricular pattern into which secondary pupils were pressed was remarkable chiefly as an indication of modern Ireland's rejection of the twentieth century's dominant intellectual trends. (Akenson, 1975:76)

While both the Church and State have resisted parental representation in decision making, it cannot be said that either parental or teacher attempts to democratise the management of schools or involve themselves in the formulation of educational policy have been at all vigorous (Atkinson, 1969:207). Thus it could be said that the Irish people—parents, government and Church—are alone to blame for the fact that until recently the Irish Catholics have, as Whyte says, associated educational superiority with Protestants and secularists (1971:66). I would like to support this statement by showing how these three bodies have, since the advent of a national school system in Ireland in 1831, managed to do this by their concern with the development of certain personal qualities in students rather than academic skills. This argument will not progress chronologically, but move in and out of eras according to the matter being discussed.

The inculcation of obedience and unquestioning acceptance of the authority of the teacher in the tradition of Irish Catholic teaching is too well known to need much elaboration here. For the Irish have taken denominational schooling to Canada, the U.S.A and Australia, where, in many ways it differed little from that practised in Ireland despite differences in the curricula. Blanshard takes an astringent view of the Irish Catholic control of education of Catholics in the U.S. and their attempts to thwart the American government's efforts to integrate its cultural and religious diversities and create mutual tolerance, by the insistence on denominational schools which are run in an undemocratic manner. He says a school survey in 1947 found that in Catholic-dominated public schools of the city of Cambridge there was an alarming emphasis on repetitive drill and a "rather complete rigidity and unusual traditionalism of methods, curricula, and administration of the system..." (1953:312). Joseph Kennedy, the father of the American Kennedy politic-
ians, sent his sons to non-denominational schools to break them away from the Catholic community and better equip them to participate in the affairs of American society (Levine, 1966:88).

The demand of unthinking obedience and acceptance of what is taught has not been confined to schools. Said one woman of her experiences in an Irish Catholic teachers' college in the late 1960s:

'If you were assiduous in the practice of your religion you were treated and viewed favourably. You were assured of a good chance of jobs whether you were up to academic standard or not. This surveillance applied to the lecturing staff as well, as did the favouritism in the allocation of jobs within the college.'

(Belfast Bulletin, 1980:11)

The surveillance by priests in the lives of lay teachers and attempts to keep them "in line" are often complained about in Irish literature, two well-known examples being found in McGahern's *The Leavetaking* and Frank McManus' *Fire in the Dust*. In his autobiography Austin Clarke reveals that when he was the English assistant lecturing at University College Dublin he fell in love with and married a continental woman in a registry office, to the opposition of the clergy. At the end of the academic year his university appointment was not renewed (1966:88).

Favouritism of the kind described by the woman mentioned above, and its obverse as complained of by Irish writers, is a form of the phenomenon of patronage discussed last chapter. Here I said that the person is given a job or certain privileges not on the basis of his or her technical or academic skills primarily, but on the basis of his or her personal relationships or contacts: in this case it is on the basis of personal behaviour – that of obedience. Atkinson says that the Irish statesman Henry Grattan who dedicated himself to the cause of Irish Catholics, deplored the fact that when St. Patrick's College Maynooth was opened in 1795 its staff were appointed without any kind of academic test (1969:61). John Henry Newman, a distinguished Oxford convert to Catholicism invited to become Rector of the new Catholic University of Ireland in 1845 had envisaged a great English-speaking Catholic university in Europe. But the bishops "'rode roughshod over'" him in the matter of appointments, and finding them so autocratic generally that he was unable to work with them (see chapter three p.102), he resigned in 1858 (Atkinson, 1969:132). From a speech reprinted in Lyons (1971:646) Newman is revealed to have been strongly committed to the concept of a liberal education, which the bishops most certainly were not.
An obsession with the control of students manifesting itself in the explicit desire of being sure that Catholic children were well instructed in a Catholic way of life "blighted every kind of educational experiment" in the period from 1831 to 1921 (Lyons, 1971:81). The British government was determined to keep the system of education undenominational in order to integrate the Protestants and Catholics in Ireland, but by 1867 only 10.7% of national schools had a staff arrangement that could be considered mixed (Akenson, 1970:216). Despite de facto denominationalism however, the Hierarchy agitated strenuously for a de jure denominationalism (Akenson, 1970:224). From 1850 onwards, Catholic clerical managers were in general forbidden to appoint teachers trained in non-denominational training colleges. The results were not far short of disastrous owing to the large percentage of teachers without training (Lyons, 1971:73). In 1883 there were 5007 untrained Catholic teachers compared with 1111 untrained Protestants (Akenson, 1970:354). The percentages of trained among the total number of teachers were 27 and 52 of the two religious groups respectively (Akenson, 1970:356). Many of the untrained teachers were principals, not merely assistants.

Let us look at how the Hierarchy hindered the development of university education in Ireland, and how the people themselves have accepted the decisions of the bishops. The native Irish had made unsuccessful attempts in 1320, then at the end of the 15th century to start a university. These attempts are thought to have collapsed through negligence and want of support (McGrath, 1979:218). There was at that time, however, a strong indigenous tradition of learning under patronage, and it is possible that this would not have been easily transplanted into a university environment. There has never been any lack of interest in training priests however. In the years of religious suppression in Ireland twenty Irish colleges were created on the continent between the years 1582 and 1681 (Dowling, 1935:15). Trinity College, a deeply Protestant institution, was founded at the end of the 16th century, and Catholics did attend at first, but between 1637 and 1793 were banned by the Protestant Ascendancy from attending. But after 1637 until the foundation of Maynooth, Irish students were commonly sent abroad to the Catholic colleges the Irish founded there. In the years following 1782 when laws suppressing Catholic education both in the hedge schools and for those going abroad were withdrawn, the British government began discussions with the bishops about the foundation of a seminary in Ireland. It was opened
in 1795 and funded by the British government until 1871. However, Connell says that the standard of education was very poor, expenditure on books minimal and staff appointed without academic qualifications. As late as 1850 trainees were forbidden to read newspapers. He talks of the low standards possibly being the result of the recruitment of priests from the peasant classes (1968:132), but they are just as probably due to the bishops' policy of giving precedence to personal qualities such as religiosity and obedience in their staff.

It is noteworthy that it was a seminary - a place where substantial control could be maintained in all aspects of the students' lives - that the bishops first attempted to acquire from the British government rather than a Catholic university in which priests could also be trained. For in the years preceding and following the foundation of Maynooth there was a critical shortage of tertiary education for Catholics in Ireland. In 1844 Ireland, with eight million people had only one university - a Protestant institution - but Scotland with two million persons had four universities (Atkinson, 1969:125). The British government endowed three Queens Colleges in 1845 in Belfast, Cork and Galway in an attempt to satisfy all religious groups. The Presbyterians were unhappy with this lack of religiosity as were the Catholics, but the latter set up bitter opposition to them, the Archbishop of Armagh, Cardinal Paul Cullen, decreeing in 1850 that no Catholic bishop or priest could hold office of any kind in these "godless colleges". There were attempts to set up a Catholic university in 1845, but it did not have a charter, and except for the faculty of medicine it could not confer degrees. The literature gives little indication as to why it failed, but it is said some Catholics preferred the more prestigious Trinity, and many did still attend the Queens Colleges. Quite possibly the matter mentioned above of the bishops riding roughshod over the Rector in the matter of appointments so that in the end he resigned, probably wanting precedence given to personal rather than academic skills as they did with appointments at Maynooth, prevented its getting a charter to give degrees. This would make it unlikely that any Catholics going to the expense of paying for a university education for their children would be prepared to do so if it did not equip the student to compete for jobs with others who were university educated elsewhere.

Not that the Queens Colleges were particularly successful academically. Despite Catholic opposition, between 1848 and 1864, 938 Catholics
as well as 1197 Presbyterians and 957 Anglicans, received degrees. But the quality of students was exceedingly poor and there were frequent complaints of students being badly schooled with academic standards which fell far short of those found in English universities (Atkinson, 1969:129), in spite of the fact that these colleges were government sponsored and run.

Trinity and the Queens Colleges were forbidden to Catholics in 1875 by their bishops which meant that formally, Catholics were left without any secular tertiary education, although the bishops did not take active steps to prevent attendance from Trinity until 1944 (Atkinson, 1969:143). (The ban was finally lifted from Trinity in 1970 (Lyons, 1971:645)). But the bishops kept up an unremitting struggle for a university of their own and they attained this in 1908 when the British government came to a compromise with their demands and established the National University of Ireland which was founded in Dublin with colleges in Cork and Galway which took over the old Queens Colleges there. While formally undenominational, allowance was made for the Hierarchy's influence there, and though they had to make compromises in the matter of appointments, they looked upon these three colleges as under their protection. Atkinson says there was no longer an insistence on a purely Catholic institution of their own: instead the faith and morals of Catholic students were to be safeguarded by ensuring they would be subjected to the influence only of teachers whose stand-point was known to be reliable in every way.

It was the intention of the Hierarchy to lay down strict standards concerning the construction and interpretation of the curriculum, which would be observed in every institution that enjoyed their blessing.

(Atkinson, 1969:143)

The historian Lee says that after it opened, standards at UCD were set exceptionally low, and little emphasis was put on research in the social sciences so crucial to solving the problems of Irish society.

Apart from a few isolated individuals, the members of the new university apparently entertained from the outset little ambition to make a major impact on either the quality of Irish life or the world of international scholarship.

(Lee, 1973:129)

As a result of the bishop's condemnation of the existing universities in Ireland in the 19th and early 20th century, it was not possible for any Catholic university-trained elite to emerge much before about
1915. Thus, it should not be surprising to find that at the turn of the century only 11.5% of Catholic male teachers and 8% of females in secondary schools were graduates (and most of them were concentrated in a few good schools) as against 56% of men and 36% of women among the Irish Protestants (Lyons, 1971:81). It has already been shown that the bishops' condemnation of teacher training colleges had deleterious effects on the education of their primary school children last century. Although the national school system was established earlier in Ireland than elsewhere in Britain, and it did act to reduce illiteracy, even so, by 1901 illiteracy in Ireland was still the highest in the British Isles at 11.95% as against an average of 3% for England and Wales (Akenson, 1970:377). But the Catholic Church is not alone to blame for the poor education of its children. We have already seen that the State's inculcation of nationalist qualities by over-stressing the use of the Irish language after 1921 has contributed to poor educational standards. Both the State and the Irish people have been negligent in other ways too, which reflect a lack of interest in having their children able to compete in a technological world.

Despite its being said by many observers of the Irish that they were very keen to have their children educated last century, the figures of school attendance belie these statements, and leave me to think that such observers as Carleton were in contact with a selected group of enthusiastic individuals who were not representative of the community. For the national schools showed very poor levels of attendance. Atkinson says that 75% of the children—from six to twelve years of age stayed away from school in 1856 compared with 55.8% in England and Wales (1969:102). A similar situation obtained in more wealthy Boston, U.S.A. where in 1877 some 9000 of the 43,000 children in the city between the ages of of five and fifteen years who were not in schools were mostly Irish, owing principally to parents not permitting children to attend school at all if there were not a Catholic school available (Levine, 1966:82). Of the Irish Americans Levine says that most "took a dim view of the usefulness of education and left its destiny in the hands of the clergy"(1966:87). The Irish Education Act of 1892 aimed to enforce compulsory education between the ages of six and fourteen now that school was free, but thirty of one hundred and eighteen municipal bodies empowered to act as local attendance authorities under the Act did not (Atkenson, 1970:346). Even by 1918 only 68.9% of the
average number of children on the rolls were in daily attendance, compared with 83% in the lowest area of the British Isles, the Orkney Islands (Akenson, 1975:66). By as late as 1950-1 the 83.3% average daily attendance still did not reach even the minimum acceptable standard (85%) in remote areas of the British Isles (Ibid:68).

These statistics reveal that parents were showing little interest in their children's future success in the material world. Coolahan remarks that "University education was not a highly valued commodity amongst the majority of the Irish middle class in the nineteenth century" (1981:109). Nor was there much concern even for secondary education in the Free State. Not until 1967 did high school education become free. In 1950 fewer than one in two children proceeded to high school (Humphreys, 1966:63), and as late as 1966, only two in every three children (Akenson, 1975:145), although fees in high schools were lower than in England and Wales (Akenson, 1975:169). However, Humphreys points out that endless sacrifices would be made by parents to send a daughter to become a nun, and especially to send a son to a seminary (1966:157). The subjects taught were not oriented to the world the children would face when leaving school: as late as 1962-3 as few as 30% of boys and 14% of girls taking the Leaving Certificate wrote papers in science (Akenson, 1975:76). Although in the early 1970s universities had begun to feel to feel the effects of increased grants from the government, the percentage of 20 to 24 year olds participating in third level education (which includes institutions other than universities) was 11, compared with an average of 20% for EEC countries (Coolahan, 1981:266). However, Coolahan qualifies this low figure by saying that some Irish students have already graduated from third level institutions by the age of twenty years, earlier than their European counterparts.

Akenson shows that the level of Irish educational investment was low in the four decades after independence compared to Ireland's counterparts in Europe. He understands that the Irish may have felt they could not afford a high investment, but just the same, educational investment patterns are a mirror to the culture.

If one assumes that a people spend their money on things they care about, then notes the chronic pattern of under-investment in education, one is led to the conclusion that Ireland as a nation placed a surprisingly low priority on the educational welfare of its children. (Akenson, 1975:89)
Akenson believes the attitude to education corresponds to the strong hierarchical order in the family with the father keeping the children subservient. When it came time to choose between the father's tobacco and the son's school fees, the scales were loaded against the fees. This found its way onto the national level where the child is at the bottom of the hierarchy, despite the love and warmth of the Irish family (1975:89)

But in entitling his study *A Mirror to Kathleen's Face*, Akenson is taking cognizance of more than the level of money invested in education as a reflection of the Irish relative lack of concern with the educational welfare of those lowest in the societal hierarchy. He has shown that a concern by the State with inculcating its children with linguistic nationalism and by the Church with obedience and the values of Irish Catholicism, both at the cost of education children in skills that would help them to achieve in a technological world, also reflect in "Kathleen" a pre-eminent concern with personal relations. Not until Ireland contemplated joining the EEC and turning itself into an industrialised society did innovations begin in the school system. In 1965 a government document appeared showing that they now intended to treat education as a social and economic activity, and not chiefly as a theological abstraction or linguistic exercise (Akenson, 1975:144). Now recognising the fact that the education system was in serious danger of becoming moribund through inbreeding and introspection, the Minister for Education made this statement in 1962:

'Closer contact with the Continent should, as its first effect, redeem us from a certain provincialism which hangs heavily over the Irish mind. It is bad for us to have our intellectual, educational, literary, artistic and other horizons confined to these islands, with only a very occasional glance over the hedge at what is going on in the rest of Europe.

(Atkinson, 1969:200)

But change does not always come easily. Coolahan says:

The progress which has been made in changing the management of Irish schools to a more broadly-based democratic mode has been a halting one, accompanied by some bitter debate.

(Coolahan, 1981:146)

In the schools I observed older teachers particularly often retained an authoritarian manner, but now imparted knowledge by modern methods which did not give them the status of revealed truths. In chapter three I
mentioned that catechism which imposes concepts in strict and inflexible terms of right and wrong upon behaviour, is no longer taught. The punishing conception of hell is no longer played up, but the idea banishment from God, light, beauty, peace, and love is conceptualised in more abstract terms. As an old-fashioned, authoritarian teacher told me, it would have been unthinkable for the concept of hell to be envisaged in abstract terms of alienation from love and all that one knew (i.e. culture) as might be expressed for instance in some of the plays of the existentialists, fifteen years ago. And old habits die hard it would seem: older teachers might change their teaching methods, but not their style and tone towards their students. Thus, among other things, the headmaster of a local vocational school marked out specific desks for every student in every room used. There was no practical value in this, and the children’s nickname of "Hitler" reveals they recognised the motives behind his behaviour.

It is from these changes which derive from the Protestant tradition found in Europe that Irish children are learning to have self-confidence. One can see substantial changes in adolescents in this direction, despite what have been fairly traditional patterns of child-rearing in many cases, i.e. those not conducive to the development of self-confidence. The education system is not the only source of change in Ireland, but it is the most important venue for change. However, as yet, the changes in education have not existed long enough nor are those emanating from other sources strong enough, to make a radical difference to the traditional absence of anti-intellectualism among Irish Catholics.

**Anti-intellectualism**

An unyielding disciplinary system and demands of obedience to teachers and their views are not conducive to competing intellectual interests, and this finds its way into the staff trained in Catholic teaching colleges and seminaries. In America Levine says intellectuality and curiosity among the Irish-Americans were suspect because they were identified with the Protestant culture. People who became intellectually curious often had to break with the Church. He cites Thomas O’Dea who says in his book *American Catholic Dilemma* that:

'...the attitude cultivated in the seminarian appears at times to be characterised to a high degree by a kind of passive receptivity; the impression is given that
Christian learning is something 'finished', and that education is a formation to be accepted from established authority with a minimum of individual initiation and critical activity on the part of the student.'

(Levine, 1966:106)

The woman mentioned earlier telling of her experiences in an Irish Catholic teachers' college in the 1960s reports that no debate or contact with the university, nor with other training colleges was encouraged. In addition, courses were deliberately biased and selective, with whole schools of thought within a particular discipline omitted. Nothing in the curriculum ever contradicted with the religious doctrines. There was no encouragement to analyse or question, and lectures were expected to be transcribed word for word. Even the religious teaching emphasised dogma and neglected the great theological philosophers, so no thought about the faith was engendered (Belfast Bulletin, 1980:12).

A recent statement from an Irish priest reveals why the Hierarchy in Ireland, America and Australia have been so intent on making sure Catholic children do not attend state-run schools:

Intellectual pride is very often the cause of heresy. A little knowledge can be a dangerous thing and some people become so puffed up with their knowledge they no longer accept anything they don't know or can't understand. They become too proud to accept things on faith in God's word.

To cite the above-mentioned woman's statements again:

'Acceptance, faith were the continual messages. You always submitted to an authority greater than your own. We grew up lacking strength and confidence in our own ideas and insights.

(Belfast Bulletin: Ibid. my emphasis).

This last statement echoes in the domain of teaching the same conclusions that I reached about the consequences of Irish child-rearing practices in chapter two. The methods of Irish Catholic teaching and their consequences are an extension into another domain of life this syndrome of inadequacy, lack of autonomy and dependence upon others for guidance. This kind of teaching in which the student must look uncritically to his teacher for guidance results in the abiding lack of intellectualism and analysis (which is to be distinguished from intelligence) of traditional Irish life.

Witing in 1947, Sean O'Faolain, a Catholic-born intellectual and thus an exception to my generalisations, says there was not a single layman's Catholic periodical to which one could apply the adjective
"enquiring" or even "intelligent".

Looking at the Catholic Church in Ireland in relation to the modern ecumenical movement one has to record that it was among the slowest-moving members of the universal Catholic Church. (O'Faolain, 1969:119)

Whyte says similar things about the Catholic social thought in Ireland until the 1960s (1971). Blanshard points out that at the time of writing (1953) there were only two small independent journals, The Leader and The Bell which ever ventured to challenge Church policy and these had little impact on the mass of people. There was (and still is) no anti-clerical society or political party or cultural movement which directly challenged the Church, and nothing resembling the spirited and saucy anti-clericalism found in France and Italy (1953:70).

But lack of intellectuality is not confined to the Catholic Church in Ireland, nor to its social teaching. There has been little intellectual content in any of the political parties either now or in the past. O'Faolain says that it was the emotional content of the French Revolution that the Irish rebels seized upon in 1798 and not its intellectual content, and the whole of patriotic literature ever since has either concerned itself with matters of sentiment rather than thought, or with interim solutions of immediate problems that time has since dealt with otherwise. Davitt in the late 19th century and Connolly in the early 20th century are two exceptions (1969:103). In Vive Moi! O'Faolain recalls his days as a nationalist rebel in the civil war and admits:

I cannot say we idealists said goodbye to our intelligence, because, alas, if we had any worthy of the name I saw but little of it in those disheartening days of civil war. (O'Faolain, 1963:190).

The lack of ideology in Ireland's nationalist politics since 1798 will be dealt with further in chapter seven.

O'Faolain's statement that "Irish political thought is, to this day [i.e. 1947], in its infancy" (1969:103) is confirmed by Chubb who points to the lack of ideological differences between the two major parties in the Republic, to the lack of debate on general issues, and to the fact that intellectuals are suspect in Irish politics.

After 1922, few enquiries of any depth were made into social and economic problems until recently, and even those were remarkable for their pedestrian quality. New
social services and new legislation have all too often been a copy mutatis mutandis of the existing British pattern. Public servants (politician or professional) and the universities have not provided new ideas, nor have there been many attempts to observe and adapt the experiences of other countries.
(Chubb, 1970:56-7)

The typical T.D. is not interested in broad issues but lets his party leaders get on with their business while he attends to his constituents. He has concern about matters of general policy only where they impinge on his own locality (1970:185). Nor has this intellectual sterility been confined to political behaviour in Ireland. Shannon tells us that in America

...Irish machine politics was carried on in an intellectual void. It was the intuitive response to practical necessities and unrelated to any comprehensive theory of politics and society.
(Shannon, 1966:67)

Many writers have complained of the lack of intellectual discussion or thought in Ireland. Ussher said in 1950:

In our country, schools of philosophy do not exactly teem; one may doubt whether the idealist aesthetic of Benedetto Croce or the existentialism of Jean-Paul Sartre has aroused a flicker of interest among our intellectuals, from poets to professors. And this is to name only the two most discussed doctrines which have appeared in Europe since 1914.
(Ussher, 1950:181-2)

Ireland at present might as well be the Gobi Desert for any tangible evidence that out of her will come a school of philosophy.
(Ibid:188)

I would like to add a few remarks on Contemporary Thought in the Irish Language; but for the unfortunate circumstance that there is no thought whatsoever being produced in Irish.
(Ibid:191)

A Catholic sympathiser, Paul-Dubois said in 1907 that

'We find...a certain form of intellectual apathy very widespread, a distaste for mental effort, a certain absence of the critical sense.'
(Whyte, 1971:65)

In an astringent look at not only the lack of encouragement of thought in Ireland, but also its suppression by means of censorship, Sheehy slams the Catholic Church and its teaching system with its emphasis on memorising rather than on analysis, and in the last words of his book he concludes bitterly that

...the great barrier to Irish development in the twentieth century was not British imperialism but Irish puritanism.
(Sheehy, 1968:242)
The choice of the term "puritan" is not quite accurate as my ongoing argument demonstrates, but Sheehy is correct in locating the source of the lack of intellectualinity in Ireland in the personality. That it may have its origins in the individual can be seen in evidence provided by the sociologist Humphreys who reports that the Irish are suspicious of intellectualinity, even in the highest classes, the employer-managerial. Said one educated professional informant:

'...if you were to advocate an intellectual grounding in the faith, if you were to advocate that people be trained more in the knowledge of their religion and in theology, you'd be accused of being a rationalist and of promoting secularism. You would be creating an intelligentsia who have always caused us trouble here, who have been the ones who have lost their faith and created a good deal of disturbance.'

(Humphreys, 1966:159).

Humphreys says New Dubliners still voice a strong fear of positive intellectual orientation to religious truths because they feel it may lead to complete rationalism (1966:232). Thus we see it is not merely the Church that advocates or demands or enforces obedience and conformity to traditions set down in the past by persons perceived to be greater than the self: the people themselves seek for it to be this way.

A people with attitudes like this are likely to implement or condone censorship by either the Church or State, and this is precisely what has happened in Ireland. Recalling the parochialism in University College Cork in the mid 1920s, O'Faolain says the Professor of Education observed Joyce's Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man in the Students' Club library and at once had it removed (1963:61). He says the Church has relied on the weapon of rigid authority to censor those who raised intellectual enquiries, and the State supported this by instituting legislation concerning censorship. He says that under the Censorship of Publications Act of 1929 imposed by the State purportedly for the suppression of indecent material, many frank attempts by Irishmen to delineate the society in which they lived were silenced. Brendan Behan's Borstal Boy is a case in point (1969:159). Under this Act much serious literature, including that written by fellow countrymen, has been made unavailable to Irish readers, who also include teachers and lecturers. In its peak during the years 1950-55 the Censorship Board averaged 600 books banned per year. Among the authors who had titles banned were some of the most celebrated figures in modern literature: Andre Gide, Jean-Paul Satre, Ernest Hemingway, John Steinbeck, Tennessee
Williams, Graham Greene, Thomas Mann, Tolstoy, G.B. Shaw, to name only a few (for a more comprehensive list see Blanshard, 1953). The intellectual insularity such censorship engenders parallels that shown above in the domain of Irish education. Yeats and the Irish Civil Liberties Association fought it, and now the Board confines itself mainly to the exclusion of paperback pornography.

However, it would be unfair and untrue to say there has been no intellectual activity or debate in Ireland at all. As mentioned earlier, the journal The Bell with O'Faolain as editor was a forum for intellectual debate. Yeats, Synge, O'Casey and Joyce established a new type of Irishman, the Irish-European, says O'Faolain.

But, whether we are thinking of poetry, or drama, or of the novel, Irish literature without the Big Four would now be regarded as no more and no less than interesting regionalist literature.

(O'Faolain, 1969:131)

But it should be noted that three of these people were Protestant and all spent a substantial part of their lives abroad. This is also true of some other great Anglo-Irish writers in the past – Swift, Sheridan, Wilde, G.B. Shaw, to mention some.

Lack of confidence in oneself and one's opinion leading to the dependence on others is the reason for the lack of intellectuality, and of political and social ideology in Irish life. For the dependence of people upon one another for their sense of self-worth manifested in the multitude of hierarchical power structures through which pass goods and services from above, and gratitude and loyalty from below, create the abiding personalism of Irish life, and leave little room for political philosophy. Looking again at the way in which the Irish political system is constructed, it is generally described in terms of a political machine, which Bart says is an ego-centred interaction system: a vast network in which the leader is located at the centre. Even if all the people in the machine were party members, one could not call it a corporate group (1976:70). The hierarchically organised machine can be compared to a feudal system: each local broker has a "fief" from his T.D. and works and lives like a small prince in his own domain (Bart, 1976:87). In this kind of political and social system in which people interact on a one to one basis, the concern is with
particular individuals and particular instances, not with social or generalised issues. Chubb remarks that loyalty is a great virtue in Ireland, but it is to institutions and persons rather than to ideas (1970:55). In a lecture given by an Irishman it was said:

'Division on personalities rather than on principles and policies has been a distinct mark of our people for a long, long, time and, perhaps, is a national characteristic that is unlikely to disappear.'

(Chubb, 1970:57)

The personalised view of the world, concerned with individual personalities rather than with social issues or ideologies is evident in the daily newspaper the Irish Independent, Dr. Torode argues, and he contrasts this with the more universalised view to be found in the Irish Times (1978), a Protestant-based daily. Although Magill is of international standard, it nevertheless retains a strong personalistic style in its journalism. This idea will be developed further in chapter seven.

**Critical and analytic capacity among contemporary Irish academics**

What of Irish Catholic academics then? Do we find even in this group a general lack of analysis and criticism. The answer I would give is yes, particularly for those whose entire education has been received in Ireland in Catholic institutions. And in the social and intellectual climate and teaching environment so far described, it would be strange to find it otherwise. Most of the analyses of Irish culture and society have been done by non-Irish scholars - Arensberg and Kimball, Humphreys, Messenger, Leyton, Brody, Bart, Sacks, Harris, Scheper-Hughes to mention the names which occur most frequently among the anthropologists or sociologists in this thesis. The state of research in psychology is very under-developed in the Republic, and I have found nothing to which I could make even a passing reference written by an Irish person. I have found the sociological studies conducted by the Economic and Social Research Institute of Dublin which are published either as monographs by that institution or as papers in their journal *Economic and Social Review* to have been generally conducted at a level of analytic enquiry such that I have been unable to make much use of their research except on odd occasions as sources of factual data. This institution is somewhat oriented to practical purposes for policy-makers and this may account for the heavy emphasis on statistical data rather than on theoretically informed enquiry. Of the two contributors whose analyses (as distinct from mere data) I have used in developing my own argument,
Peter Gibbon and Bertram Hutchinson, the latter is not Irish and the former is Anglo-Irish now living in England. Furthermore, the Institute was late in being set up (1960) and by 1970 when Chubb (who is not Irish) sent to press his excellent study of the government and politics of Ireland, in his preface he revealed he was regretful so little research had yet been done on the political sociology of Ireland. Since then an excellent study of the politics of the Church and State relations has been done by John Whyte: there have been further studies of political sociology by Schmitt, Raven and Whelan, Pfretzchner and Borock. Only Whelan (and possibly Raven) is Irish. However, the situation is improving as younger scholars benefit from the improved education system. Abstracts of papers delivered at the annual conference of the Sociological Association of Ireland in April 1982 reveal more enquiring and theoretically based studies of Ireland are likely to be forthcoming from Irish scholars at institutions such as UCD.

There is a sociological study by an Irish priest and lecturer in sociology at Maynooth, Michael MacGréil whose title reveals its contents, *Prejudice and Tolerance in Ireland* (1977). But despite its very considerable length — 660 pages on a topic which would be of some interest for my work — I have found so little analysis in this study that I have made only passing references to factual data it provided. And it is characterised by a feature commonly found in the more traditional domains of Irish studies which will be dealt with shortly — excessive dependence upon his predecessors. MacGréil has devoted over 200 pages to justifying that it is in fact legitimate to study prejudice and tolerance, and citing others who have done so. This long preamble makes no contribution whatsoever to his empirical task; nor does it aid his interpretation of the data collected, or generate inspired or original ways of acquiring that data.

The best studies of education in Ireland have been done by Akenson (1970, 1973 and 1975) and Atkinson (1969), neither of whom is Catholic, and the former of whom is not Irish (I am unable to establish the nationality of Atkinson). A recent publication by the Catholic John Coolahan (1981) purports to be the first full length treatment of Irish education at all levels from the early 19th century up to 1980. Yet much of the first half of the book especially, reproduces the information provided by Akenson and Atkinson, and it is far less critical of what the Church has been doing in education in Ireland. And when dealing with at least
one matter that would make the Hierarchy look rather unattractive and
undemocratic, he skims over the dispute - that which the Church had
with John Henry Newman in the foundation of a Catholic university in
the 1850s as mentioned above (see Coolahan, 1981:pp.109;117;118-9).
However, an Irish priest, Fergal McCrath (1979) has dealt in a masterly
way with the history of Irish education in ancient and medieval Ireland.

Irish contributions in the fields of history - political, social,
religious and literary - and to the study of the Irish languages - old,
middle and modern - are very substantial. For these are areas which
enable the researcher to rely upon precedents and facts for his published
material, and require little in the way of interpretation. History at
its best ought to be interpretative, but it need not necessarily be so,
and in confining themselves to the reproduction of facts in their role
as original researchers, Irish Catholic academics would not be unique
in the world of scholarship. They would, however, be unique in the
western world as a cultural group who seem unable to produce little
other than this kind of research for publication.

I do not pretend to have read all works written on Ireland, and
my analysis is based on a random rather than systematic sample of Irish
publications. However, I see little evidence for an Irish Catholic
capacity to depart far from orthodox sources of data or to move beyond
what others have said, particularly those whose entire education has
been received in Ireland. Although some are capable of being critical
towards their material, and also have a sense of comparative history,
such as R. Dudley Edwards (post-graduate education abroad) whose biography
of Patrick Pearse I refer to in chapter seven (1979); Lehane (1968);
and MacLysaght (higher education abroad) (1969), whose works I often
refer to in the thesis, few are capable of analysing their material
as well as that managed by three intellectuals who are not in fact
academics - O'Paolain (Catholic, post-graduate education received in
America); Ussher (Anglo-Irish); and Crusie O'Brien (Catholic background
but Protestant educated). And no Irish Catholic academic scholars approach
the skill of K.H. Connell whose four historical essays (1968) provide
valuable analytic material for my purposes.

Consider for instance, the eleven contributions to various historical
periods in the well-known series, the Gill History of Ireland. Here we
find many contributions to be meticulous, but dry-as-dust reproductions
of minutiae comprising the events of the period in question.
An historical period, or at best a theme on an historical period, binds the facts together, without any argument. A similar, but more severe criticism could be made of the large number of small volumes constituting the series History of Irish Catholicism of which Patrick Corish is the general editor. Most contributors in both series can be seen to have nationalist sentiments, although unlike earlier works produced at the end of last and the beginning of this century, this does not necessarily prevent them from producing evidence that is unflattering, nor does it necessarily create biases which distort their work. Over half the contributors to Corish's editions are priests, and the majority are Catholics: but as far as I am able to establish, only six of the contributors to the Gill series are Catholic in background, and several are not Irish. However, while some Irish Protestants - and for that matter, some scholars elsewhere in the world - do show signs of being "dependent" scholars, there are quite a few who can be critical, analytical, and go beyond their data. Two historians, the Anglo-Irish J.C. Beckett and Northern Irish Protestant F.S. Lyons have written very long historical studies dealing with the reproduction of factual data without being uncritical, as dry-as-dust, or lacking a sense of comparative history. And MacDonagh (1968) (Catholic, higher education abroad) reveals that short studies of a particular period of a similar length and format i.e. without a system of referencing, to the Gill History series can be interesting and powerful. It is to Beckett and Lyons that I refer extensively for historical data in this thesis, although I do draw upon some of the volumes of the Gill series for factual data sometimes. But despite extensive Irish Catholic involvement in the tradition of Gaelic literature and scholarship, the scholars whose analyses of the material have been most influential in the development of my argument in the remainder of this chapter are predominantly foreign and/or Irish Protestant. Although not referred to often, it was the American Vivian Mercier's analysis of congruities in Irish humour from the earliest times to the present day (1969) that sparked the idea of the possibility of a similar analysis of Irish literature and scholarship; the Irish Protestant Macalister's analysis of secret languages in Ireland (1937) has also been very helpful in crystallising my ideas; and the English scholar Robin Flower (1947) has provided the best over-view of the subject of Gaelic literature and scholarship. Only one Irish Catholic scholar, D.A. Binchy (post-graduate education abroad) has contributed substantially to the development of my argument.
However, at least three contributors to the Gill History series show evidence of a critical ability and a sense of comparative history—all three being scholars working in England—Watt (1973), Lee (1973) and Johnston (1974). I wonder then, if their relatively bland, characterless contributions may be the result less of their academic weaknesses than of the demands made by the general editors. In his preface Lee says:

This study was originally conceived as a work of reflection than of research. Unfortunately, despite many splendid recent contributions to the history of high politics of the period, the present state of knowledge precludes an interpretative essay of the type envisaged.

(Lee, 1973: Preface)

Johnston makes a similar statement. I shall not concern myself with what an interpreter of culture would consider a false position by Lee, or with disagreeing about the present state of knowledge on the period he deals with, but rather with the fact that there is an absence of interpretation in favour of a reproduction of "facts" which may reflect the desire of the editors. For such an approach to history has a very long tradition in Ireland, reflecting behaviour which has constituted a dominant theme in this and last chapter. With a minimum of criticism one maintains a dependence either upon others, who may be contemporaries (as shown in the last chapter), or on one's precedents, or upon a tradition which has been maintained by one's precedents towards which one is either implicitly or explicitly worshipful. In order to fully appreciate this tendency in the Irish we should look at its expressions over the centuries before returning to contemporary material again.

**Irish approaches to the study of their history**

One of the most important tasks of the monks in the early Irish Church, and of the *filid*, who took over from them in the 13th century, was the compilation of annals and genealogies. Flower tells us that the scholars working in monasteries in the early Irish period left us that curious fabric of *senchas*, the genealogical and historical lore of Ireland which was henceforth to dominate the historical work of the schools. This material gradually accumulated from the 6th to the 12th centuries. When Christian and biblical works came to Ireland the monastic scholars set about in the 6th and 7th centuries to compile historical links from the great world kingdoms—Assyria, Egypt, Greece, Rome and others—to Ireland, with fabricated genealogies, and this may be seen in the *Book of Conquests*. 
It was in a sense a propagandist work, designed to gather into one whole the history, traditions and mythological origins of the various races of Ireland, free and unfree alike. The result is a strange medley of poetic history, mythology, folklore and biblical and classical reminiscence, a characteristic product of these 'masters in theology, in history and in poetry'. (Flower, 1947:74)

The Book of Conquests became canonical in the schools and its teachings were faithfully reproduced down to the 17th century. This was done by the scribes and historians who took over the work of the monks after the 13th century (Flower, 1947:74). As late as the 17th century we find scholars continuing in the same tradition. O'Clery wrote a descriptive list of the monarchs of Ireland from mythological times to the 17th century called "The Succession of Kings"; he also made the great final redaction of the Book of Invasions; of "The Calender of Irish Saints"; and of "The New Lexicon" - a glossary of abstruse Gaelic words. Again following the Gaelic tradition, the Four Masters in this century compiled the "Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland". It contains little descriptive or sustained narrative, but mainly an uncoloured recording in chronological order of such events as: "In this year, so-and-so, lord of Tirconall, died"; "in this year, there was a famine". The historical composition was a dispassionate list of events in which genealogy is very important, de Blacam says (1973:233-4).

Although the Four Masters' efforts are frequently praised, the more critically-minded Binchy thinks that because they mixed fact and fable indifferently, and uncritically, from secondary sources, they are overrated (1967:68). With all this copying of the old traditions and material there was no conception or plan for putting the particularities together and writing a general history of Ireland. The first Irishman to attempt this was Jeffrey Keating in the 17th century. The historical minutaie give us no insight into the possible reasons why men acted in certain ways, or the problems or philosophical issues with which they struggled in their time. One of the more critical contributors to the Gill History series with a sense of contemporary history, John Watt, complains that the evidence in medieval Ireland on Church history does not allow us to get into the spirituality or minds of individual prelates. The diocesan history that comes down to us often seems little more than a chronicle of property deals and conflicts between rival jurisdictions (1973:119). For the scribes and historians were following on the
tradition established in the monasteries of the early Church, one which we will see later was a continuation of an oral tradition. They were expressing a strong antiquarian interest, often copying material which they did not understand, either because it was written in an archaic language or was specialised technical law terms (This antiquarian interest has made it possible for modern scholars to have access to material of the early Irish period, very little of which now survives in original manuscript form.) The attitude towards their material was a worshipful one, as we shall see most clearly in the case of law later in the chapter. The manuscripts on which this material was written were highly prized and respected by the aristocratic families who acquired them, though they may have understood or appreciated little of their contents.

It is little more than a modernised version of the Irish Annals that characterises the worst of the contributions to the Gill History series. But perhaps no modern scholar resembles the old chroniclers and scribes so much as Father Paul Walsh who seems to have consciously emulated the aims of the scholars who compiled the Book of Conquests in his Irish Men of Learning, published in 1947. But on the contrary. His compilation of genealogies as well as the presentation of facts for the sake of themselves (rather than for the understanding they may give of their subject) is, I believe, as spontaneous as is his admiration of his distant ancestors, the scribes,

...who eschewed original composition, but have earned the gratitude of all scholars, if not Irishmen, by the pages they have left to future eyes to examine.

(Walsh, 1947:Preface)

Walsh's repetition of so-called facts - genealogies of the historians, scribes, genealogists and poets of the past - often accepting what may well have been fabricated (i.e. an individual's claims of a long family history of scholarship) with an absolute absence of critical assessment, might not unreasonably be supposed to have the same origins in the personality as it had in his distant ancestors. Nor is it coincidental that at the end of Walsh's accumulation of largely useless "facts" that he in turn receives by way of obituaries, the same tributes from three of his (very sentimental) descendants, in three separate repetitive sections, for his "genius", which we learn was a "phenomenal memory" for family history, genealogy, literary history, philology, computation, the Irish Annals, diocesan history, and Irish place names (1947:283).
In the study of law in the past we see precisely the same trends. Binchy says that our only knowledge of the Ancient Laws which operated in Ireland until the English Conquest in the 17th century in many areas, (sometimes incorrectly called Brehon Laws), survives in manuscripts written at least 800 years after the early tracts had been compiled, and so were written by scribes who did not always understand what they were copying. He believes that by the middle of the 8th century, all the extant law tracts had already received their final shape. They were first committed to writing at the end of the 6th century, preceding Christianity in their customary form of oral verse which was in the possession of the druids (1943). The prolific commentaries which the lawyers engaged in on the ancient texts did not help either them or us to understand the texts. For their function was to give the fiction of immutability which does not allow us to get any idea of what law in practice was like at any particular time (Binchy, 1967:62). Binchy states that Irish law was jurist-made, working on the basis of immemorial usage, hence its conservatism. No innovating hand of the legislator, neither king nor assembly, had authority when these rules were formulated. And as each petty state constituted a separate jurisdiction, regional variation was inevitable. But we find in the recipients of the tradition of laws the fictions of uniformity and continuity, as well as that unreal schematism and passion for classification (which also obtains in the Hindu law books). Irish jurists give us an idealised or highly conventionalised picture of Irish society and law, doubtless accurate in fundamentals, but often untrustworthy in its details (1943:214)

Lawyers are everywhere innately conservative but the Irish lawyers carried conservatism to unheard-of lengths. The old canonical texts were congealed in ink: they became the sacred and immutable deposit of ancestral wisdom. (Binchy, 1967:60)

The jurists were to learn them by heart and interpret them, never to bring them up to date (Ibid).

The predilection for "collecting" traditions which are venerated can be seen throughout the history of Irish scholarship, and is most clearly embodied on the contemporary scene perhaps less in the contributions to the Gill History series than in the Department of Irish Folklore at U.C.D. In its early days as the Irish Folklore Commission, founded in the 1930s, the big problem was to collect material from the creators and
transmitters before it disappeared in an industrialising society. But having collected folklore, the next task is analysis, surely, made difficult perhaps before Propp and later Levi-Strauss gave to the academic world the technique of structuralism, but yet possible for anyone with psychoanalytic leanings. Yet glancing at the journal published by the Department, *Bealotideas*, since the 1950s, among the contributions written in English which predominate, no hint of either psychoanalysis or structuralism is to be seen: only new contributions to existing stock-piles of folklore, or at best, in recent editions, articles on themes which draw material together from various districts or eras.

Let us look at how a professor of this department discusses what he sees to be the problems for the scholar of folklore in his popular book (as distinct from purely academic) *The Bedside Book of Irish Folklore* (1980). Seamus Ó Cathain makes it clear that the most important task of the modern folklorist is not analysis, but "making a permanent record of Irish oral tradition in its many facets for the benefit of posterity and future generations of Irish people". (1980:12), though he admits his department already has the best collection of manuscripts in the world. He gives an example of the type of information wanted on traditions, which he would like people with such knowledge to send to his department (in this case on the lighting of bonfires), which reveals he is seeking only factual material (1980:25). This method is totally uninformed by the tradition of observer/participant used by anthropologists, one which allows both acquisition of data and analysis. Ó Cathain is not interested in syncretism such as that often found in Ireland's Own - the kind of material which I have found can give us the deepest insights into Irish culture and personality, as the folk poem beginning my second chapter reveals. He believes that the most important task of the folklorist is to separate such material from the "genuine article". This belief carries a very uninformed assumption that "new" and "genuine" are antinomies: it fails to appreciate the fact that the "old" stories were once "new" ones.

This belief in the value of aged material having more academic value than new material created by people causes Ó Cathain to fall into a trap of unscholarliness. For he is prepared to accept at face value, as historically correct, a story told by a woman at 85 years of age about what she remembered her grandfather – who died when the woman was only
eight years of age - told her of his part in the 1798 rebellion (this story was recorded in 1934). Considering 136 years intervened between the telling and the originally-devised story - whose factuality at that time remains questionable - that both persons were very old when they told the story, and one but a child when she received it, it can hardly be considered to be as valid as conventional historical records which are documented by contemporaries. Yet this is how O Cathain regards it (1980:29). One is left to presume that O Cathain's nativistic fervour has blinded his vision and blighted his academic objectivity.

Or is this what has happened? O Cathain's approach to his material can be shown to have congruence with other contemporary Irish studies, and with an Irish tradition. This is the tendency to approach one's material as an antiquarian, as one who is interested in it for the sake of itself, rather than the understanding it will give of its creators, and giving to this material the fiction of continuity, consistency and a near-sacredness as the traditions of one's forefathers. This tendency is especially evident in O Cathain's and O'Flanagan's contemporary "dínáshenchas" (a study of the lore of high places in earlier periods), The Living Landscape (1975). Flower says that the poets of Ireland cultivated this study with an unremitting assiduity until with revision, enlargement and copying throughout the centuries, it formed a large body of literature in prose and verse forming a kind of Dictionary of National Topography which fitted the famous sites of the country each with its appropriate legend (1947:1). Although O Cathain's and O'Flanagan's study of the placenames and accompanying folklore in the townland of Kilgalligan (county Mayo) to determine their dating, life-span and how they were created could have uncovered much that might have contributed to our understanding of the people and the way they lived in the past - a kind of social geography as produced by McCourt (1950) (see chapter five) - they have chosen to leave us almost entirely in the dark about such matters. For theirs is a latter-day expression of the worship of the Gaelic tradition, the unquestioned "immutable" tradition through which they realise their scholarly existence.

Absence of originality in the scholastic traditions

As we might expect from such a tradition, one of the marked characteristics of Irish scholarship has been a lack of originality and intellectuality, noted by a number of Irish scholars over the last century,
each with his own explanation for the phenomenon. Frank O'Connor states that because of their obsession with the oral transmission of knowledge, the Irish professional classes in early Ireland aimed at producing not the man with the best brain but with the best memory. One effect of this oral tradition was particularly regrettable: the development of memory at the expense of intelligence which paralyses the critical faculty. "The mass of information that was fed into the memory of an Irishman of the professional classes could produce nothing but a brain-storm" (1967:15), one form of which was false etymology (see below). Irish literature never had any critical apparatus. When something went wrong with a text it did not get corrected but was rationalised over until it established a mythology of its own (1967:16).

O'Faolain comments that the Irish learning tradition tended to be uncreative, local and particular and he believes it may have been due to the strong ascetic trend in the culture. Even the jurists showed no art of generalisation, he says, for whenever asked a general question such as "What is Justice?", they would reply by enumerating "There are fifteen of Justice". The Irish suffered from an incapacity to generalise. The Irish grammatical tracts could never define in general terms, but always fell back on particular examples (1969:54). O'Faolain makes a statement (Ibid:54) that echoes one made by the great Gaelic scholar Rudolf Thurneysen:

'Apart from their piety, the Irish certainly brought abroad with them their inclination to scholarship which was not very wide-spread on the continent, and made them welcome as schoolmasters; but to develop their reasoning powers was something they could only do in closer proximity to the Mediterranean.'

(O'Connor, 1967:9)

And O'Faolain remarks that all modern Irish writers are "au fond incurably local and romantic" (1969:141).

While such particularism is not peculiar to pre-industrialised Ireland by any means, being as it is common in societies which do not have an alienated class of intellectuals, O'Faolain is suggesting that it was more extreme in Ireland than elsewhere in Europe at comparable stages of development. We can see an excellent example of the contrast between the Irish learning tradition and that of the ancient Greeks and Romans in their respective ways of describing the druids for historical purposes. The descriptions given by the latter (such as Julius Caesar
whose occupation was not that of a scholar) of the Gaulish druids allow posterity insights into their functions, operations, status in the society and so on (see Chadwick, 1966). But while there are numerous references to Irish druids by Irish Christain writers, McGrath says they were not concerned to give outsiders or posterity a systematic account of the druidic system, but merely incorporate into their writing according to their literary or historical needs, the doings and sayings of particular druids (1979:18). And the tradition of particularism continues to be quite evident in times when an alienated intellectual class does exist, as I have suggested in the way they deal with particularities in history rather than linking them together into some kind of overarching vision or argument; in their study of folklore; and as I shall later show, in their approach to studies of their own language in different historical periods.

Despite the immense amount of material available in surviving manuscripts, there has been little trace of any theological or philosophical speculation among the Irish scholars. Thurneysen was struck, as have been others, that from the beginning to the end the native Irish tradition produced only one certain Irish philosopher, Johannes Eriugena of the 9th century (O'Faolain, 1969:54). In a seminal paper on Latin exegesis in the middle ages, Bischoff says that Irish biblical interpreters were often led to a sophisticated and penetrating discussion of the literal sense of the scriptures with questions concerning why or why not being directed to small details of expression and to word sequence (1976).

In the early 16th century there was no intellectual ferment in Ireland nor any anxious questioning. The practice of religion may have had its weaknesses, but acceptance of it in theory was unqualified. No heated arguments developed about faith and good works, about the Mass, the Scriptures, justification, and predestination.

(Mooney, 1967:39)

I mentioned last chapter that the Irish have been distinguished for their literary creations, throughout their history. However, poetry, especially after the 13th century, became characterised by extremely strict rules of composition which remained unchanged for four centuries and had the effect of stifling originality in the bulk of new compositions. Douglas Hyde, president of the nativist Gaelic League said that the *filid* of the middle ages

'...seem to have continued on the rather cut-and-dry lines of tribal genealogy, religious meditations, personal eulogium,
clan history and elegies for the dead. There reigns during this period a lack of imagination and initiative in literature....There is great technical skill exhibited, but little robust originality.'

(Grath, 1979:202)

His chapter in which this statement is found is entitled "Four Centuries of Decay" (Ibid). Grath thinks these criticisms are generally warranted, but he explains that the féil was mainly a public relations officer of the chiefs.

Other Gaelic scholars have similar things to say about this and other periods. O'Farrell, who is said not only to have studied bardic teaching but composed poetry in characteristic strict metre of the middle ages, admits that the poetry of that period often lacked inspiration, though not artistic finish. He thinks the poems were too long and joins with Dr. Hyde who says "'Their chief characteristic is an intense compression which produces an air of weighty sententiousness'" (1970:12). Grin's statement that

They sometimes lack genuine inspiration, but they are always dignified in style and carefully finished. And as they follow unservingly the old traditional standards they form a great linguistic storehouse of classical Gaelic, unimpeachable in vocabulary, morphology and syntax.

(Bergin, 1970:22)

is somewhat apologetic. As mentioned in the last chapter, O'Farrell is extremely critical of the 18th century Gaelic poets. He holds in contempt their slavish ingratiation to both Irish and English lords, their lack of interest in the common people and their welfare, their aristocratic snobbishness and unrealistic nostalgia for an anachronistic political order that had been virtually dead for a century (1980:32-8).

In this extraordinary veneration for preceding scholars and traditions, we can see a continuity from the earliest times when information was transmitted orally, and later scribally, through to the Walshes and O Cathains of modern Ireland. All these scholars realise their worthiness and sense of self much less through their own original contributions to knowledge than through others whom they perceive to be in some way greater than themselves. One is reminded of the Catholic teacher cited earlier in the chapter who said that when being trained as a teacher she was forced to submit to an authority greater than that of her own so that she grew to have no confidence in her own ideas and insights. In these scholars, these conditions appear to have been fully
realised. In the conclusion to this chapter we shall see another manifestation of this condition - the tendency of the Irish to look to the dead and to past generations for present political ideology.

These scholars reproduce information which gives us virtually no insight into the internal states of men, the cultural, philosophical or theological problems with which they grappled in their times. Walsh's kind of scholarship does not constitute the whole of traditional Irish scholarship, but a substantial part of it. But in the rest of the western world, we have long understood scholarship to constitute primarily the function of helping man to understand himself. Nor did this whole stream of scholars, all repeating traditions and praising their predecessors - either explicitly, or implicitly by choosing to copy particular manuscripts rather than others - offer their society information and ideas which had anything other than minimal practical function. This scholarship did not maintain administration of the state, for Gaelic Ireland never constituted anything other than a series of petty kingdoms without central government, and based on a pastoral life. What then was the function of scholarship in Irish society? To answer this question I turn to the other side of the coin of dependent scholarly behaviour - the authoritarian scholarly behaviour which expresses superiority over the other and obliges him to look up to, and perhaps depend on the scholar.

Scholarship as a vehicle for power over others

That the native Irish should have maintained a sophistical tradition of scholarship, when they were essentially a pastoral people who did not settle in towns demands an explanation. So too does the kind of scholarship which concerns itself with establishing pedigrees, be they for the new Christian Irish who wanted to show direct connections to the famous ancient kingdoms, or the newly independent 20th century Irish wishing to establish claims to scholarliness in their culture by tracing the genealogies of the scholars in the past. I think we can begin the explanation which covers both questions with a statement made by Flower.

The old Irish society was organised upon an intensely aristocratic basis, and...set great store by those memories of past achievement which feed the pride and enhance the prestige of a dominant class. The function of the poets was to keep alive this long-descended record in its full detail of genealogy and varied incident.

(Flower, 1947:3)
Flower says that the poet established in the service of a master would devote himself enthusiastically to his interests and was of choice and necessity an upholder of the monarchical principal in its most extreme form (1947:99). Flower is providing us with the reasons why Irish society should have patronised learned men and says that the scholar might have fulfilled this function because in doing so he received protection from his patron (1947). But by this means the filid acquired some of the aristocratic powers or prestige of the patrons themselves. While on the one hand the filid depended slavishly and uncritically on this aristocratic tradition for their self-realisation, on the other, some of them used this tradition to create a superiority for themselves. The principal means by which this was achieved was that of word-play, in various forms, a method which again did not make any contributions to the understanding of the material they were dealing with: in fact the contrary was the intention – the exclusion of others from one's privileged status by mystifying one's material and making it incomprehensible to all but very selected others. The first form of word-play I shall deal with is that of secret languages.

Secret languages

R.A.S. Macalister has written in a masterly manner, with a fine comparative sense of his subject, on the secret languages of Ireland. Their purpose appears to have been to maintain exclusivity and to demonstrate learning skills that would intimidate others. I shall therefore refer to him at length. In The Secret Languages of Ireland (1937), Macalister reports that Caesar said although the druids of Gaul (who seem to be somewhat related in custom to those of Ireland) made use of Greek letters for certain matters, they did not commit their verses to script because he (Caesar) supposed they either desired to guard against the vulgar becoming acquainted with their mysteries, or because they were afraid of weakening their students' powers of memory (1937:2). Macalister thinks it may be the former (1937:4) and draws valid parallels for certain religious beliefs or revealed truths not being written down in other cultures. In addition, the druids may have used an archaic language which was unintelligible to the public. Evidence of this comes, among other places, from a report immediately before the Christian era in a glossatorial note of the Ancient Laws of Ireland, by an observer who said that two members of the filid class who were involved in judging law cases spoke "'in a dark tongue'" so that no one was able to understand them. "'These people keep their judgements and knowledge
to themselves. We know not the meaning of what they say" (1937:12).
Interestingly, Macalister reports in a footnote that a 10th century Irish
charlatan who knew of this story (which had survived reproduction over
five centuries) endeavoured to reconstruct the dispute and in the text
he produces, he has shown the disputants to have been seeking to con-
found each other with obscure, allusive kennings and other literary
devices (Ibid:12). However" incorrectly" this scribe has reproduced
the story, it gives us an insight into the kinds of tactics legal
disputants were probably still using in his era, i.e. 10th century Ireland.

Thus Macalister says:

From Caesar's evidence, we have drawn the conclusion that the
druids in Gaul must have had at their service, in the language in
which this literary heritage was composed, a means of communication
known to no one, however exalted, outside their own circle of
initiation.

(Macalister, 1937:14)

However, he admits there is no way of verifying this from the classical
literature. Although the scanty information on the druids comes from
observers of the Roman and Greek empires, from the above-mentioned case
in Ireland, there may be some basis for supposing there were some
similarities between the behaviour of those in Ireland and Gaul, Mac-
alister believes (1937:14), the latter country of which, like the rest
of Europe, and unlike Ireland, was to become Romanised. 7 Macalister
puts forward a good argument that Ogham alphabet used in Ireland was
extremely clumsy, never being intended for literary communication: rather
it may have been a form of secret communication (1937:28). The druidic
language was archaic Goldic and it is in this language that Ogham
writers in Ireland endeavoured to express themselves. The term "Ogham"
originally referred to this language, he believes (1937:29).

Macalister moves into the subject of cryptology which may be defined
as the art whereby two persons, A and B, interchange a communication
while withholding its purport from a third person Z who has cognizance of
their means of self-expression (these symbols may refer to individuals
or groups). He enumerates four branches of cryptology, of which Ogham
alphabet was one, and says we find this phenomenon extensively practi-
ised in Ireland (1937:38), although there is also evidence of its being
used elsewhere in north western Europe (Ibid:61). He makes a novel and
persuasive argument that what has hitherto been considered incompre-
ensible gibberish in the tract of the Book of Ballymote of the 14th
century may in fact be a serious treatise on such secret methods of
communication through a cryptological medium (1937:58).

There was a continuity of learning from the druids to the *filid* with the latter also using a language which was a standard literary dialect while the vernacular continued to change. Discussing the medieval period Bergin says:

They normalised the language by admitting into their verse only such forms and usages as had the sanction of earlier poets of high repute, everything else being rigorously excluded. (Bergin, 1970:13)

There are a lot of other rules for forms which must not be used, rules for aspiration and eclipses and so on. Dialect was archaic and there was a sustained dignity of style with excessive devotion to traditional precedents (Ibid). The bardic schools themselves were "a sort of conservative trade union, hedging poetry about with rules and restrictions and jealous of unlicensed innovations" (Flower, 1947:152). Knott and Murphy point out that the court poet in medieval Ireland held a high standing. His was an hereditary calling and he belonged to an aristocracy who could retain their privileges only by strictly observing the obligations entailed by their rank and calling. So he had to maintain a high standard in his compositions to avoid slovenliness or inaccuracy in prosody or diction (1966:62), or else, be the subject of satires commonly made on vulgar composers who lacked the requisite finesse. But in becoming extremely stylised and elite, the poets' works often became far removed from their mainsprings in human emotion. Even the 18th century poets' best supporter, Daniel Corkery, says that the poets' verse became

...more and more a study rather for the schools themselves than an outlet for a people's emotion. A profession that was hereditary, a rich, strongly-organised caste, an over-elaborated catechism of art - one reckons up such characteristics and finds it hard to equate these darlings of the nation with our idea of poets in general. (Corkery, 1967:84)

In the sense that its methods were not accessible to outsiders, we see evidence of a transformed secret language in the practice of writing poetry.

Macalister has discerned a continuity between the studies of the druids, *filid* and those performed in the monastic schools. Here the reading of biblical texts was prevalent, and an intensive study made of the Psalms. Just as a student of the druidic schools was called upon
to learn a corpus of verses, so a pupil in the monastic schools began his studies by learning by heart the 150 psalms attributed to David. And the students complained of their laborious tasks. Excursions into Vergil and other classical writers helped to lay a tolerably sound foundation of Latin scholarship and

...in this remote and extra-imperial island, Latin, a foreign language, took the place of old 'Ogham' language as the corpus vile of grammatical study. (Macalister, 1937:69)

Nowhere is this use of a secret language to which only a very exclusive minority have access more evident than in the Ancient Laws. Whatever the parallels between old Irish law and that from other jurist-made systems, the one element which is consonant with other old Irish literary or scholarly creations is its tendency to archaism and deliberate obscurity. On this Binchy says that the legal language was

...a professional and semi-secret language, full of technical terms which made it largely unintelligible to the uninitiated, the 'rude and ignorant folk' whom the jurists, intent on retaining their monopoly, sought to exclude from the practice of law...Few of its technical terms are found outside the purely legal texts and glossaries, and practically none of them has passed into the spoken language, a further proof that in Gaelic Ireland law remained...a secret science...Within a couple of centuries from the compilations of the tracts their language was not always intelligible to their official custodians and interpreters in the law schools. (Binchy, 1943:210)

Joyce adds that a few legal rules laid down in the Ancient Laws were unreal and fictitious. Some would seem to be mere intellectual problems invented to show the cleverness, or to test the ingenuity, of the learners in solving theoretical difficulties (1920:15). Binchy says that in medieval Ireland lawyers owed much of their prestige to the very fact that they were the custodians of ancient and arcane wisdom, and they made great play with the archaic texts, well aware that the layman would never guess how limited was their knowledge of these texts. Their commentaries were rather in the nature of antiquarian window dressing (1967:64).

It would appear that these examples of exclusivity of knowledge of which we shall see more shortly and to which only a few elite persons had access after a long period of training, might best be understood by the use of comparative anthropology. For example, looking at the material from Barth's monograph (1975), and from Hiatt's work (1971; 1975),
one finds long systems of "apprenticeship" for membership of privileged, high-status groups in the society, which are meant to maintain the exclusivity of the groups who define themselves by secret knowledge which they will impart to certain others only under specific, usually arduous circumstances wherein the "apprentices" have to prove their worthiness to enter the exclusive groups.

That the druids and filid including those who interpreted law were prestigious groups is everywhere in evidence. When students in the filid schools broke up they dispersed themselves among gentlemen and rich farmers by whom they were well treated and entertained (McGrath, 1979). There were many grades of filid, the highest of whom had equal status to political figures, although Binchy doubts that these numerous "grades" of rank into which the free-born Irish were divided ever had any political significance outside the law schools. It is more probable that the old three-fold classification determined status in questions that arose in practice i.e. "Kings, Lords and Commons", the normal division in other Indo-European societies and known to Irish literature of all periods (1943:224-5). However, this does not mean that subtle distinctions of different status were not a social factor as one may see in any part of the world where there are complex societies. Furthermore, there is frequent evidence of quarrels between the scholars, poets, and ascetics (see Flower, 1947:44; 76-7), which would appear to be concerned with establishing ascendancy in their status. In fact, the poets quarreled among themselves at the worst moments of their country's history over relative ascendancy. In the "curious" collection of poems known as the Contention of the Bards which took place at the beginning of the 17th century during the years of religious and political repression, some poets chose the medium of geography as the vehicle through which to enact their rivalry. So out of keeping with the concerns of the time was it that one contemporary priest in Louvain expressed in a bitter epigram that it was wrangling over an empty kennel when the whelps had been stolen (Flower, 1947:168-9). Knott and Murphy say that "Contention" more accurately translates as "counter-boasting": in this "Contention" all the traditional learning of the poetic order is brought into play about supremacy (1966:88). Sometimes Irish society felt the poets misused their privileged status for in the 6th century we find their numbers are reported as excessive and they have become overweening in their behaviour, and attempts are made to control them (McGrath, 1979:116).
It would appear that far from scholarship serving practical functions, its principal end as far as the individual was concerned was to enhance the prestige and superiority of the scholar who sought to exclude others and to confound them with his stunning knowledge. There are further manifestations of this. Talking in riddles has been at all times a favorite amusement among the Gaelic people, Mercier says. Early Irish literature abounds with riddles of a certain kind to which the formula which introduces the answer, a time-honoured boastful one, is "not hard" or "easy" (to say). A typical riddle is "What are the three dumb creatures that give knowledge to every one? Easy (to say): an eye, a mind, a letter". This formula introduces the learned treatises, traditional place-name lore and even hero-tales (1969:80).

Bischoff tells us that an Irish scholar compiling a biblical commentary in the late eighth century took over in many places long excerpts from Isidore which go far beyond what is directly necessary. Thus, when treating the division of land in Canaan it expands on linear and square measures, and when discussing the kings it also introduces the remaining degrees of rank and military classification. The work is interspersed with a considerable number of comparisons between Hebrew, Greek and Latin words. And when somebody does something for the first time, or when something happens for the first time, the pedantic questions are obtrusive. They bring to mind that Irish scholar Cadac-Andreas whose learned vanity and presumption was caustically ridiculed at the court of Charlemagne by Theodulf and an anonymous bardling. The following question is addressed to Cadac: "Who was the first among the Irish to have painted his face at a funeral?" (Bischoff, 1976:88). Bischoff does say, however, that from this point onwards, exegesis became less pedantic.

Bischoff says that the Irish tended to display superiority of knowledge in speech and phrases. A particular favorite ornament of Irish erudition was the rendering of a word in the "three languages" i.e., Hebrew, Greek and Latin, though modern scholars agree that the knowledge of Greek in the early monastic schools was limited to that of the alphabet and a few chance words and phrases (McCraith, 1979:77); and the Irish knowledge of Hebrew was almost non-existent. Bischoff continues, that through the writings of Jerome which were full of examples of such triple knowledge of languages, the desire to imitate was nourished. What had phililogical meaning in the former now became antiquated knowledge or appearance of knowledge, deficiencies of which
were very arbitrarily supplied. And more and more of these linguistic comparisons of doubtful origins were accepted, e.g., the names of the three Magi in the three holy languages (1976).

Kennings - another form of ostentation (in the form of strained metaphor) which involves confounding others with one's wisdom - were commonly used in Irish society, and skill in their use, as in the use of archaic diction, was part of the curriculum of the aspiring *fili*. When Cu Chulainn was wooing Emer, for instance, he expressed himself in a string of allusions and periphrases, which the lady was shrewd enough to interpret and reply to in the same spirit, so that although the courtship took place in public, the bystanders were unaware of what was going on. Words conveying no meaning to their hearer are always impressive. A story used to be current of how Daniel O'Connell put to silence an abusive Dublin fishwife by the use of a rigmarole of long, and in themselves, innocent words which he created. A striking example in Middle Irish appears in the extraordinary story called *The Ever-New Tongue* (Macalister, 1937:74). Another locus for kennings in early Irish is "The Colloquy of the Two Sages" which contains a veritable battle of wits between two persons. The colloquy is actually a verbal contest in which two men seek to gain supremacy through words and language whose meaning is as cryptic as could be imagined. This text must have been highly prized, Mercier says, for thirteen manuscript copies of it are known (1969:84).

The significance of this text for the history of Irish learning and wit can hardly be exaggerated. It expresses three archaic attitudes which have remained embedded in the popular beliefs of the Irish: first, that wisdom can be demonstrated by the propounding or answering of seemingly insoluble riddles; second, that the dexterous use of verbal ambiguity is inseparable from wit and wisdom; third, that truth can be arrived at by witty dialectic. The witty and humorous cross-examination of witnesses who match their own wit and humour against barristers is part of Irish legal tradition.... To this day, obtaining information from an Irishman or Irishwoman about the simplest matters of fact often involves a battle of wits.

(Mercier, 1969:86)

That James Joyce should have replied "*in risu veritas*"("in laughter is truth" - a laughter usually derived from mockery in Joyce's case) in correcting a friend citing the adage "*in vino veritas*" (Rodgers, 1972: 62), is eloquent testimony to the profundity of Mercier's insight. Knowledge, and its manipulation, which can involve a play with words, is the medium through which a sense of selfhood is maintained *vis-à-vis*
the other in Ireland.

Let us look at how this behaviour is manifested in Carleton's dramatisation of the hedge schoolmaster's behaviour in "The Hedge School", a subject with which Carleton was intimately familiar as he had been a hedge schoolmaster himself. When two Protestant men came into his school to see how his charges were progressing, the master was not pleased to have them and besides playing some practical tricks, engaged in some intellectual tricks which so confounded them, one of whom was a Cambridge graduate, that they left in haste. The master's pedantry had no limits; nor did his capacity for intellectual trickery of which a barrage was aimed at the bewildered visitors of the kind: "'And how would you find me the solid contents of a load of thorns?'" (1979:199); or "'Can you give me Latin for game-egg in two words?'" (1979:200).

No doubt Carleton is engaging in typical caricaturing, but this image is supported by the information he conveys about the activities of those involved in the hedge school system in the 19th century. A student who felt he had learned as much as he could under a master challenged him to a public verbal contest for which there would be a moderator or judge, and to which many "ignorant" peasants would attend as it constituted very interesting local entertainment. The type of questions shown above were used by each party to confound the other. If the student lost the challenge he settled back humbly under the tutelage of the same master until such time as he felt fit to renew the challenge. If he won he would seek a new master whose knowledge he would imbibe until such times as he challenged him. During these peregrinations he was called the "poor scholar", and from what I can discern, he was greatly assisted in material matters by the peasantry who were honoured to be associated with such ambitious scholarliness, in much the same way as they would be in the case of a priest. So the poor scholar built up knowledge and capacity in this way, through contests, defeats and triumphs, and after three of four years in this manner returned to his native place and sent another challenge to the schoolmaster, and if successful, drove him out of the district and established himself in his place. The vanquished master sought a new district, sent a new challenge in turn to some other teacher, and if he won, put him to flight in the same manner ("The Poor Scholar", 1979). This behaviour must be distinguished from competition: it is an attempt to displace totally one's rival, not to coexist with him on equal terms where each
strives to compete in the task of good teaching, or acquisition of knowledge. Here in fact, we have a foretaste of behaviour to be revealed in the following chapter - anti-authoritarianism, or challenge to the authority figure.

Some who received instruction in this manner did go on to Trinity and many to Maynooth. Carleton praised their stock of knowledge in classics and mathematics, but says a great deal of ludicrous pedantry generally accompanied this knowledge ("The Poor Scholar", 1979). But we have already seen the poor quality of the students attending Maynooth, and of those who instructed them, and the poor standards of students entering and leaving the Queens Colleges in the 19th century. As most of these students would have come from hedge schools before 1831 and the advent of a national school system (of 8000 or so Catholic schools in the 19th century 7600 were held by independent lay teachers and most of these were hedge schools (Atkinson, 1969:48)), the image Carleton conveys of the hedge school as an institution imparting knowledge which was an important medium through which one's integrity was maintained vis-à-vis the other is probably not greatly exaggerated.

And this tradition of establishing one's superior wisdom by confounding the other by riddles, jokes, epigrams and limericks, quotations from eminent authors etc., which one is challenged to equal is not yet dead. I found myself among a group of very "Irish" academics and students who constantly engaged in such repartee. One specialised in witty epigrams for which, I was told, those who compose are much admired in the academic fraternity and the epigrams are long remembered if about a particularly eminent person; one in multi-cultural jokes, the telling of which he had got to a fine art; and another in quotations from eminent writers which left the other two desperately searching for a suitable joke or riddle to equal, or perhaps to mock its profundity. Much amused by this brilliant repartee, I would sometimes return to the task at hand in my case, which had been to seek advice and reading material for various aspects of my research, and a sounding board on which to test some of my theories. However, made uneasy by my attempts to analyse material with which they were more familiar than myself, they would introduce an appropriate quotation, epigram, limerick, riddle, joke, or story in which I was meant to see myself, and my whole intention was thereby rendered - good-naturedly as it so happened - ridiculously irrelevant or inapposite.
Hisperic Latin and its contemporary counterpart

There is yet another dimension of the learning tradition in which behaviour consonant with that so far described is manifested, and it maintains the continuity with the invention and use of secret languages. It concerns Hisperic Latin which is also called Hisperic. One important source of information on this invention is the seventh century *Hisperica Famina* — "a title which, in humble emulation of its own style, we might render 'Occidental Talkitudes'" (Macalister, 1937:78). The text, Macalister says, begins by showing us a teacher glorying in his scholarship.

Next he administers a snub to a countryman who has come to be taught learning: let him mind his own business and return to his sheep, says the master in effect, though expressing himself with bewildering circumlocutions — displaying a spirit of exclusivism truly druidic, and altogether antithetic to Christian universality.

... the vocabulary is little short of diabolical. It is primarily Latin — a hodge-podge of classical, colloquial, and ecclesiastical vocables, used either in their orthodox form or distorted in one way or another, morphologically or semantically.

(Macalister, 1937:81-2)

What we see in Hisperic is the essence of a secret language: the mother tongue with its syntax is the framework of his utterances and he merely varies the verbal bricks with which he constructs them (1937:82).

The text of the *Hisperica Famina* is compiled by a group of impostors clinging to their knowledge and preventing others from getting their secrets. Michael Herren says:

The whole of the *Famina* are filled with allusions to the superiority of one person's knowledge or rhetorical ability over those of another.

(Herren, 1974a:42).

There was a brief Hisperic florescence of 20 years which seems to have suddenly died, to the bewilderment of Herren, but neither he, nor many others have been able to see its continuity with other forms of learning which serve precisely the same function.

In an article entitled "Hisperic-Latin:'Luxuriant Culture-Fungus of Decay'", Herren tells us that an eminent Gaelic scholar, Eoin Mac Neill has thus pejoratively described the *Famina* and other Hisperic texts, considering them to be products of literary decadence. So MacNeill has foisted them onto another people (the Welsh) because their
corrupt use of language presented such an embarrassment (1974b). Herren
gives sound Irish origins and justifies their existence on the basis of
their being experimental models, vigorous attempts to adapt Latin and
bits of other learned languages to Irish models (1974b). In his *Hisper-
ica Famina* (1974a), however, Herren provides at least two other possible
explanations, besides acknowledging that they display much evidence of
the struggle for the superiority of the writer over the ignorami he
ridicules. This vacillation at least shows Herren is keeping an open
mind on its possible function, but it would be made clearer to him if
he could see its congruences with other aspects of Irish scholarship
i.e., showiness, the use of archaic diction, multi-lingual word-play,
but especially, its uncannily clear consonance with some material shown
to us by Carleton; and with some latter-day "faminations" by James Joyce.

No doubt Carleton's "Denis O'Shaughnessy Goes to Maynooth" would
embarrass Professor MacNeill, but in this case he would not need to
attribute the work to a foreigner making observations of behaviour in a
place other than Ireland. This story is also a caricature, but a bril-
liantly funny and insightful one. It concerns a young man of peasant
origins pompously and arrogantly parading his knowledge to all in his
district, including his awe-struck parents, so that he might acclaim him-
self a man of high status and great importance in his district. All
instances of his displays of learning are in the context of power strug-
gles, and he uses his knowledge -- or more correctly, his skill with
abstruse, deformed, often misused and misunderstood foreign words -- in
a way congruent with the writer of the *Hisperica Famina*. His real know-
ledge of Greek reveals itself when he tries to get his own family and
everyone in the district to call him Dionysius because he believes it is
the Greek form of Denis. His knowledge of classics, such as it may be,
in no way brings him into contact with ideas or philosophy so that he
might expand his vision of mankind. Here is an extract from the story.

How his[father's] eye will dance in his head with pride, when
the young priest thunders out a line of Virgil or Homer, a
sentence of Cicero, or a rule from syntax! And with what com-
placency and affection will the father and relations of such
a person, when sitting during a winter evening about the hearth,
demand from him a translation of what he repeats, or grammatical
analysis, in which he must show the dependences and relations
of word upon word -- the concord, the verb, the mood, the gender,
and the case; into every one and all of which the learned
youth enters with an air of oracular importance and a polysyllab-
icism of language that fails not in confounding them with
astonishment and edification.

(Carleton Vol. III, 1979:36)
Neither the Hisperic fanatics nor poor Denis got their respective forms of *braggadocio* to impart much meaning to their audiences, but they did succeed in stunning them with their learning — Denis his live audience and the Hisperic creators countless scholars who copied, interpreted and made portentous commentaries upon them. By mixing the work of the Hisperic parodyist, Maro, and the etymologist Isidore (who was also substantially relied upon for the creation of the *Hisperica Famina*, Herren says) into

...an incongruous and indigestible pie, they compiled the solemn monument of grammatical but misdirected learning called *The Scholar's Primer*. And generations of scholars glossed it, and glossed it, and glossed it again, till it assumed a shape out of which it would pass the wit of an Aristotle to extract any coherent sense of meaning.

(Macalister, 1937:87-8)

But James Joyce was the first to use this method of discourse which successfully imparted meaning and philosophy: but this Irishman lived all his adult life away from Ireland.11 Joyce's skills seem to have arisen spontaneously, without the guidance of the Gaelic tradition of which he was largely ignorant (see Clarke, 1966:25-6).

Not all scholars looked at the Hisperic creations and the creators of *The Scholar's Primer* admiringly. Some had the satirical eye of a medieval Carleton. The scholar Maro working on the continent wrote a parody of the Hisperic literary style, and in particular, the *Hisperica Famina* is thought to be the principal object of his scorn. Maro has one scholar disputing day and night for a fortnight on the question whether the pronoun *ego* can have a vocative case. He affects a Latiny — or rather, twelve different kinds of Latiny — never seen before on earth with all manner of spurious words and unheard of grammatical forms. He commends an imaginary friend for inventing abbreviations equally impossible to comprehend (Macalister, 1937:84). For once, the Irish sense of humour failed them, for as mentioned above, they took Maro's parody to be a grammatical explanation of Hisperic writings (Macalister, 1937:87)

James Joyce's work, which has generated such a multitude of interpretations and exegeses, is a manifestation in the 20th century of the old Irish tradition of secret language creation. But there is yet another — the creation and use of modern Irish which, astounded though some may be to read this, is, I believe, the most recent and pervasive example of this phenomenon. This is contrary to the explicit
intentions of the Gaelic League which imposed compulsory Irish on National schools and made Irish a subject which was essential for Matriculation in the new State, the latter beginning before independence, in 1912, and remaining until 1973, and compulsory Irish still obtaining in National schools today. Furthermore, attempts had been made by nationalist groups last century to stop the decline in Irish speaking, with little success. For while 40% of the population spoke it in 1851, this fell to 14.5% in 1891 (Atkinson, 1969:153). Similar and worse declines in the Celtic languages have occurred in Scotland, Wales, the Isle of Mann and Cornwall in the past few centuries as the dominant English culture encroached upon the cultures of these provinces.

Similarly, the revival of nationalism in all these Celtic cultures this century, including Brittany, has had as its essential ingredient, the revival of their language, and in terms of getting it taught in schools and having bilingual media, the Welsh have won some significant concessions from the BBC. Once they became independent, the Irish did not have to wring such concessions from a nationalist government, but the language pressure groups have had considerable failure in making Irish people interested in their own language. A lot of the economic and cultural programmes which were meant to maintain the cultural and linguistic integrity of the Gaeltacht areas which had about 40,000 people using Irish as their true vernacular in 1946 (Messenger, 1969:6), have for one reason or another failed. Nollaig O Cadra gave regular reports on such schemes in the 1970s, especially those concerned with maintaining the spoken language, in the American journal Éire-Ireland. There are a number of reasons why the language revival has failed, most of which cannot be dealt with here, but it became clear to me that in a generation or so it is unlikely that any of the descendants of peasants, the real bearers of the Irish language, will be even bilingual. On a visit to one of the remotest parts of the Gaeltacht where the people speak a dialect of Irish and have some difficulty understanding the Irish spoken by other native speakers, and especially the modern Irish of the media, very few children spoke Irish as a first language. In one family of ten children where the parents both spoke Irish as a first language, one of the girls told me that there are a couple of brothers and sisters with whom she does not "feel right" conversing in English. But even if these marry people from that district, the odds are against that partner also speaking Irish as a first language. And in a generation or so when this happens, the only Irish speakers
in Ireland will be the "trendies", or as Flann O'Brien calls them, the "Gaeligores" - those nationalistic persons who have heard it not at their "mother's knee", but have learned it from books.

The real inheritors of the Irish language, the small peasant farmers of the west of Ireland, do not really feel proud of their language and are aware that the rough, peasant-like way in which they speak it will gain them little social mobility or middle-class respectability. It is true though, that many children from the Gaeltacht have received social mobility through the teaching profession because of the emphasis placed on competent Irish for Matriculation, especially for those entering the teaching profession. While their own peasant Irish would no doubt have helped them, they would have had to make a lot of changes to it to effect this, for modern, written Irish taught in the schools and universities, is as one native speaker distinguishing it from her own said, "polished". So polished in fact, that one high school student told me that at her boarding school in the west of Ireland girls from the Aran Islands usually scored badly at school in Irish which was their first language, and also in English of which they had a poor grasp. This is despite the fact that it is believed the "best" Irish is spoken in the Aran Islands, Messenger says. Their speech fits the three criteria of nativists for good Irish, these being the relative absence of despised English terms; the retention of traditional Irish terms; and the richness of the Irish idiom (1969:6). It is clear then, that there is an incongruence between the aims of the Gaelic Revival which has been to re-establish and maintain as much Irishness in the people as possible, and the actual practice of those implementing these ideals.

There are some linguists who are trenchantly critical of the language the Irish revivalists have created. They began with a living peasant language, but Walsh, an Irish linguist working on Irish dialects says, these middle-class people were ashamed of the coarse peasant traditions of this language and so set about making a language of their own which is

A monstrous parody of the language, an insult to the generations of Irish speakers in the Gaeltacht who had preserved it for our ears... ...they created a language which had to look like one of a literate people. So they favoured archaic spelling and obsolete forms which were to be free from English borrowings. And all the time in their efforts to speak refined non-peasant Irish,
they used a mainly English sound system and a largely English syntax.

(Walsh, 1977:19-20)

Perhaps Walsh is being a little too severe however, for the Irish have been faced with considerable difficulty in creating a single mutually comprehensible language for the various regional dialects and to render it suitable for use in a modern commercial and industrial world. It had last been used as a written language in the archaic Gaelic world of the 18th century poets. Attempts have been made to regularise and simplify the spelling of this very difficult language to render it more accessible to the English speakers of Ireland. Just the same, there are some language revivalists who have cultivated an archaic style. Despite Patrick Pearse's fervent desire that Ireland should be a nation for the Irish people whose peasant customs he claimed to admire (but see chapter three p.125 for his aristocratic tendencies), nevertheless

He held that while the 'speech of the people' is appropriate to narrative, a more dignified and scholarly diction ought to be used in polemical prose. It was common while he lived, to condemn his style as artificial...

(de Blacam, 1973:383)

Although some of these extremes have been modified in reforms of the language, it remains not a language of the people, but of the elite. Not a single person born in my parish of 2,500 people was known to be a competent speaker. The only exceptions were a couple of old women who had been moved from county Mayo many years ago under a land reform scheme meant to reduce the congestion of the west. Teachers had to have a minimum grasp of it and some students both liked and were good at Irish, but even one teacher who learned it at university was unable to translate for me a discussion in Irish on television. I have no doubt that she grasped some of its meaning, but she was clearly not fluent in Irish.

However, most children hate to learn Irish, the consequence of which can be clearly seen in the fact that the government has seen fit to introduce advertisements on television and in the newspapers giving both English and Irish commonly used phrases and greetings, persuasively encouraging people to get the sense that it is fashionable to display minimal signs of bilingualism. It has had the effect of making people feel more proud of their language though they may not
be able to understand or speak it. But they are unable to take up the
government's suggestion because it is an extreme affectation among mod-
ern uneducated, or working-class people to intersperse English with the
odd Irish word. Such behaviour would be seen to be "putting on airs".
In the past ten years or so in the country, and probably earlier in the
city, people have begun to give their children Irish names, but that is
the limit of their knowledge of Irish. For one man who was very nation-
alist pointed out to me something I would not have realised myself —
that most people do not know the words of their national anthem. This
remark came in response to the fact that at a dance there was no one
to lead them in song, though there was a band to play the anthem, and
as a result I heard scarcely anyone singing, and commented upon it.
Incredulous that ignorance of the Irish words was the reason, some time
later I asked some nationalistic people who had been present at the
dance to translate the anthem for me, and I found they could not even
construe after the first phrase. They covered themselves from my
possible penetration of their inability to do so by saying the words
were really untranslatable.

Any Irish nationalist reading this would immediately not only deny
it, but be horrified that I should say it, for their language is the
one characteristic of which they are not ashamed that has its origins
deep in the Gaelic past. And while the government on the one hand real-
ises how the language revival has failed, on the other, it tries to
believe it has not by accepting unquestioningly people's claims to speak
Irish. In light of the above information it is obvious that the census
returns reporting that 26.6% of Dubliners over the age of twenty one in
1971 declared themselves to be "Irish speakers" (McGréil, 1977:404) is
a reflection less of bilingualism than of a desire to possess this
quality. Of the 27.2% of people over the age of three years who
claimed to be Irish speakers in the census of 1961, Lyons says:

It may be doubted, however, if this total is composed
entirely of Irish-speakers who might by any stretch of
the imagination be called fluent.

(Lyons, 1971:633)

Irish people are embarrassed and sometimes angered when they are addressed
in Irish (because it makes them feel ignorant) as I observed at an
amateur drama festival where the Minister for Education spoke in both
languages. The Irish language has indeed become the language of the
elite. Among some academics with a Catholic background I
observed that the highest status was accorded to the most fluent speaker of modern Irish and/or the one who had the greatest grasp of middle or old Irish. These academics would put down others as academics, or as persons claiming to be of high status, on the sole basis of their incompetence or vulgarity in Irish. In the last analysis, a person's academic or professional skills were of less importance than his competence in Irish when deciding those fine degrees of status which the old Irish divided minutely into grades.

The Irish language can also be used to humiliate those who do not speak it. To a Protestant T.D. in the Dail who has a poor grasp of Irish, the Gaeltacht minister of 1980 insisted on replying to his English questions in Irish. The article reporting this described it as "bilingual bloody-mindedness".12 And in a simple form, Irish is currently used as a "true" secret language among the prisoners in Northern Ireland's prisons by the Catholics (see Coogan, 1980).

The pomposity, arrogance and obsession of the Irish language enthusiasts is brilliantly parodied in Flann O'Brien's The Poor Mouth. One could say this writer bears the same relationship to the "secret language" speakers of the 20th century as the medieval scholar Maro bore to the Hisperic enthusiasts of the 7th century. In this parody we see the poor native speakers of Irish gasp in wonder as the invasion of these "Gaeilgores" left "Many Gaels collapsed from hunger and from the strain of listening while one fellow died most Gaelically in the midst of the assembly" (1975:55). Here is a typical parodic passage of their pomposity and exclusivity as perceived through the leprechaunian eyes of O'Brien.

Gael! he said, it delights my Gaelic heart to be here today speaking Gaelic with you at this Gaelic feis in the centre of the Gaeltacht. May I state that I am a Gael. I'm Gaelic from the crown of my head to the soles of my feet - Gaelic front and back, above and below. Likewise, you are all truly Gaelic. We are all Gaelic Gaels of Gaelic lineage. He who is Gaelic, will be Gaelic evermore. I myself have spoken not a word except Gaelic since the day I was born - just like you - and every sentence I've ever uttered has been on the subject of Gaelic. If we're truly Gaelic, we must constantly discuss the question of the Gaelic revival and the question of Gaelicism. There is no use in having Gaelic, if we converse in it on non-Gaelic topics. He who speaks Gaelic but fails to discuss the language question is not truly Gaelic in his heart; such conduct is of no benefit to Gaelicism because he only jeers at Gaelic and reviles the Gaels. There is nothing in this life so nice and so Gaelic as truly true Gaelic Gaels who speak in true
Gaelic about the truly Gaelic language. I hereby declare this feis to be Gaelically open! Up the Gaels! Long live the Gaelic tongue! When this noble Gael sat down on his Gaelic backside, a great tumult and hand-clapping arose throughout the assembly. Many of the native Gaels were becoming feeble from standing because their legs were debilitated from lack of nourishment, but they made no complaint.

(O'Brien, 1975:54-5)

This situation of "Gaelic" exclusivity constitutes a tragic irony for those Gaelic revivalists who envisaged an Irish-speaking Ireland whose people would be purged of the degenerate English customs they had acquired. With all their noble ambitions, they did not understand that the desire to establish superiority over others by a display of oral skills to which only a few elite have access and can master is not a degenerate English, but a very old Irish custom.

Glosses and commentaries

We have not yet finished with the Irish learning tradition, for the archaisms of poetry, and of the Ancient Laws, and the "faminations" of the Hisperic creators, produced the glossators - those scholars who might be seen as a composite of the scribe who gains his sense of self entirely through the reproduction of another's work, and of the Hisperic fraud who flaunts his knowledge to prove his superiority over others. It should be pointed out that scribes did sometimes show dimensions of their individuality in that they also engaged in glossing and commentary. These two activities are distinct, but Binchy says it is not always easy to draw a line between them. Glossing is an attempt to explain words in the text and construct so-called "etymologies". This consists in resolving a word of more than one syllable into its "original" constituent elements, each of them a separate word (1943:211).

The bible arrived in Ireland with the first missionaries and we can assume biblical exegesis began then in the 5th century. In attempts to understand the bible the Irish relied first on educated foreigners, such as Isidore of Seville, until a native clergy took their place. Then the bible was interpreted into the vernacular language with commentaries and glosses on hard words made. As the vernacular language changed, given the strong antiquarian interest in Ireland, glosses were necessary for poetry, many words of which were archaic in the contemporary vernacular, for Hisperic, and of course, for the Ancient Laws, the jurists being among the leading exponents.
This tradition of glossing came from abroad but was taken on with a zeal by the Irish so that pseudo-etymological analysis was elevated into a science with alternatives that were equally wide of the mark. Even monosyllables were not immune from the glossators' misguided ingenuity, Binchy tells us. Some of it was correct, but later jurists use it only too often as a cloak to hide their ignorance.

An unfamiliar word is 'explained' by them in a series of alternative 'etymologies', one more fantastic than the other, the only condition being that the word-groups shall each bear some relation to the sound of the word glossed. My friend and teacher Professor Osborn Bergin once gave a neat parody in English to illustrate the technique of these unscrupulous glossators. He pictured them confronted with the Shakespearean phrase 'darrail your battle'. Taking their cue from the familiar word 'battle', they would have 'separated' the first word somewhat as follows: 'darrain, that is, do ruin, from its destructiveness; or die ere you run, that is, they must not retreat; or dare in, because they are brave; or tear around, from their activity; or dear rain, from the showers of blood'. That this parody is in no way exaggerated could be proved by several examples of legal glossing in which the alternative explanations are more numerous still and just as far-fetched.

(Binchy, 1943:212)

Glosses such as these are not particularly helpful in understanding the text and Binchy shows how difficult is the task of any modern translator of the Ancient Laws, for instance, to distinguish between commentaries and glosses, and the original text. These voluminous expositions leave us in the dark not only about the institutions in the ancient texts with which they were dealing which were obsolete before their time, but about the law that was in force at the time they were transcribed (1943). The interpretations made by these custodians and interpreters of ancestral wisdom consisted of over-elaborate variations on themes that were obviously unfamiliar to them. Comparing them with the late commentators of the Indian law tracts whose interpretative approaches were somewhat similar to the Irish, Binchy says:

...they weave a crazy pattern of rabbinical distinction, schematic constructions, academic causistry, and arithmetical calculations, none of which has any value for the student of Irish legal history.

(Binchy, 1943:225)

A number of scholars indicate that the Irish obsession with words, of which the etymologies and glossaries are manifestations, preceded Christian influence, which enhanced, enlarged and gave respectability
to these tendencies. They remain today, I would suggest, and may be found in journals dealing with Irish studies such as *Eriu* or *Celtica*, journals which engage in folk etymologies and and much discussion of the origins of terms and their possible meanings, but little linguistic philosophy, as may be found in the Welsh journal *Studia Celtica*, by contrast. Although the Irish appear to be almost absent from the numerous interpretative studies of James Joyce's works, it is one Brendan O'Neill who, in 1981 has published what appears to be the only comprehensive glossary of Greek and Latin lexicon in *Finnegan's Wake*, and Gaelic lexicon in both this book and *Ulysses*.

**The illuminated manuscripts**

A brief consideration of the illuminated manuscripts reveals that one non-literary creation in which the Irish excelled can be analysed in the same way as the scholastic tradition to show the same tendencies are operating. In the first place, for all its Oriental and Germanic borrowings, Henry says that Irish art shows a remarkable continuity from prehistoric times to the early middle ages, one in which abstract patterns were combined according to very strict and elaborate rules. A long pagan tradition supplied the first elements and the essential decorative principles of the art which flourished in the monasteries after the 5th century (1965:1). The illuminated manuscripts in particular, were characterised by an extreme reverence for tradition, together with an excessive refinement which was exceedingly difficult to master, and which commanded great respect from those unable to master its techniques. The great Monogram page of the Book of Kells has been described as "the most elaborate specimen of calligraphy" ever executed" (Finlay, 1973:146), and epithets such as "fastidious" and "meticulous" give the art some qualities which Henry recognises it shares with Irish poetry. There was no attempt to philosophise, or intellectualise, or to express emotional concerns such as love, beauty of the human or natural form, concern with fertility and so on that is commonly found in art forms elsewhere (including those of an aristocracy).

Henry says that the Irish style of art preserved and fortified during centuries of seclusion, became codified into a

...system of rules so firm that every borrowed element had to be assimilated and bent to its rigid, uncomproing discipline. It is the visible manifestation of an attitude of mind - the same which pervades the literature of the period.

(Henry, 1947:186)
The Irish artist's "essential principle of composition is to give an impression of intricacy and complexity by the subtle combination of perfectly clear and highly organised elements" (1947:197).

That deliberate cheating coming of a refinement of subtlety, of a virtuosity which likes to hide itself calls to mind the 'syllogism of deceit' which Benedict of Aniane accused the Irish scholars of practising - probably, an equivalent feat in terms of verbal virtuosity, the masterpiece of a twisted logic.

(Henry, 1947:201)

...the tendency to asymmetry and equivalence remained so strongly part and parcel of the Celtic mind that it produced some time later in Irish poetry one of the most elaborate metres and rhymes ever invented.

(Henry, 1947:202)

Henry does not believe Irish art (as well as that of the peoples who occupied northern Europe in the Bronze Age) lacked an intellectual content in that it imparted what she sees as possible magical and religious meanings, but its stylisation is absolutely opposed to Greek art (1947:189). However, she does say:

That lack of a sense of organic construction, that obsession with the ornament wrought for its own sake and having a perfection in itself also characterizes the literature of the period. Long epics are composed of vivid episodes connected only by a loose plan, so vague that any number of new fragments can conveniently be added; and even the shorter poems shine more by the delicate perfection of detail than by any firm purpose.

(Henry, 1947:204)

Ornamentation is conceived in such a way that it can be seen as a sacred riddle. From a pagan cryptogram the artists were trained to see in a pattern a visible sign of an idea, as decorative words of a mystical language (Henry, 1947:189). However, I am unable to see how she justifies reading this into Irish art, for nowhere is there any evidence of an exegetical tradition relating to the illuminated manuscripts, though exegeses of their other literary traditions abound. Henry is simply assuming it must have had some kind of message. Nor does she attempt to make any suggestion as to what this religious message might have been.

We have read sufficient material from Henry to recognise the striking parallels with the Irish learning tradition - iron discipline of style, over-refined fastidiousness, showiness, production for its own sake rather than for its contribution to knowledge or man's understanding of himself, and cryptic. All these qualities we have seen are the product of a trad-
ion in which an elite use a skill to maintain their integrity and status vis-à-vis others.

Conclusion

There is no doubt one could take a more positive approach to the Irish scholastic tradition than I have done. Take Flower for instance:

The concrete cast of language, the epigrammatic concision of speech, the pleasure in sharp, bright colour which we find everywhere in the best of the literature, is confused in the worst periods and examples by strange pedantries of rhetorical expansion, which appear to derive from a native tendency to display, fostered by the influence of the more degenerate kinds of late Latin rhetoric.

(Flower, 1947:110).

But I am not a literary critic. I readily acknowledge that parts of the Irish scholastic tradition contributed to people's ideas about themselves in an implicit way, and there was sometimes a searching of the scriptures to flesh out realities. But the overwhelming impression one gains from the tradition is that it has been a means for the self-realisation of individuals of such kind that it contributed little to fellow Irishmen's understanding of themselves. On the one hand, exponents reveal a fear of departing from their precedents to whom their attitude is one of slavish respect; on the other, when they do depart it is to force others to give them that respect. There have never been attempts to question or change the system or tradition in which they worked. The rich, skilful and aesthetic scholastic and literary tradition has a continuity which has transcended political, economic and social changes over the last 1500 years. As de Blacam says, one of the most remarkable traits of Gaelic literature is that it deals with a continuous historic present.

The same life, the same mode of thought, appear in the eighteenth century as in the eighth...the Gael found a way of life long ago, and a religious faith, that satisfied him then and forever...

(de Blacam, 1973:xii)

This extreme conservatism in relatively dynamic Europe has been made possible by the accident of Ireland's geography, remote island that it is on the periphery of Europe, the only culture that remained beyond the reach of the Roman empire. But it is only one manifestation of a conservatism that prevails at all levels in Ireland, a country which has herself chosen to cling to her past "longer and more tenaciously than any other country in Europe, resisting Change, Alteration, Reconstruction to the very last". (O'Faolain, 1969:168).
The manner of "rebellion" in the world of scholarship, i.e. by changing one's position in the structured hierarchy of persons without changing that structure, can be clearly seen in political rebellion in Ireland, of which she has a long history. It will be properly dealt with in chapter seven, but here I would like to suggest that despite their predilection for rebellion, Irish revolutions have always been as conservative as their scholarship, for precisely the same reasons. Lyons says the feudal aristocracy (so to speak) of the Anglo-Irish did not give way to a proletarian dictatorship, but a rural bourgeoisie, in its own way as conservative as the landlords it had displaced (1971:268).

In their continuing reliance upon the efficient functioning of a more or less benevolent government, in their reluctance to innovate in either industry or agriculture, in their attachment to their religion, and in their unchanging moral and social attitudes, the Irish presented to the twentieth century world the strange and paradoxical spectacle of a people who, having pursued with immense tenacity and a great measure of success the goal of independence, were content to rear upon the foundations of that independence one of the most conservative states in Europe.

(Lyons, 1971:92)

This historian's assertions are confirmed by Humphreys' well-known statement that "In the history of Europe, Ireland's revolution surely is among the most un-revolutionary" (1966:51). Akenson is also in agreement:

If radical revolutions are concerned with the reorientation of systems of power, then the Irish revolution was a very superficial revolution indeed.

(Akenson, 1975:34)

For rebellions in Ireland have not been characterised by a questioning of the status quo, nor informed by ideology, by ideas about social changes. And they have looked not to the future for their inspiration, but to the generations of dead who preceded them and who gave them the sanction for their present action. The reverence towards these political ancestors is of precisely the same kind as that of the scholars towards their precedents, viz. that each looks to known figures whose perfection and strength he can idealise and then adopt as his own. Hence O'Faolain says when discussing the lack of democracy, free speech and critical discussion following independence of an oppressive regime:

...we lived under the hypnotism of the past, our timidities about the future, our excessive reverence for old traditions, our endemic fear of new ways, of new thinking, the opiate of that absurd historical myth, and, the horror of the feeling of solitude that comes on every man who dares push out his boat from the security of his old, cosy, familiar harbour into unknown seas.

(O'Faolain, 1969:162)
NOTES - CHAPTER FOUR

1. This denial of higher education to Irish Catholics also applied to all Catholics in England, except in the case of medicine (Johnston, 1974:45).


4. This apparently democratic statement does I believe, reflect genuine desire, but as we shall see later in the chapter in regards to the Irish language, folklore collected from peasants does not become available to their children unless those children attend university. The best imparter of Irish folklore to the people is Ireland's Own which, because of its tendency to syncretisation, is deplored by the purists as we shall see shortly.

5. Messenger also notes similar weaknesses, saying that the Irish folklorists' queries have been guided by Sean Ó Súilleabháin's A Handbook of Irish Folklore which does not include many categories of significance to anthropologists (1969:7).

6. It would be reasonable to argue that to some extent, James Joyce was spontaneously recreating a transformed version of this tradition of dindshenchas in his Dubliners and Ulysses. In each, close details of Dublin's streets are presented and in the latter novel one can even trace one's way through the streets of this city that Joyce loved so well.

7. See McGrath (1979:chapter two) for general information on and references to the Gaulish and Irish druids. Also see Chadwick (1966).

8. Joyce comments that these laws with their complexity appear to have been at a singularly advanced stage of organisation for so early a period when there was no legislative machinery, and no authority to enforce the laws which are merely a collection of customs, of precedents in law, attaining the force of law by long usage and public opinion (1920: 178-181), and as Binchy says, were regionally varied. This information would support my view that their function was not practical, but cultural.

9. This is not Flower's interpretation. Naively he takes the contention literally as a genuine concern to set the record straight as to what is a trivial, hair-splitting concern.

10. Kennings were also commonly used in the Germanic languages.

11. A number of scholars have drawn attention to similarities between Joyce's work and the trends found in Irish literature. The German scholar E.K. Rand made some interesting comparisons between the Hisperica Famina and Finnegans Wake (Herren, 1974a:5). Herren has also briefly suggested that Joyce's work is comparable to the Hisperica Famina (1974a:14), and Mercier has said that he is heir
to the tradition-bound nature of Irish literature with its playful attitude to language (1969:80). He adds that Finnegans Wake has become "the most thoroughgoing example of multilingual word play ever devised by man" (1969:103).


CHAPTER FIVE

ANTI-AUTHORITARIANISM AND SELF DEFENCE

...trembling between timidity and the edges of violence as the rest of your race...

(McGahern, 1973:11)

In chapter one and two I argued that anxious attachment results in the formation of both dependence and assertions of independence of detachment. While the individual needs the other and is dependent upon him, he must protect his integrity from impositions by that other, so he oscillates between the two opposite poles of behaviour. Chapters three and four dealt with dependence, and attempts by others to demand dependence. This chapter will deal with the opposite condition. By attending to assertions of independence and withdrawal, I shall try to explain the paradox of the coexistence in the Irish of authoritarianism and supplication to authority figures, with anti-authoritarianism and assertions of independence.

Anti-authoritarianism, assertions of independence or self-sufficiency take on a wide variety of forms in Ireland. One prevalent mechanism for protecting the self against the encroachment of others is lying or ambiguity. In her amusing satire of the Catholic Hierarchy and some Irish conventions, Honor Tracy deals with an English anthropologist who intends to fight out in court a case the Hierarchy has brought against him for his description in an English journal of a pagan fertility ritual he saw some nuns enacting (innocent of its meaning, though they were). And attempt is made to describe how the Irish law works.

To begin with the Irish, an unmastically minded people, had a subtler conception of what truth was than their Saxon neighbours, who were always the plodding slaves of fact.

(Tracy, 1967:73)

Tracy says that it is very difficult to find out facts in Ireland because the Irish person will not say what he thinks, but rather what he believes you would like him to think (1953:21), a sentiment I share. Indeed, interpreting the particular meaning of individual outright lies posed a very
serious challenge, independently of any attempt to analyse why this
behaviour in general might be such a prevalent feature of Irish life.
I very quickly learned that if I did not want to receive an outright
lie to my enquiries on many personal matters, I should not be so foolish
as to ask direct questions. "Frankness is in most Irishmen no more
than that wavering tentacle, swiftly retractable beneath the defensive
hide of outer conformity", asserts O'Faolain in a study of the great
Daniel O'Connell in whom he sees the quintessence of Irishness (1980:77).
For extant evidence of this behaviour on the public level, I would refer
to the debate on the 1970 Arms Crisis which was carried on in Magill
from May to November 1980, where one has to wade through epic public
lies and subterfuge at the parliamentary level by Irishmen to fellow
Irishmen.

These characteristics are not recent developments in Ireland, al-
though they may be more exaggerated in adverse economic and political
circumstances. In a study of the stage Irishman up to the 19th century,
Duggan concludes from the evidence of plays that the Irish emigrees of
the 17th and 18th centuries in England did not engage in the crafts or
trades but rather they seemed to have preferred "callings where wit and
cunning of mind rather than of hand were essentials" (1969:168)." The
professional witness [at court] was obviously an early national calling"
(Ibid:169). William Carleton, that skilful observer, albeit masterful
comic exaggerator, confirms Duggan's findings in his short stories. In
"An Essay on Irish Swearing" he says that the Irishman stands unrivalled
and unapproachable in his creation of the *alibi*.

There is where he shines, where his oath, instead of being
a mere matter of fact or opinion, rises up into the dignity of
epic narrative, containing within itself all the complexity
of machinery, harmony of parts, and fertility of invention,
by which your true epic should be characterised
(Carleton, 1979:268)

Every oath with him is an epic - pure poetry, abounding with
humour, pathos, and the highest order of invention and talent.
He is not at ease, it is true under *facts*: there is some-
thing too common-place in dealing with them, which his genius
scorns.
He is not, however, *altogether* averse to fact; but like your
true poet, he veils, changes, and modifies them with such
skill, that they possess all the merit and graces of fiction.
(Carleton, 1979:269-70)

Carleton is revealing here a variation of a peculiar form of Irish
deceit commonly called "blarney". While those Irish persons who go to kiss the Stone of Blarney may only be seeking the blessing eloquence, blarney does imply more than this. It is a form of hypocrisy, of poetic but deceptive speech which obliges the other with the fiction of compliance while preserving fidelity to the hypocrite's own particular views or feelings. It is behaviour which preceded effective English colonisation as the origins of the word reveal: "blarney" is said to date from the 16th century and reign of the Gaelic lords, from the Irish noble the Lord of Blarney who put Queen Elizabeth I off over renouncing his claims to ancestral lands and acknowledging that he held tenure by a grant from the Crown "with fair words and soft speech" until she expostulated: "'This is all Blarney. What he says he never means'" (Shannon, 1966:12).

Blarney may be put to many uses, from the courtroom to insincere praise of one's friends. At the latter level it operates as the inverse of, but complement to malice, which is meant to destroy the other's self-esteem. For

Desire for confirmation from each is present in both [parties], but each is caught between trust and mistrust, confidence and despair, and both [may] settle for counterfeit acts of confirmation on the basis of pretence. To do so both must play the game of collusion.

(Laing, 1971:108-9)

Malice and insincere praise are but transformations of each other, one being concerned to destroy the other's self-esteem in order to maintain one's own, the other to build it up in order that that other will reciprocate the "good deed" for one's own self-esteem.

It is conventional for most commentators and scholars of Ireland to connect this behaviour with the oppressive and unjust political and legal systems during British colonisation. Shannon believes the Irish developed the art of soft deception and the disingenuous oath to deal with this problem: they had no tangible resources to meet adversity but inscrutable silence or the resources of wit and speech (1963:11). However, as always, I reject this glib explanation with my justification for doing so spelt out in chapter one. Despite admiration of eloquence, lying is hated by Irish people who are angered at being taken in by others who, if believed, have thereby gained a fleeting subordinate position in the relationship. In the examples provided by Duggan and Carleton above, we can see that blarney has become a desired
means of outwitting the other as an end in itself — a means of reversing the roles of superordinate/subordinate. Lying is punished in children who very early in their lives learn to defend themselves against dominating and intrusive elders by this means. But such punishment acts not to suppress lying, but to make it more skilful.

Lying is but one mechanism to prevent others from intruding onto one's integrity. As mentioned above, Shannon suggests silence is another. Children frequently use this method to deal with a probing parent. The title of Tracy's book mentioned earlier, Mind You, I've Said Nothing! (1953) is embodying the Irish tendency for denial of statements they have made which might reveal their ideas or feelings to others: it is a variation on the theme of silence. However, in children as in adults, silence can be strongly spiced with seething anger and resentment. It is a form of withdrawal from a scene of conflict rather than attempting to fight out what is perceived to be an imbalanced match. I am not suggesting that stubborn silence which Schepker-Hughes has also observed (1919:117), is peculiar to Ireland. Rather, it is more prevalent, and intense, than in comparable cultures such as Australia or America, as are lying and other forms of deception.

In the second chapter I argued that one of the manifestations of withdrawal is that of guardedness in the forms of bodily and para-linguistic communication. That introduction to guardedness and withdrawal now needs to be extended for a fuller understanding. In the second chapter this unconscious behaviour was shown to constitute a purely defensive strategy whose signals to the other were but a contingency of self-protectiveness rather than a deliberate message to others. However, some non-verbal communication does exist at a more conscious level. While the Irish can, and do, express exuberance, and in fact pride themselves on this ability as a nation compared with the more dour northern European (largely Protestant) neighbours such as the Scots, Dutch and Germans, they are also masters at controlling spontaneous feelings that would give information of the inner state to others. Children acquire this ability as young as four years of age. A family of young children I knew rarely had visitors, so might have been expected to welcome them. But scrutinise the children's expressions and behaviour though I did, I could never find much evidence that they were pleased by my visit, though they had some reason to be as they were left fairly undisciplined while their mother was engaged in chatting with me (but
they were not neglected by their mother during this time). However, I realised one day that I had not watched them at the right time, for when I unexpectedly arrived at the school to pick them up, they had controlled, but happy little smiles. Lowering their eyes to regain composure, they quickly wiped away these unmistakable signs of pleasure at my visit. While some adults readily give way to spontaneous feeling of pleasure that others have evoked, at least for some chosen people on some occasions, others are more controlled most of the time. In one man whom I got to know very well, I discovered after some time that he was incapable of giving way to anything more than incipient spontaneous enjoyment. His only real sense of fun was allowed expression in circumstances of acting the role of another self which was disassociated from his real self, and it was kept under strict control. This man was a fine comic actor in amateur plays, able to perform even the most ludicrous facial expressions and bodily movements. However, he was not able to dance, or to sing at all in a group of people who had initiated song, and he mocked those who did sing spontaneously, saying how "false" and "contrived" such singing was.

This man typifies an inability to allow others to see that they may be giving pleasure. It is the consequence of a societal situation in which everyone is perceived as a potentially subordinate figure. As Laing says, when another is perceived as the prototype of giver, but not receiver, this tends to generate a sense of failure, i.e., one has nothing to give. To make a difference to that other becomes victory, to allow that other to make a difference to oneself is defeat. Oscillating between the roles of giver and receiver, the victim is incapable of reciprocity himself, nor does he find it in others. He fears everyone in case they will make a difference to him (1971:84), and in the Irish situation, he resolves the problem by not allowing others the satisfaction of knowing they are able to affect him. Now Arland Ussher's observation becomes comprehensible. He has noticed that

...an Irishman usually has to be drunk or under anaesthetics before you can catch him without his slightly mocking inscrutability. One may put the matter more cruelly and say the Irishman is always afraid - afraid of his thoughts, his desires, his neighbours. Or one may put it kindly and say that his pride or his fastidiousness are forever holding him back - that he remains disdainfully ironical before sensual passion or communal purpose.

(Ussher, 1950:137)
Ussher is having it both ways, as I believe he should. I would only add to this that one frequently sees among the young men in Ireland - the group above all others who are concerned to deny dependence on others as I shall demonstrate at various points from hereon - they engage in a devil-may-care jauntiness which announces to the world their self-containment, their imperviousness to what the world has to offer them.

The most obvious institutionalised aspect of this refusal to allow others to realise they can make a difference to you can be found in the Irish convention of requiring the other to make an invitation for lunch, tea, or any other matter at least three times before you deign to accept. When people became relaxed with me after my arrival in the town, one of the things they commented on was my habit of accepting such an invitation at the first request. Conversely, some Irish people commented that when visiting people in England and America they found that if they did not accept the first invitation it was not made a second time. It is revealing that I felt humiliated on the rare occasions I made invitations to my place that I should have to ask a further two times before a reluctant "yes" was received. No doubt over time I would have come to terms with this conventional "insult". In addition, people will come to visit and while not leaving, constantly say they are, indeed they must. This I believe, is to show they really are not much interested in staying (though they may well be). Furthermore, it is conventional for Irish people never to turn up at a function or dinner party on time, for that would be showing too much enthusiasm to the host. Rather, an hour or so later, people will begin to stroll in nonchalantly, the recalcitrant bachelors of course, being last. One will find the occasional amused reference in papers to foreign visitors arriving punctually at functions only to find themselves utterly and foolishly alone.

A further example of this phenomenon of refusing to let the other realise he can make a difference to oneself is the way some people pretend to be indifferent to or impervious to praise or compliments. Peter Kavanagh says that when neighbours praised him to his mother (when he was a child) she rejected it in ritualistic fashion, though she was secretly pleased. He was hurt then, as he still is at this "rotten convention" which he did not understand (1977:13). Obversely, there are quite a few Irish people who are unable to give sincere praise, and one such woman wondered how it was that people such as her sister-in-law
was so unlike herself in this. Another said that in the context of extreme and unremitting criticism of one's self and work by the nuns who taught her in primary school, whom one could not please by even one's greatest efforts, she was given a great boost when a nun praised her work to the class of ten year olds. So great was the effect of this unaccustomed praise that she was much more assiduous in her work for the remainder of primary school, and even beyond. Such is the preciousness of praise for some Irish people.

We need to distinguish between genuine praise and blarney or insincere praise of another. But related to this inability to offer praise is the virtual inability of any Irish person to make a direct and sincere apology in relationships of near equals when breaches in relationships have occurred. Of course one finds some evidence of insincere apologies coming from ingratiating persons of which the literature shows there were many more in the past. Comparing the ease with which Americans forgive after quarreling, Peter Kavanagh says that in his time (the 1920s to 1940s), when serious rows occurred with Irish neighbours in rural Ireland they could last up to thirty years sometimes, for people were too proud to make the first move towards reconciliation (1977:13). Rows which pass on through generations are commonly reported for rural Ireland. The same woman who lamented her inability to praise also regretted her inability to apologise. As she said, when young, on occasions she had apologised to her mother, but the latter would contemptuously snort "humph", so that the daughter felt this reply to be such an imposition on her exposed ego she could not continue to make herself vulnerable by admitting she was wrong. Such people, however, are capable of apologising in more indirect ways if they feel they have truly wronged a person and must make a move to heal the rupture in the relationship. They may ask the injured party over for a cup of tea when he or she had withdrawn, or buy a small gift while saying it had been given (to the donor) on an earlier occasion, and was not needed or used.

The refusal to allow the other to make a difference to one extends to further areas of people's lives. In the domain of sexual relationships it is a very significant feature which will be discussed in the following chapter.

But these and other forms of behaviour to be mentioned later can serve the purpose of preventing others penetrating the feelings and
psyche of the self in order to understand it. I was made aware of this Irish fear of being analysed very shortly after I arrived in the country, and was at constant pains to hide analyses of the motives and feelings I had made of my informants. And equally, informants would often put me to the test to ascertain if I had made correct analyses of personalities — both their own, and others. For this reason I never engaged in direct interviews in families, and with one exception on one occasion, nor was I ever able to use a tape recorder for spontaneous interactions. An expression of this fear is provided by the narrator of O'Connor's short story "Public Opinion" who says:

I don't know what it is about Irish people that makes them afraid of having their business discussed. It is not that it is any worse than other people's business, only we behave as if it was.

(O'Connor, 1972:94)

To find out what the other is thinking of is probably one of the principal reasons for some Irish women to open others' mail, and to go through their personal belongings and correspondence. This behaviour is well understood by Laing who says that the person who lacks a sense of primary ontological security fears correct interpretations of his behaviour. For

To be understood correctly is to be engulfed, to be enclosed, swallowed up, drowned, eaten up, smothered, stifled in or by another person's supposed all-embracing comprehension. It is lonely and painful to be always misunderstood, but there is at least from this point of view a measure of safety in isolation.

(Laing, 1965:45)

While the Irish person does not seek to be "misunderstood", he or she does not wish to have his or her psyche comprehended. However, as Laing points out, this results in an isolation of the person from others. For this reason, coexisting with an attempt to conceal the self is a desire to reveal the self. This can be found in social interaction where a person might get "things off his chest" by telling a personal story by analogy; by imputing something that happened to the self to another whom the listener does not know; by putting the extant concern into an historical scene, i.e., saying it happened long ago; or by simply telling the problem to a "trusted" relative or friend in indirect and allusive terms and hope they will not comprehend its total reality. This need to reveal is institutionalised in the Catholic confessional where the confessor who is sworn to secrecy can be given more trust than a person not under this obligation. In chapter three I explained the priest's need to hear confessions as a desire to have control over others:
here I am explaining the obverse side of the institution, to wit, the willingness with which Irish people attend confessions. However, I would point out that confessees do not necessarily or always reveal their innermost thoughts and desires. Individuals differ in the degree to which they "confess" and no doubt many confessions would be very routine, formulaic-like utterances. I shall reveal below that there is generally considerable difference between the sexes in regards to this readiness to confess. But it was this confessional tendency that allowed me to acquire information during fieldwork despite the prevailing guardedness of most of my informants.

**Mutual independence expressed in the Irish village layout**

The studied mutual indifference discussed above is curiously represented in traditional Irish "town-planning". The native Irish build their villages in such a way that "Each dwelling has the air of ignoring the existence of its neighbours" (Evans, 1939:209). In an unpublished PhD on the rundale system of land holding in Ireland, McCourt says that although the clachan might evolve to a size on par with the English village, its layout lacks the organised pattern of the latter. Houses are huddled together without plan or order, sometimes crowded in close association or loosely dispersed; others are arranged with some semblance of regularity but turn their backs on the cobbled street. A typical Mayo village was described thus in 1846:

>'The cottages look as if pitchforked to oneside, some are placed sideways, some endways, some cornerways, and there is never a street; and the crooked passages in and out between the dunghills and irregularly placed cottages form the only pathways. Their utter forlornness is pitiable'

(McCourt, 1950:93)

In this village of some 2,000 people there were no rows of houses but each cottage was stuck independently by itself and always at an acute, obtuse or right angle to the next cottage as the case may be. Such mutual indifference and lack of communal concern gave the observer the notion that the Irish rundale village is like "'an overgrown democracy'". McCourt says shelter has been suggested as one of the aims of this method of building a town, though he thinks it is probable that the hap-hazard layout was inherent in the rundale system itself in which cottages were thrown up in a piecemeal fashion (ibid).

However, that towns in the west of Ireland continue to be built in
such a way that they resemble from the distance or the air "A child's box of bricks spilled on the floor'with no visible plan" (Danaahar, 1970:18), 18), is, I believe, neither the result principally of allocation of building space or distribution of farm holdings; nor is it to provide shelter. Rather it is a manifestation of Irish disorderliness which I have explained as being the consequence of rebellions against attempts by others to put one in a subordinate position (chapter three p.139).

Orders given by authority figures followed by unsystematic rebellion conceived not as a way of creating a new order, but as an end in itself, generate not an alternative system, but chaos. There is however, an example of modified chaos in the traditional Irish village, for it did act to house and shelter people. I would qualify this instance of "rebellion" by saying that this village pattern is a material manifestation of the widespread Irish personality condition of needing the other, and simultaneously refusing to acknowledge that need.

I first reached this conclusion during a visit to the west of Ireland. Afterwards I realised this building pattern was also evident in the east. There were houses in my town built by the local council after independence, whose spatial separation had no practical advantage, and some disadvantages. Their spatial arrangement contrasted markedly with the terraced rows of the old part built by the Protestants in the last two centuries or so. For those who could afford it in this expensive agricultural area, it was popular to buy blocks of land from farmers up to five miles from the town in which the owner worked, though such people often took no advantage of their opportunity to have a vegetable garden of their own and could not generally be described as "nature lovers". Nor did it seem to me that any particular status attached to this. Such houses were usually within a hundred yards or so of others which would form an indistinct cluster without any centralised plan. Many older clusters in which farming families lived and farmed their adjacent land were already established in this way - almost in the form of a village, but not quite.

Consistent with my argument is the fact that some people showed an intense interest in their neighbours, masked by a public demeanour which ranged from polite indifference to snubbing. The relationship was maintained by periodic gestures of goodwill. Brody describes how neighbours were intensely interested in what others were doing, but would not go
down to visit them (1973:152), a gesture which would allow the neigh-
bour to realise he was important to the interested party. However, I
do not wish to create the impression that the Irish are generally anti-
social. Quite the contrary. The majority of people in my town, who were
economically independent of their neighbours, kept their doors unlocked
with the key in them in winter, and open in summer, so that selected
neighbours could freely drop in. But we must not ignore evidence that
when people are in a position of economic inter-dependence as they were
in the traditional farming communities, they may have a greater need to
express their wish to keep a distance and appear somewhat indifferent to
neighbours. In the east where there is greater wealth, most young
farming couples who could possibly afford it set up a house independent
of the parental one, often at some distance though on the same farm. One
woman whose husband had extended the parental house so that there were
now two almost totally independent units with a common wall, complained
that she was so close to her mother-in-law, though I noticed she made
good use of the services the older woman made available as babysitter
etc. However, this woman was often at pains to show her mother-in-law
how superfluous she was, and one instance included even hiring help
during and after a pregnancy, though the mother-in-law had offered to
help, and certainly wished to do so as it was one of the few ways she
had of feeling useful now that her own family had grown up and left home.

The Irish farmer as the epitomy of independence

While there is a heavy dependence on others, whether those others
are given only temporary or permanent status as superordinate, there is
much evidence that people do not find this satisfactory. There coexists
with dependence a fierce independence and self-assertion. While ignoring
much evidence of dependent behaviour, nativists are forever praising
the independence of the Irish peasant. However, it cannot be said that
the nativists are seeing something which does not exist. It is most
evident in the way that, for well over a century now, there has been a
strong agrarian movement for individual ownership of land, and as a re-
sult of post-famine unrest and movements of a constitutional nature, the
first great land reform acts designed to give ownership to tenant farmers
was passed in 1881 and was followed by another in 1903. The independent
State's governments were strongly committed to the concept of maintaining
as many people as possible on their own land. They have achieved this so
successfully that the Irish landscape is dotted with numerous small
holdings many too small to be economic, especially in the western regions. Ireland now has the highest level of individual farm ownership in the EEC, with 92% ownership where the average in the EEC is 68%. And long term leasing is very unusual.\(^2\) \& \(^3\)

The original reason for this movement is usually understood to be the dislike of the often rack-renting Anglo-Irish landlords. But as three generations have now been born into a virtually land-lordless Ireland, and the desire for independent holdings remains as fierce as ever, this argument might not supply us with the total explanation. Without dismissing it, I would suggest that this desire for personal ownership of often inefficient land may lie in the desire of most Irish-men to express their independence of others in the way in which they earn their living. Every scholar and observer of traditional Ireland has noticed the fierce pride of the owner of land, and the relatively low status of those without it (this had substantially changed by 1980 however). Arensberg points to the comparatively lower status of the landless village tradesmen than the landowners (1937:104-5). Schepers-Hughes notes that farmers kept a sharp watch on others who attempted to rise from the ranks of the ordinary to the admired, but greatly envied status of strong farmer. Many bachelors and childless couples said they would rather die without any plans for farm succession than live to see a "greedy" neighbour buy up their unused lots piecemeal in order to consolidate his farm and win status. The selling of a field outright to a neighbour was unthinkable. They would sell to "harmless" and neutral outsiders, e.g. English tourists looking to buy summer vacation homes, but not to each other, despite strongly nationalistic counter sentiments of Irish soil for the Irish (1979:41). In behaving this way, the Irish farmers are attempting to prevent peers becoming superordinate.

Even in the village there has traditionally been a tendency for people to work less in cooperative groups than as individual units, thereby paralleling the structure of the agricultural sector. Arensberg and Kimball say that most people in Ennis (6000 people) and other country towns worked either for themselves or relatives, despite the employment of a fairly large number of people in government organisations. The economy of Ennis was that of the small independent units whether on the farm or in the town itself (1968:318). Perhaps this
desire to assert independence is one of the principal reasons for the failure of many rural cooperative ventures in Ireland. And this is contrasted frequently by the Irish themselves with the great success of the Irishman's Dutch or Danish counterpart who is described as a cooperative and efficient rural industrialist. Eipper says that local initiatives were continually paralysed by divisions in the community and that community leaders recognised the problem (1980:127). This is despite the traditional coöring among farmers which involved mutual help among a number of neighbouring farmers. It will be shown in chapter seven how this assertion of independence of others and inability to cooperate has led to an inability to cooperate in nationalist aims.

One of the most significant features in the nativist Irish movement promoted by the political parties has been the doctrine of separatism, self-containment and independence, politically, culturally and economically. The Sinn Fein party, a very important force at the time of the formation of the Free State, translates as "Ourselves Alone", thereby emphasising self-reliance. A party by this name remains in Ireland today currently representing the Provisional I.R.A. The desire for self-containment was embodied strongly in the philosophy of the president of the Gaelic League, Dr. Hyde. This organisation, a powerful agent in the nationalist movement at the end of last and beginning of this century, promoted an intellectual and cultural independence. It looked to the past for models upon which the Irish, having first purged themselves of degenerate English customs, could create new Irishmen. Patrick Pearse carried this view into education where he aimed to make the boys of his experimental Gaelic school self-sufficient. To some extent this self-sufficiency was realised economically during the first four decades of the Free State if one judges from Ireland's import figures. In 1950-61 for instance, she had the lowest import of goods and services of the fourteen OECD countries (from figures in Kennedy and Dowling, 1975:45), although in chapter three I did point to the inability of Ireland to provide jobs for all her people during this period, people who became dependent upon other countries to which they emigrated to seek jobs. I also mentioned her reliance on Marshall Aid after World War II as evidence for her failure to be as self-sufficient as she aimed (pp. 132-3). This aim of the self-sufficient Irishman still survives and may be seen for instance, in the Irish Press, a daily newspaper. Conveyed through the presentation of news, Dr. Torode has
discerned a backward looking nationalism and cultural independence in this this paper. However, its image coexists with the contrary, one de-
scribed in chapter three - that of a cultural dependence upon others for its sense of self, especially on Britain, in a way that other soci-
eties do not depend on the Irish. Torode says the Irish Independent, displays considerable anxiety about the image of Irish society and individuals held in Britain and other western European countries (1978). Thus we see embodied in two Irish newspapers the dual condition of the Irish personality - self-assertion and dependence.

Some signs of this self-chosen isolation of Ireland from the rest of the world were seen last chapter in the domains of education and scholarship. Her lack of concern for the happenings elsewhere in the political scene is expressed in the fact that as late as 1956 she had no foreign policy, relying on Britain to represent her when necessary. Chubb says that political, social, economic and cultural isolation meant that the great changes in post-war Europe have made little impact on Ireland (1970:316). Not until 1956 when Ireland was admitted to the United Nations did change begin (1970:316). Lyons also points to Ire-
land's indifference to world affairs, but adds that since the 1960s she has shown much more interest than formerly (1971:587). Chubb says that self-isolation, partly achieved by means of censorship, did not contrib-
ute to Ireland's attempts to make herself independent, though he under-
stands well the difficulty of her getting out of the shadow of her powerful neighbour, Britain. While he rightly acknowledges the Republic is politically, and especially culturally, a sovereign country, he qualifies its full claim to political sovereignty in the following statement:

If the ability to scan all one's neighbours and not to be oriented on one alone is a sign of a truly independent people, and if the recognition and pursuit of a wide range of inter-
national interests is the mark of a truly sovereign state, there are grounds for speculating on whether, for all her formal sovereignty, Ireland should be thought of as in prac-
tice no more than a detached province of the United Kingdom. Some Europeans do see her thus.

(Chubb, 1970:316)

Because many of the Anglo-Irish landlords were infamous rack-
renters (i.e., they put up the rent as soon as a tenant made improve-
ments to his holding), we tend to hear mainly about them to the exclu-
sion of a strain of peasant behaviour which I suspect may have been quite prevalent - that of refusing to pay rent (independent of the
explicit policy of non-payment of rent adopted as a political strategy by agrarian reform movements in the later part of the 19th century). It is I believe, an assertion of the farmer's cherished right to express this independence of everyone, of his refusal to acknowledge he is beholden to anyone as suggested above. And it contains within its workings a powerful strain of anti-authoritarianism.

In his autobiographical novel, O Crohan indicated it was a point of honour not to pay rent as early as the 1850s. The Blasket Islanders were not troubled by rent collectors to any extent, but when they did come on a couple of occasions in O Crohan's father's lifetime, the islanders hid their cattle so the collectors went away with nothing. What O Crohan reveals in his descriptions is a dislike of authority, especially when the authority has not personal relationship with the recent payers, and nothing to offer them (1929: esp. pp. 218-220). Poverty was not the reason for the refusal to pay rent for these islanders suffered less in the famine times owing to the bounty of the sea which surrounded them, and to a lesser extent, to material which they retrieved from the wrecked ships.

Equally proud of their independence are the Tory Islanders from whom it has been difficult to collect rents for a long time, Fox says. A landlord who purchased the island and bits of the mainland in 1861 for £6,500 collected scarcely any rents: after 1872 he got not a penny. Yet it became clear from correspondence on the matter they could have afforded to pay some, for they said they had offered him £100 instead of the £196 he was asking in 1882, though the landlord denied this offer had been made. (This material comes from a pamphlet the landlord had to publish to defend himself against accusations of cruelty and indifference to his tenants, in a letter by the resident priest appealing for funds to save the islanders from starvation.) The islanders appear to have been earning enough not to have starved, and the landlord answered their charges with the comment that this was a typical Hibernian swindle. That Fox also believes it might have been a swindle is revealed in his words: "but he never got the better of the islanders" in these manoeuvres. He adds they refused to pay rates also, the arrears of which in 1844 were reckoned at £264. The collector of county cess was driven off the island in 1871 and it was decided to send an armed force to collect what I think must reasonably be considered a fair amount in light of the fact that they paid no income tax but enjoyed the benefits of protection from armed
invaders, if nothing else, from the government. However, the gunboat was wrecked in the attempt and fifty lives lost, to no chagrin of the islanders, after which no more attempts were made to collect either rates or rent (Fox, 1978:8-9).

Compiled from the notes of Lord George Hill, *Facts from Clewdown* (1971) is arguably one of the best sources of information available on a traditional Irish community left very substantially to run its own affairs with minimal interference from landlords or police, before the Great Famine. A philanthropic landlord who bought a large part of north west Donegal which had previously belonged to several landlords, Lord George Hill dedicated himself to improving his estate, ploughing back into it any rents he took besides large sums received from elsewhere. Let us read what Lord George has to say when he took over the estate.

This wild mountain district, prior to 1838, was divided into small properties; there were no resident proprietors. The estates were of such little value, that no gentleman, or scarcely a respectable person, would, or could, act as agent for them. Rents were very small - almost nominal, and there was no regularity as to collecting them: trifling sums were taken at fairs, or whenever or wherever they could be got; often no receipt was given - no accurate accounts kept: consequently, the greatest confusion prevailed, as to what was due upon the properties. There were arrears of eight, ten, and even twenty years standing: some of the tenants not having paid rent for that period, and many lived on the estates quite unknown....The manner, too, in which the rents were collected was strange and unsatisfactory...

(Lord George Hill, 1971:18)

being as they were usually taken at fairs and settled in poteen. The County Cess collector remarked to the bailiff that

'If he got the rent from the tailor, he would be a clever fellow, as he had never been known to pay rent, cess, or any other tax'.

(Ibid:20)

As to coercing the people, it was never thought of, or feared. When an attempt to do so was once made by a proprietor, he had to bring with him the whole yeomanry corps he commanded, simply to protect his bailiff. It will serve as a specimen of the way in which these estates were managed by the agents to whom they were formerly entrusted, to give the two following original notes, which will also show that the tenants 'made', or fixed 'the rent themselves', and paid what they pleased. The notes are the reply from one of those agents, to an inquiry which was made of him by letter, in consequence of tenants refusing to pay the amount of rent as returned in the rental, and are as follows:-

No. 1. - 'A.B. made the rent himself, and never paid me more than £1 10s. yearly.

C----, done the same, and never paid me more than £1 12s. yearly.
D.E. paid the same yearly, £1 12s.
F--- returned what I returned to you to Mr. G---. Mr.
H--- never got more from them than what I returned to
you now, but he wanted to make the rent roll look
large in Mr. G---'s eyes.

No.2.  'A. B., Shoemaker   .   .   .   £1 8 5
     C.D., Black      .   .   .   1 8 5
     E.F.       .   .   .   .   .   019 0
     C.'s Mother  .   .   .   .   0 9 6
               £4 5 4

'They have five one-third cow's grass among the tribe, let
them show you that they have not this quantity - they make the
rent themselves, and C.D. would never pay for the old woman's
part although he had the benefit.'

(Lord George Hill, 1971:19)

No doubt the agent would not be telling the absolute truth, but
just the same, the picture is clear enough for us to believe Lord George's
anecdotes about the extraordinary devices used to beguile the people into
paying their rents. And it would be clear now that the Irish peasants
in this part of Ireland well and truly governed themselves, and land-
lords were but nominal owners of the land. As Lord George says,
being without roads and inaccessible "the country was ruled by a few
bullies, lawless distillers, who acknowledged neither landlord nor
agent"(1971:27). In about 1922 one landlord tried to get a neighbouring
magistrate to manage his estate, and accompanying him onto the property
with a view to improving it, the people became so outraged at this"intrus-
ion" that both the landlord and his intended agent had to go away leaving
the property in the hands of the former agent who could scarcely
either read or write and in whose care it remained until purchased by
Lord George Hill. In fact, people were afraid to go into the district.
Two revenue police parties intending to collect excise from poteen-
makers were beaten and disarmed in 1934 and following this, fifty con-
stabulary were repulsed and forced to give up collecting tithe (1971:29).

In The Living Landscape, O Cathain's and O'Flanagan's book on a town-
land in the remote north west corner of county Mayo to which roads were
constructed only in this generation and in which there were no resident
landlords, it is revealed that there were traces of peasant behaviour
last century similar to those described for north west Donegal. Only by
installing coastguards was any control brought over smuggling and delib-
erate shipwrecking: even so, between 1800 and 1900 eight ships were del-
iberately wrecked so that their cargo could be plundered (1975:252).
Illicit distillation was rife, as it was in the rest of Ireland (see below).
In fact I went to this area in 1980 and found it was one of the few places in which poteen-making still survived. Rent was paid by a group of people who were members of the traditional system of land tenure known as rundale (whether it was always paid or not is not was not stated, and perhaps not known). From limited information provided by the editors it would seem most unlikely that if people had chosen not to pay rent, they could not have easily been forced to do so, owing to similar geographical conditions obtaining as in Donegal. And as there were a number of other activities normally considered outside the law which they engaged in, it would not be unreasonable to suppose that this pan-Irish dislike for landlords would not have been enacted in a refusal to pay rent when possible.

Ireland now has a virtually landlordless countryside, but in a limited way it could be said that the government of Ireland has some rights over individual's land, to wit, in the form of being in a position to demand tax. But Irish farmers are accused by the wage and salary earning sector of the society of dictating to the government whether they will pay tax or not, while the PAYE sector does not even have the right to negotiate on this matter. While self-employed persons are also included in this category, it is farmers who are taking the brunt of the PAYE members' ire, the degree of which was expressed in May 1979 when one quarter of a million people joined the Republic's first political strike to protest against the way in which the tax system disadvantaged them. There was another such strike in March 1980 and throughout the year that I was in Ireland fierce debates raged between the two sides, one of whom clearly considered they were a special group in the society. Until such protests, farmers with more than 30 acres paid only 2% of their income in tax, and furthermore, Dr. O'Connel says they have received 90% of the £2000 received from the EEC which it has given to Ireland between 1973 and 1980. While there was some spin-off to the rest of the community by way of job creation, such a system is very clearly giving unfair economic advantage to those persons, the individual farmers, who have been seen as the embodiment of certain Irish national ideals, as I described earlier.

And yet, for all this defiance of landlords and quasi-landlords, and expressions of independence and self-sufficiency in these practically landlordless areas of Ireland, there is much evidence of dependence on either those landlords, or other philanthropic or charitable persons. O Crohan's novel The Islandman is one of several stories written in Irish forming the basis for O'Brien's parody The Poor Mouth (see chapter three
pp. 126-8), because of the quaintly expressed tendency to cry the poor mouth about the poverty, misfortunes, trials and tribulations from which most peasants in pre-industrialised Europe have suffered (and for that matter, suffer elsewhere in the under-developed countries in the world). Similarly we note the Tory Islanders seeking charity from a landlord to whom they will not pay rent. The poverty of the peasants of the Gweedore estate was extreme, but could not reasonably be blamed upon landlords, unless one wants to blame the 17th century Scottish and English planters who took over much of Ulster when it was sparsely populated. However, these newcomers did provide employment for some displaced native Irish on the land, and in the 18th and 19th centuries provided considerable opportunities for employment off the land in industrial Belfast. Yet, presumably on behalf of the Gweedore peasants, we find the local teacher seeking relief in a letter to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in 1837. Revealing truly pitiable poverty, this petition appeared in English newspapers and had the effect of eliciting clothing supplies for the people (Hill, 1971). And as I mentioned in chapter three, the modern Irish have been "Playing the poor mouth...with consummate skill, even when it has not been entirely justified" in the EEC (p. 133). It is the farmers of the west of Ireland, the embodiment of Irish ideals of independence and self-sufficiency, who have been the greatest recipients of these funds, being as they are eligible for EEC regional funds for under-developed areas.

In light of this evidence, one is inclined to agree with G.B. Shaw, who, hearing of yet another international plea for charity from Ireland (this time after the formation of the Free State) replied that Ireland was not so much poor as she was "only an incorrigible beggar, which is not quite the same thing" (1962:163).

**Asceticism an expression of independence and self-sufficiency**

Frank O'Connor reveals a keen understanding of the connection between a desire not to allow others to make a difference to one and ascetic withdrawal. One of the characters muses:

> Not to become involved, to remain detached - that was the great thing; to care for things and people, yet not to care for them so much that your happiness became dependent on them. (O'Connor, 1972:25)

He follows this with a discussion of the process of trying to be saintly which

> ...did give you the feeling that your life had some meaning; that inside you, you had a real source of strength; that there
was nothing you could not do without, and yet remain sweet, self-sufficient and content.

(O'Connor, 1972:26)

In his literary creation O'Connor is providing us with an embodiment of Bowlby's claims that:

Cultivation of self-sufficiency and a self-protective shell, with as much disavowal as possible of all desire for love and support, are the natural sequelae.

(Bowlby, 1980:239-40)

The Irish group of people called the Pioneers comprise total abstainers from alcoholic liquor, who, as the parish priest explained to me, forgo moderation for temperance. They announce their sacrifice to all by the wearing of the Sacred Heart pin. There are a lot of Pioneers in this country with the highest rate of hospitalisation for alcoholism in the western world, with about 13% of the entire population members in 1966 (from Chubb, 1970:100). Total abstention from alcoholic liquor is a form of asceticism and I found it interesting that one couple interpreted their membership and abstinence as being the inverse of dependence. They were members, they said, because they greatly feared that if they took alcohol at all they could develop a dependence upon it to sustain them in times of crises. And the display of their Pioneer pins, then, could be said to be a proud assertion of their emotional independence.

Throughout Ireland's long history of ascetic self-denial and retreat from worldly materials there has been an element of extreme pride, haughtiness and indifference to things, and of course, to people, who can give one pleasure and comfort. Self-exile from one's community and country manifests itself at least as early as the 6th century, and the fact that it was achieved at a great emotional cost shows the degree of dependence the monks suffered from. Corish says:

Now in this society where a man's status as a citizen was normally accepted only within the boundaries of his tuath the idea seems to have emerged quite early that self-exile from one's native community was the greatest asceticism, short of physical martyrdom, which a Christian could undertake.

(Corish, 1972:6)

(See also Flower, 1947:19). The members of the early Irish Christian Church from the 6th to about the 12th centuries were inveterate wanderers and while this seems to have diminished for some centuries, it recurs again in the 19th and 20th centuries with the huge exodus of missionaries, both nuns and priests, to foreign, often hostile countries
as a chosen task in life. Joyce asserts:

'The Irish passion for pilgrimage and preaching' never died out: it is characteristic of the race. This great missionary emigration to foreign lands has continued in a measure down to our own day: for it may be safely asserted that no other missionaries are playing so general and successful a part in the conversion of the pagan people all over the world...as those of Ireland. 11 & 12

( Joyce, 1920:346)

Testimony to their voluntary sense of loss at leaving their beloved country and family they write of and remember them nostalgically, as did the voluntary exile James Joyce, who wrote exclusively of his homeland and her people. His novels and letters reveal his leaving Ireland was a gesture of fierce independence from her. In A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man Stephen Daedalus asserts:

I will not serve that in which I no longer believe, whether it calls itself my home, my fatherland, or my church: and I will try to express myself in some mode of life or art as freely as I can and as wholly as I can, using for my defense the only arms I allow myself to use - silence, exile and cunning.

( Joyce, 1977:361. My emphasis)

Non servium became Joyce's motto in exile. We see in these states of defiance against dependence, variations on the theme of anti-authoritarianism which this chapter reveals has widespread cultural manifestations in Ireland. And it is worth noting that Joyce, who so vigorously resisted enforced dependence, became Catholic Ireland's most original and creative artist.

A general ascetic trend can still be seen in some Irish families. At least two mothers I knew explicitly and frequently stated that "plainness" in material things - toys, food, clothes, house decor - was desirable. And these were not statements expressing mere utilitarianism. It may seem ironic perhaps that these mothers who, like all others, desired their children to be dependent on them, nevertheless sought to teach them some indifference to material things. But at no time have I meant to imply that mothers desire total dependence upon them - only a partial emotional dependence. In fact we shall see next chapter that mothers seek for their sons to be their protectors while at the same time desiring filial dependence. Even the politicians who seek for their electorates to be dependent upon their patronage have encouraged this independence of things which might give their people pleasure. This is revealed in a famous passage from a wartime broadcast by Ireland's most renowned statesman this century, Eamon de Valera, the Republic's Taois-
each for thirty years, a message which he acted upon in governmental policy.

'That Ireland which we dreamed of would be the home of a people who valued material wealth only as the basis of right living, of a people who were satisfied with frugal comfort and devoted their leisure to the things of the spirit - ...'

Such an attitude plays a role in reinforcing the lack of industriousness in Ireland revealed in chapter three.

Assertion of independence against the clergy

Asserting oneself against those upon whom one is dependent, showing the authority figures one does not really need them, is an Irish way of life. While the Catholic Hierarchy does command much obedience, and there is profound respect for the clergy, a degree of anti-clericalism does exist which differs for males and females, and also from one region to another. The more directly intrusive the priest is, the more his parishioners are likely to be anti-clerical. Thus while Messenger says of the Inis Beag people that devoutly Catholic though they may be,

It is difficult to over-estimate the degree of fear of the clergy and anti-clericalism which have been inculcated among the folk by the more immoderate measures employed by the priests during the last century.

(Messenger, 1969:60)

We must remember that this is a small island without competing political forces, however, and the priest was able to intrude more into his parishioners' lives than elsewhere in Ireland.

Scheper-Hughes says some priests are thought to be greedy and she found some anti-clericalism in her district (1979:51). I too found a little, but expressed less against the Church as such than particular priests who did not embody Christian teaching as well as they might have. It is for this reason, I believe, that the anti-clerical sentiments observed by Messenger were seldom manifested in acts of resistance against the will of the curate. And outside must be careful not to express like sentiments, or even agree with local diatribes, or he will invoke a spirited defence of the Church' (1969:61). Connery is correct I think, when he says that while anti-clericalism may be rife in Ireland it has no element of anti-Christianity (1968:134).

Sometimes Irishmen have disobeyed explicit Church rulings and this has resulted in their being denied the sacraments or excommunicated when
they wanted to remain fully committed members of their faith. This has occurred when nationalist sentiments have divided their loyalties because the Church has forbidden membership of various nationalist organisations, particularly those whose aims have involved achieving political gains through violence, and this will be discussed in chapter seven. Here nationalist rebels will be shown to be committed Catholics, despite their disobedience. Discussing the period of the Civil War, Frank O'Connor provides us with an amusing anecdote bearing on the matter of the rebels' divided allegiances: during sermons in which the priest would preach against rebellion, several people would get up, genuflect, leave the church and congregate outside waiting for the priest to finish his sermon, then return (1970:147). This incongruity is exceeded by the Catholic prisoners in the H-block who have not only committed political crimes, but have recently engaged in dirty protests and hunger strikes (both of which the Church disapproves) saying the Rosary together to give them the strength to continue their protests and strikes (Coogan, 1980). It is often thought that the Church's allowing elaborate funerals to IRA men killed in action or dying from hunger strikes is hypocritical. But it can also be seen as the fulfilment of their duties to those members of their Church who have had divided loyalties.

There are more subtle ways that men in particular express the fact that while they need the priest, they are not altogether his slave. It is customary in Ireland for the bachelors and a few married men to come in late for Mass and leave early and/or stand at the back of the church when there are seats available. And all the railings of the priest to move into the church are of no avail. In one church in the west of Ireland some of the men only came to the church grounds, and as it was too small and crowded to fit them comfortably, stayed outside chatting. This performance was repeated every Sunday. I found it interesting that when I asked one old man in my town who walked to the church with his wife, but would not sit in the seats available, what he would do if the priest ordered him personally to sit down, he replied he would leave and never return to that church. But he would not miss Mass: rather, he would go elsewhere.

What these men are saying by such symbolic gestures is that we need you and will obey you, but do not take too much of our autonomy. This statement is expressed elsewhere. Many men nowadays will not go to confession at all, saying they will answer to God themselves (a Protestant sentiment); or, why should they tell the priest their sins when he will
not tell them his sins? Others constitute what are termed "hardy
annuals" — those who go to confession just once a year at Easter, to
the chagrin of their wives and mothers. But few will miss Mass. Young
people, men and women, now commonly refuse to go to confession, comprom-
ises by the Church in the ways in which confession may be heard being
of little avail in persuading them to do so. The vast majority however,
still attend Sunday Mass. When I asked one young woman, a student, why
she did so when she did not believe it to be a sin not to attend (in fact,
she even professed not to believe in heaven or hell, though she did think
there was a God and possibly some kind of after-life), she had some diffi-
culty in finding an answer, but replied it was because she felt she would
feel she had broken with her family if she gave up this one last ritual.

Drinking

While heavy drinking in Ireland is for many, for most of the time,
a means of escape from problems, drinking itself and the activities which
surround it have some element of anti-authoritarianism in them, partic-
ularly in the past. In his historical article on illicit distillation,
Connell shows this activity has been very prevalent in Ireland since the
17th century. While economic factors and possibly a preference for the
taste of poteen were significant reasons for its existence, there is no
doubt that a certain anti-authoritarian attraction surrounded it. Connell
says:

There was, indeed, some shred of the patriot's glory for the
man who cheated the excise, and the imprisonment he risked
necessarily worsened neither his own condition nor (when
neighbours were sympathetic) that of his family.

(Connell, 1968:26)

This is followed shortly by a more powerful statement.

Poteen-making provides a striking example of the proverbial
reluctance of the Irish to accept the law's definition of an
offence. Continuously the illicit distiller has enjoyed some-
thing of the respect and sympathy due to an important and
much-tried functionary: the excise officials lament that
he bore none of the malefactor's stigma; and in fiction it is
the gauger who is outwitted, the distiller who has the last laugh.

(Connell, 1968:28)

A film of a modern manifestation of this behaviour was made in Ire-
land in 1978 called Poteen. Apart from showing us the exquisite beauty
of Connemara, the plot concerns a couple of middlemen who have just
collected their illicit brew from the distiller, when they are waylaid
by the police who drink themselves into a stupor back at the station. The agents stealthily enter and retrieve the poteen back from the police, later selling it, without however, telling the distiller of their achievement. The film is a revelation of Hibernian roguery, and counter-roguery.

In the twentieth century men often go to the pub in defiance of their wives and mothers, and only the most shameless "nager" would send in a child to retrieve the offender. I found pub drinkers' behaviour at closing time in most rural areas an interesting contrast to that of Australians, and to some extent, Dubliners. Bartenders' calls for last drinks see people buy several each, over which they sit for three quarters of an hour or so following closing-time, deaf to the entreaties of the bartenders to leave, entreaties, incidentally which can consist of the most ingenious lies about swooping police etc. But the police in rural areas are lax about the rule, realising that if they suppress this expression of anti-authoritarianism their lives and perhaps those of their family, will be made difficult, as people told me. Thus, the sergeant in my town made several "mistakes" of this nature when he first arrived from Dublin, but within a year he had learned to make the odd raid on the "late-closing pub" in whose accommodation I lived for six weeks. But he gave plenty of warning by walking slowly up the street giving the revellers time to scoot out into the kitchen of the restaurant on the other side of the building - not without their drinks in hand of course - and return later for more quiet drinking until quite frequently as late as four a.m.

Anti-authoritarianism in the workplace

Not surprisingly, anti-authoritarianism is more readily elicited where the individual does not have a relationship of dependence upon the other, but he is in a subordinate position to that other. While many employees, particularly those in private industry, may be cowed by their superiors, where jobs are more secure, superordinates must be careful about how they express commands or orders. Fully aware that haughty commands and reference to his high status would invite recalcitrance from the administrative staff in his university, one professor told me that when he wanted photocopying done for instance, he would not ask staff to do it quickly for him, even in a polite manner. Rather, he would stop and chat with the subordinate, ask him how his family was, express sorrow at noticing how busy he was, and apologise (insincerely, of course) for giving him more work to do. The response would be, "oh, that's alright, I'll do yours
right away", to which the professor would answer: "No, don't trouble yourself". But the man would insist. In this perverse way the professor had achieved his aim by the canny realisation that the subordinate would be flattered by being given a transitory superordinate status, and would then go out of his way to be obliging. While I showed that people are very dependent on politicians as brokers, nevertheless they are not powerless in relation to politicians. Bart points out that people do not like politicians with airs and graces who behave a "cut above the rest" or will not mix well because of snobbishness; hence, few Protestant landlords, or lawyers of either religion are politicians (1976:57).

Perhaps the approach taken by the Irish professor might be usefully learned by those government sponsored bodies and by banks whose workers embark on what people from the rest of the western world find to be inordinately long and stubborn strikes. e.g. a six month's postal strike in 1978-9; a strike which closed the Associated Banks from 1 May 1970 to 17 November 1970 and curtailed banking services for nearly a year (Kennedy and Dowling, 1975:265); and other six week to three month long strikes in the banking sector in the 1970s. Between 1969-73 Ireland lost an average of 870 working days per 1000 people employed per annum compared to 1036 for the United Kingdom and 1372 for the U.S.A. But considering a longer period, that of 1964 to 1973, Ireland exceeded the British with an average of 1054 days lost per 1000 employed persons per annum and took second place in the industrial world following the U.S. which lost 1247 days per 1000 employed persons per annum (from O'Malley et al., 1978:56). And in the years under consideration, Ireland was amongst the least industrialised countries of the western world. While the statistics alone do not prove it, I have offered them as support for my belief that strikes in Ireland may sometimes be less about pay or working conditions than about letting the boss know his power is limited. Strikes that are exceedingly long show certain signs of "irrationality" i.e., that no gains in pay can possibly make up for the losses in wages. By no stretch of the imagination could it be said that all this strike action in Ireland has given the average worker good conditions of work or pay.

Not all of what appears to be anti-authoritarian behaviour is that alone, however. The wanton undiscipline of motorists and pedestrians for example, or the careless littering of Ireland constantly complained
about by more community-minded citizens, may be less the result of rebellion than reflections of a lack of concern for community. In Ireland there is a very poor conception of community as a democratic settlement of near equal persons with mutual responsibilities they freely fulfil. Rather, a man's place in society is conceived in hierarchical terms where he is looked after from above and can control those below. This structure which results in a personalistic, particularistic view of the world as analysed in chapter four (pp.167-8) is not conducive to the development of responsibility towards those who live outside the particular hierarchy in which a person is involved. According to Evans, the Irishman's attitude towards the Englishman's concern for community is that it is a sign of simple-mindedness(1967). Aware of the benefits of the newly developing sense of community, Father Cleary made use of his regular column in the Sunday Independent to urge the Irish to continue to give their support to community-consciousness. 15

Schmitt points out that a resistance to regimentation and ambivalence towards laws and regulations is one of the built-in checks upon extreme authoritarianism and organisational rigidity (1975:54). Perhaps it is this strong anti-authoritarian trend in the presence of such authoritarianism that militated against the rise of fascism in Ireland during those periods this century when it was being developed elsewhere in Europe, including Catholic countries such as Spain and Italy.

**Anti-authoritarianism in gaols in Northern Ireland**

One recent interesting manifestation of self-assertion against subordinate figures has been found among the prisoners in the Maze and Armagh prisons in Northern Ireland where, since the seventies, there has been an enormous growth in prison population. In their "battle of the bowels" as Coogan graphically calls it, which also involves a refusal to wash, the protesters sit locked in their cells in unwashed blankets in the midst of several weeks accumulated faeces and urine which lie not in containers but all over the cells, not the least on the walls where it is smeared to further point up their rebellion. Coogan, a sympathiser who has written a book on the protest, describes the situation.

Then in order to dispose of the faeces and continue with the darkening of the walls the prisoners started smearing excreta over the white paint. One result of the smearing has been, despite the fact that the cells are cleaned regularly - as we shall see - the prisoners being forcibly
removed to another block whilst this is done, according to Maguire there are 'millions' of little white maggots in the cells. 'You wake up with them in your hair and your nose and your ears. You lift up the mattress and they are crawling under it'.

(Coogan, 1980:7)

While the ostensible reason for the strikes has been to regain the status of political prisoner (taken away in 1976) by prisoners, there is much reason for supposing it has really been an attempt to assert that the prison authorities cannot control entirely their personhood. For one thing, after a year of this protest in which the British made absolutely no attempt to negotiate with the prisoners, it should have become clear it was a futile gesture. Furthermore, it aroused little interest on the outside, for as Coogan says, the Catholics, like others were repelled by its bizarre nature (1980:152). But the strikers remained steadfast for up to four years as more and more joined the strike, without any change or negotiation being made in their status as ordinary criminals.

It was said in chapter two that nascent forms of this behaviour can be seen in childhood under not dissimilar circumstances, i.e., when the child is the "prisoner" of the mother. But most revealing for my purposes is the fact that the protest has been surrounded with much ritual defiance which seems to be an end in itself. This includes the refusal to wash which forces the warders to give prisoners compulsory baths. And the solidarity among prisoners seemed to increase in this protest, despite the fact that prisoners were confined to their cells and not all allowed to intermingle, and its very unpleasant nature for the prisoners themselves. Said one prisoner to Coogan: "'The spirit is fantastic. The lads are very good to each other...You are all in there because you want to be there!'" (1980:4). As Coogan describes the protest it is, I believe, a gesture intended to prove to the prison authorities that they may control their bodies (and not even these successfully) by incarcerating them, but not their spirits: their integrity remains intact.

**Anti-authoritarianism in schools**

Anti-authoritarianism is usually suppressed in the home when it surfaces in children in response to some of the child-rearing practices described in chapter two. But mothers who are either unable or
unprepared to exercise constant and extreme control over their children can find themselves with a house full of "wild flowers", as one mother described her children. She was a good-natured woman with an abundance of high-spirited (though also very dependent) children whom she was always threatening with unconvincing gravity: "I'll burst your divils, I surely will!", which sent the scurrying offspring to further heights of misbehaviour just to test her limit. She did occasionally fulfil her promise, but much of her time was taken up with this kind of delightful, but rather aimless play (aimless at least from the point of view of one who might be concerned to teach her children skills that would help them to lead productive adult lives in an industrialised world).

Parents might successfully suppress anti-authoritarianism at home, but not necessarily elsewhere. Away from home in the schools it is very evident as early as eight years of age. It is far greater among boys than girls, as it is among adult men than women, and this will be given further substance in the seventh chapter. It was virtually impossible for me to get any response from boys of any age on the Symonds Picture Story test, though many girls responded enthusiastically. Few boys beyond the age of eight years would cooperate in school activities such as plays or choirs (though some men do take up acting and singing of their own free will as an adult hobby). The headmaster of the local national school told me that the boys are in fact, much better now than in the past, this being the first year in which any boy had appeared in the children's church choir in his memory.

I noticed that there was a marked imbalance between girls and boys among the adolescents remaining at school beyond the age of fifteen years, there being only five boys in the total of thirty students in the Leaving Certificate class at the local vocational school. While this may have been more extreme in this relatively traditional rural area than in the cities or towns, and more boys are taken away to attend college than girls, the imbalance I observed is a general trend in Ireland. In 1975 the number of girls who sat for the Leaving Certificate exceeded boys by 15,689 to 13,519 (McCarthy, 1978:105). In my district, and no doubt many others, it is not due to boys being kept at home to work on the farm nowadays. Some parents who were concerned at the difficulty they anticipated in persuading their sons to complete their schooling when most of their friends would be opting out, sent their sons to private schools
nearby or to boarding school. These schools contained children from families who had aspirations for their children to be materially successful in life, though they came from all sections of the social strata. I noticed that the mothers of some of these children were less punishing than others. Of course, this alone is not sufficient to create a child who desires to be successful at school: the mother also needs to encourage the child to fulfil these aspirations in positive, supportive ways. Nor am I suggesting that the mothers of such sons might not be over-loving, and domineering, as I described "good" mothers can be in chapter two. What I am saying is that the sons of mothers who were punishing, critical and authoritarian, without offering their children constructive avenues for self-fulfilment, were more likely to realise themselves through anti-authoritarian activities.

All this anti-authoritarianism notwithstanding, children have much greater freedom of expression and activity in school now than in the not-so-distant past. It was perhaps one of the least authoritarian of the national school teachers who allowed me to come into his classes frequently and to tape them. But despite the freedom he gave his nine to ten year olds, I got the strong impression that much of the energy of the boys was directed in opposition to the teacher, good-humoured rather than resentful though most of it was. I would even go so far as to say that some of the learning that took place among the boys did so in this context. This was manifested particularly in anti-authoritarian humour which set the class into gales of laughter. Such behaviour could be seen not so much during lessons involving the non-humanities such as mathematics or geography, but during those such as religion and non-grammatical lessons in English; and more towards the afternoon following the morning's obedience. One religion lesson involved the life and personal qualities of the Irishwoman Edel Quinn who contracted tuberculosis. What was tuberculosis, asked the teacher? "Brucellosis", cried out one game lad knowing full well it was not. "Ah, Begob", quipped another without invitation from the teacher, "me Da's got a quare lot of cows with brucellosis", to the uproarious delight of the class as other members tried to better this (quare lot = awful lot). Control is not easily restored by a non-authoritarian teacher in such circumstances, but despite the disorder I have no doubt that in such a lenient atmosphere, by engaging in such stimulating activities, the children not only learned about tuberculosis and brucellosis, but much about personal relationships.
Anti-authoritarianism in humour

This humour was far more sophisticated, sharp and of a different nature from any I have seen in Australian or Greek children of that age. It is the precursor of adult Irish humour, much of which involves satire or mockery of those in positions of power. Satire is pre-eminent in Irish literature from the earliest times, and the chiefs greatly feared the capacity of their proteges, the poets, for satire if they failed to please them. One sometimes wonder if the poets were not in fact the more powerful persons in Gaelic Ireland. It was a skill acquired by the Anglo-Irish such as Swift, Congreve, Farquhar, Goldsmith, Sheridan, Wilde, Shaw and many others in the twentieth century. Indeed satire, wit and ridicule are forms of behaviour which can be used either to place the other in a subordinate position, as I showed in chapter two, or to defend the self against being placed in that position. Often, an act of self-defence among relative equals (i.e. not between teachers and students) results in such a reversal of roles, however transitory, so that the one defending himself against attack becomes momentarily the attacker.

But as the wit of the school children reveals, humour and wit are not instruments available only to the educated for their defence and/or attack upon others whatever the degree of benignity or malignancy. The Edgeworths said at the turn of the 19th century:

The Irish nation from the highest to the lowest in daily conversation about the ordinary affairs of life, employ a superfluity of wit and metaphor which would be astonishing and unintelligible to a majority of the respectable body of English yeoman.

(Edgeworth, 1823:137)

That it has its origins not in colonialism, but in childhood, before any dealings with landlords, their agents, or the courts, is given support by the following observation by the Edgeworths.

'Wild wit, invention ever new' - appear in high perfection amongst even the youngest inhabitants of an Irish cottage.

(Ibid:133)

Demonstrating its affinity with those qualities of ambiguity and cunning deception described at the beginning of the chapter, they say:

The word wit, amongst the lowest classes in Ireland, means not only quickness of repartee, but cleverness in action; it implies invention and address, with no slight mixture of cunning; all of which is expressed in their dialect by the single word 'cuteness' (acuteness).

(Edgeworth, 1823:133)
"The same 'cuteness' which appears in youth continues and improves in old age" (1923:134)

But that such wit and satire can be directed in upon the self is realised in a profoundly insightful statement by Mercier.

Behind the bards and hagiographers, who endlessly strive to outdo each other in their accounts of heroic deeds and saintly miracles, there lurks the figure of the sceptic and/or parodist. Anyone who knows the contradictions of the Irish mind may come to suspect that the sceptical parodist is but the bard or the hagiographer himself in a different mood.

(Mercier, 1969:12)

For here is the realisation that so afraid is the Irishman of being mocked for whatever creative or constructive work he may produce which will excel that of his peers, he mocks his own self, thereby depriving the other of the power to detract from his creation.

Thus we find much mockery of profound human emotions in Ireland, both now and in the past.

There has always been in the Irish nature a sharp and astringent irony, a tendency to react against sentiment and mysticism, an occasional bias to regard life under a clear and humorous light.

(Flower, 1947:149)

When I went to see the American film The China Syndrome in a Bray cinema, I was surprised to hear a number of people, mainly males laughing where I would not have expected them to, nor where the film-makers had intended to elicit laughter. These were controlled emotional occasions in the film which I found very moving. I felt it strange that there should have been laughter at such points during this serious, intellectual movie in which the film-makers in the characteristic new American movie-making style, used considerable irony and even cynicism, and did not engage in any sentimentality. Some educated Anglo-Irish people whom I accompanied said that with the exception of sentiments involving nationalist events, such as portrayed in replays of the 1916 uprising in which the Irish wept copiously, this was a typical reaction to sentiment expressed in films. They felt it was because Irish people were ashamed to display sentiment themselves that they were embarrassed when others did so, and dealt with the problem by mocking laughter.

I feel this is partly correct, but there are some emotions the Irish are not ashamed to express, such as those involving relationships with children. Some of the plays and sketches at the yearly concert in my
town concerned extremely sentimental matters involving orphaned children, and older children caring for younger ones, and everyone loved them. Nor are the Irish in the least afraid to express sorrow or grief at funerals, and to talk sentimentally about dead persons. In fact the Irish are well-known for their predilection for funerals, and the activities surrounding them. But children, dead patriots and dead friends and relatives cannot injure one's vulnerability when a person gives away his or her feelings about his or her commitment to them. Not so for other persons in the community however. From these potentially or actually superordinate persons one tries to hide emotions such as those concerning success or failure in one's aims in life, be it in a career or within one's family. Most importantly, one tries to hide emotions of affection towards a lover or marriage partner. As Laing says: "to disclose oneself to the other is hard without confidence in oneself and trust in the other" (1971:106). Any display of deep emotions in media which may reflect the self, such as naturalistic film, runs the risk of being met by mocking laughter which denies their existence. As Mercier says, Swift, Shaw, Beckett and Joyce have all laughed at romantic love in such a way that this kind of mockery makes it difficult for the Irish to express romantic love at all (1969:77) (see chapter six).

Not even religion is entirely immune from Irish satire. Although the literature reveals sophisticated Dubliners who have lost some of their faith make few concessions to the Church in their tendency for satire, I found it substantially, but not totally, absent among the townspeople. The man who compared people going to communion before confession at Easter (because of the long queue for confession) to a man who eats his dessert before his soup was not a committed church-goer. But those who created, watched and roared with laughter at the sketches in the annual town concert mocking the parish priest's railings at the bachelors to move into the church, were mostly committed Catholics. So too were those who mocked certain priestly rituals at Irish wakes in the past. Included in these were mock marriages and mock confessions (O Suilleabhain, 1967).

Mercier has indicated in his chapter entitled "Macabre and Grotesque in the Irish Tradition" that the mockery of profound human emotions sometimes reaches these extremes and that these two qualities, the macabre and grotesque, can be found throughout the long tradition of Irish humour. Although O Suilleabhain shows that there were many similarities between
Irish wakes and those held on the continent (1967), merriment can triumph over mourning in the very presence of the corpse in Ireland (Mercier, 1969: 49). These rituals involving an alternation of humour with grief are probably man's way of forcing the bereaved to take a lighter view of his loss so that he can gradually loosen himself from the beloved. Such apparently unseemly behaviour may then, be considered to have a functional role to play in society in dealing with the problem of death and grief. But from what O Suilleabhain describes of these wake amusements, the Irish would seem to have taken the matter further than what was emotionally functional.

The mockery of one's own emotions and commitments, and also those of others would appear to be taken to extremes in Ireland that are self-denying and destructive, creating a sense of futility in not only relationships, but also in endeavours. This claim is embodied in the humour of a statement certifying its owner had done service as a member of the local Defence Force during World War II. This certificate, now boldly displayed over its proud owner's door, was required before the man could apply for a government job which he sought, one he did not get as the contents of the certificate would reveal.

To whom it may concern.

Volunteer [member's name] joined the local Defence Force in 1941. He attended only one parade.

[signed]

Captain of the Local Defence Force.

Hostility towards authority figures upon whom there is dependence

The incongruity of this information proudly framed, at first shocks one into a refreshing laughter. But coming close upon the laughter is the creeping feeling of tragedy at the realisation that this was an organisation created by the Irish Government, for the defence of Irish people, shortly after the gaining of independence following three bitter centuries of colonisation by a foreign power. This was an avowed patriot asserting that he could thwart the government for which his father risked his life to secure, to build and create, and which this man hopes will remain governing his country.

We see in this defiance of the government which this man considers to be legitimate and upon which he depends for defence as well as other
matters, an ambivalence about its authority. Hostility and suspicion towards what are now considered lawful authorities have extended beyond the era of what was seen as unlawful and unrepresentative government. The Irishman's distrust and jaundiced view of his government is remarked upon by most scholars such as Bart (1976), Sacks (1976), Humphreys (1966: 23) and Messenger (1969:56). Without seriously analysing it, most scholars have opted for the easiest and most obvious possible reason - that of oppression under a colonial government whose rule was considered to be unjust and evil, attitudes towards which have carried over to indigenous government. But if people can "learn" to be hostile to government because at some point in their history it has deserved such hostility, equally they can "learn" not to be hostile when that government becomes representative, especially after two and a half generations of indigenous rule. Hostility to legitimate government has its origins not in the conscious learning process in Ireland, I would argue, but in the unconscious development of the individual's personality. Let us look at another manifestation of this dependence which has associated with it a lesser degree of hostility - the dependence of the Irish on God and the priests.

The priest is the mediator between helpless men and a powerful God upon whom most Irish people depend emotionally and in other ways to get them through their lives. Whether the individual priest is good or bad, so long as he keeps his vows he can effectively siphon off some of God's benevolence and spiritual support for his flock. This supposition acts to limit hostility towards the priests when they over-step the limits of their right to intrude on people's private lives. When God does not help them following their imploring his benevolence, people do not become resentful towards him as a rule. For perennial problems such as too frequent pregnancies, sick children, and uncooperative husband, or an unemployed husband, I never saw my female informants rail against God when the relief for which they prayed did not come. But I did see a bereaved family whose head had died prematurely struggle for several months to maintain faith. Over and over again the mother and adolescent daughter would ask in the months following his death: "Why did God need to take him. We need him more than God does" followed by doubts about heaven and hell and an afterlife. But there was never any doubt about God's existence and the mother and daughter attended Mass virtually every morning of the week during this crisis. After several months the questions about God's benevolence tapered off. They began to be
convinced and satisfied with the idea that as the man was a good father and member of the community, he was with God, and not in Hell, and faith in God's benevolence was restored. And who are we to question God's decisions?

Resignation and fatalism usually characterise people's attitudes towards God's will more than hostility. In their collection of Irish poetry Brooke and Rolleston say that idyls of the poor can be found in most countries, but in Ireland they are distinctive:

The peasant meets overwhelming trouble with the courage and the endurance of a fatalism which is only modified by his profound religion. He dies in silence and submission...
(Brooke and Rolleston, 1900:xxvii)

Resignation to God's will is enjoined on people of the Catholic faith in Ireland. The basis for this belief and behaviour may lie in the fact that in this culture there is generally an absence of the kind of alienation from family that we see in the western Protestant countries where individuality and achievement often take precedence over family ties. Just as the Irish child and adolescent feels ultimately that they are in the protection of the mother provided they behave as she wants, however anxiously attached they may be, so perhaps do adults, given proper supplication, feel they are being watched over by an all-powerful, benevolent God who knows what is in their best interest. When I spoke to some people about suffering and the problem of theodicy, they reminded me that God knew what he was doing during Christ's suffering and death. The Catholic Church in Ireland deifies the suffering mother worn to a frazzle with child-rearing, often in the absence of a supportive husband, making it quite clear she will see her rewards in the next life.

But having acknowledged the positive dimension of this culturally-prescribed approach to difficulties, i.e. solving them by fatalistic acceptance, one must not ignore a less positive dimension of such behaviour. This is one manifestation of the apathy we saw in both the political and economic domains (chapter three), and will see again in nationalist politics (chapter seven): it is the consequence of a despair that comes from anxious attachment.

The fundamental difference between the authority figures of God and the government is that one is unknowable, his rewards intangible, the other is not. If a real-life government fails to produce tangible goods, unlike God, the failure becomes unequivocally evident, and is likely to
cause resentment or hostility. As I indicated in chapter three, the Irish approach the services their government offers them through intermediaries, for they are fearful that they themselves will not have the power to achieve by themselves what they seek. On the other side of the coin, parties are mobilised along hierarchical chains of patronage. When a party comes to power, be it in Ireland or the urban areas of the U.S.A. controlled by the Irish Americans, they proceed to some extent to use funds not to improve the municipality or the country as the case may be so much as to reward those individuals who have helped them to come to power with jobs, houses etc. Those who supported the wrong or losing party can lose out substantially when goods and services are distributed in this partisan manner. It may be the consequence of the awareness of this possible loss, combined with the sense of impotence that the individual is unable effectively to approach the bureaucracy and take what is rightfully his that results in the widespread Irish distrust of and jaundiced view of government. Yet this cannot be the entire reason, for it was shown in chapter three that patronage tends to be more "imaginary" than real in modern Ireland where social services are concerned, objective criteria automatically conferring eligibility.

In order to understand this dependence on God, as well as on government, yet hostility towards representative government, we need to return to the work of Bowlby who says that just as

...there is a strong case for believing that gnawing uncertainty about the accessibility and responsiveness of attachment figures is a principal condition for the development of unstable and anxious personality so is there a strong case for believing that an unthinking confidence in the unfailing accessibility and support of attachment figures is the bedrock on which stable and self-reliant personality is built.

(Bowlby, 1975:366)

For not only young children, it is now clear, but human beings of all ages are found to be at their happiest and to be able to deploy their talents to best advantage when they are confidant that, standing behind them, there are one or more trusted persons who will come to their aid should difficulties arise. The person trusted provides a secure base from which his (or her) companion can operate. And the more trustworthy the base the more it is taken for granted:...Paradoxically, the truly self-reliant person when viewed in this light proves to be by no means as independent as cultural stereotypes suppose. An essential ingredient is a capacity to rely trustingly on others when occasion demands and to know on whom it is appropriate to rely. A healthily self-reliant person is thus capable of exchanging roles when the situation changes: at one time he is providing a secure base from which his companion(s) can operate; at another he is glad to rely on one or another of his companions to provide him
with just such a base in return. (Bowlby, 1975:407)

Bowlby demonstrates how astronauts - men who are among the greatest achievers in the western world - operate in this manner in their extremely dangerous and demanding work. Such reversals of roles and the concomitant trust is contrasted with women who experience major emotional difficulties during pregnancy and puerperium who are found to have great difficulty relying on others. Such a woman is either unable to express her desire for support or else she does so in a demanding and aggressive way; in either case her behaviour reflects her lack of confidence that support will be forthcoming. Commonly she is both dissatisfied with what she is given, and is herself unable to give spontaneously to others (Ibid:408).  

Bowlby's work helps us to understand the abiding mistrust and suspicion that the Irish have of authority. Their lives fraught with insecure attachment in the family - an insecurity maintained by respective husbands and wives in adulthood as I shall demonstrate in the following chapter, as well as by the rest of the community whose malice is ever anxious to claim another victim - the average Irish person ultimately feels he or she cannot really completely rely on anyone. Trust is extended least of all towards those who are needed but with whom the person has no close personal relationship yet to whom he must supplicate himself. Rather, like Bowlby's case of insecure pregnant women, he demands a help he does not really expect to receive. This explains more fully, I believe, the dual nature of the Irish attitude towards their own government - dependence and hostility.

Anti-authoritarianism expressed in physical violence

In chapters one and two I showed that the anxiously attached child expressed anger towards the attachment figure, and suggested this was an attempt to assert his individuality; his right to be noticed and cared for. But as this can alienate the attachment figure - and in Ireland it is often punished - so anger can be redirected. Bowlby says:

Instead of strongly rooted affection laced occasionally with 'hot displeasure', such as develops in a child brought up by affectionate parents, there grows a deep-running resentment, held in check only partially by an anxious uncertain affection. (Bowlby, 1975:288)
This, combined with an inability to solve their own problems, can result in people readily resorting to violence, or idealised violence, to solve problems in Ireland. Although violence features much less in women's behaviour than in men's, it can often be seen in the home in the form of very bad temper with the ordinary problems that raising a family presents and can take the form either of abusive yelling, or of physical punishment, or both. In these cases, the behaviour is to be distinguished from punishment or criticism offered in order to force obedience and submission from the child. It can also lead to the projection of hatred onto figures who may not have caused the problem; or to the projection of the problems of the self onto an entire nation with the hated figure seen to be the tormentor of that nation. While I deal with nationalist strivings in chapter seven, here I would like to make the point that the present hatred of the British which one can still find among some Irishmen too young to appreciate the struggles of independence may be attributed to such a projection of both hatred, and victimisation.

Women's violence is confined to the home: men's violence (real or idealised) as a means of resolving problems finds its way into the public, and especially the political domain. Many men deplore violence, but a minority do not. Others may not believe in violence as a means of solving their problems, but nevertheless suffer from violent feelings. Scheper-Hughes says results of her TAT testing reveal that passive and conforming to authority figures though the adolescent males may be on the surface, a certain amount of suppressed anger and rebelliousness does break through in anti-authoritarian fantasies (1979:175). I found a number of men who committed no violence in their lives towards their families, nor engaged in fisty-cuffs when drunk, nevertheless espoused violence as a means to solving Ireland's problems, with both their own legitimate government, and the one they see to be illegitimate in Northern Ireland. During an extended discussion on this subject one such man said he thought the only real solution to serious problems was violence, for it was the only form of behaviour which others would take seriously. He insisted that this applied to Australians as much as to the Irish. Significantly, Pfretzchner and Borock found that small-town and rural students were more prone than other urban groups towards the acceptance of violence as a solution to political problems, while students from Dublin and cities, especially those of managerial and professional families, possessed a greater degree of confidence in their ability to influence
government policies and had a greater regard for the democratic rules of government (1976:115;118). For it is in the rural areas that life is the most traditional and least democratised.

The red-headed, freckle-faced, quick-fisted Irishman is an American stereotype (Shannon, 1966:144), and in the past it was not altogether unwarranted. There is much documentary material on faction fighting last century in Ireland. Vivid and lively pictures emerge from O'Donnell's drawing together of some of this material (1975). Up to 1000 men could be commanded on either side for this endemic activity, though under the 100 mark was more usual. It was opposed by the Anglo-Irish rulers, but the constabulary had little success in quelling this 19th century transformation of the very old Irish propensity for warfare. It seems to have constituted an end in itself, a way of realising the self almost. No property changed hands to the victors as a consequence of these activities.

These factions were joined by small boys at school. Casting a humourous eye on the phenomenon, Carleton recalls the Lilliputian engagements of his childhood which paralleled those of the boys' fathers and older brothers in his story "The Funeral, and Party Fight". The cream of the matter is this: - a species of ambition prevails in the Green Isle, not known in any other country. It is an ambition of about three miles by four in extent, or, in other words, which is only bounded by the limits of the parish in which the subject of it may reside. It puts itself forth early in the character, and a hardy perennial it is. In my own case, its first development was noticed in the hedge-school which I attended. I had not been long there, till I was forced to declare myself either for the Caseys or the Murphys, two tiny factions, that had split the school between them. The day on which the ceremony of my declaration took place was a solemn one. (Carleton, 1979:2)

Having lined themselves up on the sides of the two factions in a glen

The word was then put to me in full form - 'Whether will you side wid the decent Murphys or the blackguard Caseys? The potatoe for ever!' said I, throwing up by caubeen, and running over to the Murphy standard. In the twinkling of an eye we were at it; and in a short time the devil an eye some of us had to twinkle. A battle-royal succeeded, that lasted near half an hour, and it would probably have lasted double the time, were it not for the appearance of the 'mæther',... (Carleton, 1979:3)
From O'Donnell's material it would seem the fights were often provoked at fairs for no reason in particular other than the sheer love of battle. One Cork landlord said:

'Philosophers who maintain that the state of nature is a state of war will draw strong support from Irish customs. In other places they fight for some object of real or imaginary advantage - in Ireland they fight for nothing but fighting's sake.'

(O'Donnell, 1975:80)

The fights were often preceded by what an anthropologist would call ritual or ceremonial taunting between leaders in order to get them started. Deaths and serious injuries were common, though deadly weapons such as guns and knives were not usually used. The treated blackthorn stick and stones were the principal weapons. The Irish, however, maintained their sense of humour about the condition and many an apocryphal story is told about fights, O'Connell says. One involved a man who sustained a fracture of the skull at a fair, died, and his assailant was tried and convicted of manslaughter. Before passing sentence the judge asked him if he had anything to say in extenuation of the crime.

'I have, my lord,' he said. 'You heard the doctor swearing that the deceased had a very thin skull. I put it to you in all fairness, my lord, that if he had a very thin skull, the fair of Cappawhite was no place for him to be'.

(O'Donnell, 1975:51)

The Church and state both waged their own campaigns against this activity which appears to have begun to die out after the Great Famine. One can only speculate on the reasons: one may have lain in the drop in unemployment owing to emigration becoming a way of life; a greater desire for social mobility and respectability; and the rechannelling of energy by some into agrarian reforms, some of which used peaceful means to achieve their ends, and some violent. For instance, the Land League of the later part of the 19th century which settled many disputes outside the law, had great success in subsuming local under national grievances (Lee, 1973:95).

Such behaviour did not disappear altogether, however. A few young men in my town and the adjacent town returned sometimes to start an anticipated fight with some permanent town dwellers. Fisty-cuffs is abhorred by Irish people on the whole, however, and engaged in perhaps not more frequently than in a rural Australian town. We should not ignore what I would call its recent transformation into sport, which, perhaps no more violent in Ireland than elsewhere, would appear to be more widely participated in. MacLysaght comments: "It is a feature of modern life in Ireland that sport in all its branches is as much the province of the poor
as of the rich (1969:131). Magill, the most sophisticated Irish political journal, with an international subscription, devotes a much larger amount of its space - sometimes up to 20% - to sport than comparable journals in America and Australia. Although the title of the article is actually referring to the ability of the Irish to overcome the divisions in the Gaelic Athletics Association during the past century, "Tribute to our fighting spirit" is clearly meant to refer equally to the nature or intent of the Gaelic sportsmen in this article published in the Irish Independent (11 January 1980). The G.A.A. is, and has been, a very powerful cultural and political body in Ireland since its formation about a century ago, and has reified traditional Gaelic games as a form of loyalty to the nation. That sport may be a transformation of warfare or fighting can be seen elsewhere, such as in New Guinea, where following pacification, some of the people have conducted team games such as football as an alternative to warfare for solving problems or disputes (see Lawrence, 1971:88).

Violence, or idealised violence as a solution to one's problems on the contemporary scene is not necessarily the consequence of being treated violently by parents, or in the schools. I found it interesting that the man mentioned above who espoused violence though did not enact it, had a brother and sister who abhorred it, including that of the IRA, saying it could not be justified under any circumstances. I knew the mother of this large family of ten children, who, being closely spaced, were unlikely to have been treated very differently from one another, and she was the most gentle of persons who never beat her children, they said. Nor did the father, who, from descriptions was, however, rather more severe (he was now deceased). This implies that it is not necessary for the child to have been treated with physical violence for him to espouse violence as a solution to his problems. One man I knew who recalled constant floggings as a boy - something I believe to be correct after getting to know his extremely severe parents - would not now lay a hand on his (rather mischievous as it so happened) children because of the suffering he endured in his own childhood. His solution to the boyhood treatment, however, was an alternative one to arousing counter violence - withdrawal. While being a gay, very sociable adult, and a skilled musician, he could handle very few of life's problems, and shrugged them off to live a rather heedless, irresponsible life. In a district which many people said had enough work to go around, he could rarely find a job
and when he did so, was unable to remain there. For the most part of the year, he relied on social security, which was inadequate to keep his large family whose lack of proper nourishment was clear to others in the town. He ran a car, though he could not afford to, and was always "gallivanting around", leaving his over-wrought wife to care entirely for his offspring. While liking him, most people I knew, including one of his relatives, deplored his irresponsibility, which was only more extreme in form than that found in many other men in the town who seemed to have taken a similar course in life.

Some men oscillated between withdrawal of this kind (which does not necessarily have the same manifestations as this case), and violence. Usually the violence comes when men are drunk. One bashed wife said, it was not really that they got drunk and did not realise what they were doing, but rather they got the courage to do or say things when they were drunk that they were afraid to say when sober. I observed this frequently among men myself, and would acknowledge that it is a state of behaviour not peculiar to the Irish. But I believe that the state of "trembling between timidity and the edges of violence" (McGahern, 1973:11) to be such an all-prevailing characteristic in Ireland, whatever forms the two contradictory states might take, that I feel it appropriate to suggest it characterises or embodies the contents of this entire chapter.

Conclusion

The coexistence of these two contradictory attitudes constitutes a paradox of the same order as the statement that within a framework of dependence on others one could say the Irish person revels in denying that dependence. 19 I have made this statement in my thesis by dealing firstly with the manifestations of authoritarianism/supplication to authority figures, then those of anti-authoritarianism or expressions of independence. In fact, timidity/violence, dependence/independence, authoritarianism/anti-authoritarianism, conformity/obstinacy are all transformations of the same phenomenon that is the Irish person's need for others for his self-realisation while at the same time those others constitute a threat to his survival. The following two chapters will be concerned with further manifestations of these paradoxes, one in the sphere of relations between the sexes, the other in the sphere of nationalism.
NOTES - CHAPTER FIVE

1. The clachan is a cluster of nucleated dwellings whose owners belong to the rundale system of land ownership in the district.


3. In 1895 only 12% of all holdings were being worked by farmers who owned them. By 1921, the year of independence, it was 64% (Kennedy, 1973:158).

4. It is not at all clear from the literature just how well cooring groups worked together. McCourt reveals there was much quarrelling and litigation and some outright uncooperativeness involved in the rundale system of land tenure, which in some cases involved joint ownership of holdings and also stock. However, his information comes from periods in which there were intense pressures on land. Peter Gibbon criticises both nativists and the anthropologists Arensberg and Kimball for supposing the mutual cooperation or cooring groups were so homogeneous or worked so smoothly (although not for the same reasons as myself) (1973). Arensberg and Kimball do not seem to have studied closely a cooring group, so we do not know how cooperative they really were in their district. Damian Hannon, who was born into one, gives us some, but not adequate information. They were very closed groups into which strangers, i.e. those not born into the community, were not easily incorporated. He indicates a certain tension may have existed when he says that kin troubles were not discussed with neighbours (1971), presumably because of the fear that this information would be used against the family. (See McFarlane on the concern of people to maintain the "standing" of the family vis-à-vis others in a Northern Irish village, and for this reason did not gossip about relatives to non-relatives (n.d.)). Harris reveals that while neighbouring farmers did help each other in a Northern Irish rural area, their wives did not even visit each other, and that if by chance they entered a neighbour's home, they would be ill-at-ease and anxious to leave as soon as possible. Women visited only their kin (1972:144).

5. While Fox believes this recalcitrance may have been due to the propaganda on land rights from the mainland at the time, this cannot be assumed. Communication between Tory Island the mainland has always been poor. It would be interesting to know if there had been difficulties in collecting rents from the Tory Islanders before this period. However, even if the land agitation movement had reached the island from the mainland, it could only have precipitated action which people were ready and willing to engage in.


7. It was reported that 20,000 protestors marched through the streets of Dublin in May in 1982 in a demonstration of discontent over the tax and insurance payments made by the PAYE sector, despite the £45 million package of tax relief recently given to the wage and
salary earners. It was not as big as the tax protest of March 1979, but it was still one of the largest protests that Dublin has been in recent years. (Magill Digest Magill June 1982:3)

8. One could no more claim that the 19th century descendants of the planters who were predominantly small landholders, many of whose children themselves emigrated to America because of overpopulation (see chapter eight) were usurpers of Ulster land than it can generally be claimed that Australians or Americans have no rightful place in the countries they took from a native peoples several centuries ago. While many factors may have caused the population increase in Ireland in the 18th and 19th centuries, some of which were shared in common with the rest of western Europe which experienced similar increases, one factor rarely considered to have contributed to the survival of greater number of Irish Catholics was the cessation of the endemic warfare engaged in during the pre-colonial times by the native Irish among themselves.

9. This poverty in Gweedore was possibly due to the kinds of forces described in chapter three manifesting themselves in chronic poteen-manufacture and drinking which used up grain that should have served as food; in extreme mismanagement of the land by the indigenous system of rundale (see McCourt, 1950); and in the crowding of people around the coastline instead of dispersing themselves inland where there was available land to be exploited (see Hill, 1971). And when Lord George Hill successfullyameliorated these conditions, poverty very substantially declined. When Fox refers to the "notorious Lord George Hill" (1975:91), I presume he is referring to the latter's attempts to wean the Irish away from the indigenous land tenure system which Fox sees as functional in the Tory Island society. Doubtless this system did serve the communities' needs well before population expansion, as it probably also did in Scotland, parts of England and on the continent from the North Atlantic coast to the Aegean Sea where it has been found (McCourt, 1950:286). But with population increase and pressure on land in the rundale system it became fragmented into plots so tiny and uneconomic that McCourt says for instance, one man had a small quantity of land in 42 different places, and in County Mayo, ten families owned 355 separate lots of land. Many were not even one tenth of an acre in size. Not only this, but quarrels over boundaries, as well as over ownership, were greatly increased, and much energy and time spent on attempts to resolve them (1950). Faced with the choice between modifying an indigenous form of land tenure and starvation, Gweedore peasants wisely chose the former. However patronising and paternalistic Lord George Hill may have been, his contribution to saving Irish people from starvation is without doubt substantial. Far from the descendants of the Gweedore peasants losing their culture because of the modified system of land tenure, like other occupiers of the Gaeltacht, they have remained in the 20th century a rich repository for traditional culture and behaviour.

10. Shaw is not being callous in saying this. Rather, as a committed socialist he is humanely recommending that jobs be created to alleviate the conditions that cause poverty rather than charity be given on a particularistic, personalistic basis. As Whyte points out, charities such as St. Vincent de Paul Society alleviated many cases of
distress, but did nothing to alter the system which made that distress possible (1971:63-4). Unlike most other Irishmen, Shaw had an international perspective which enabled him to see that Ireland's rural poverty was considerably preferable to Britain's urban proletarian poverty at the time.

11. In this gesture of denial of one's need for others there exists an equally strong need for forcing others to need one in the act of missionising "pagan" people.

12. This exodus is to be distinguished from emigration per se of an excess population of members of religious orders, less by the countries to which they went than by the positive orientation towards leaving their beloved country for "white martyrdom" on foreign shores. A nun told me that the order to which she belonged, which was founded in Ireland and had branches elsewhere in the world, had an explicit policy of transferring members from their native land, and never allowing them to remain in one particular convent for too long. She said she greatly regretted leaving Ireland when younger, then later, leaving Australia where she spent ten years. While it may be necessary to know more about the policies of this order, I would tentatively suggest that they may be enforcing "white martyrdom" on their members, an "enforcement" that becomes voluntarily accepted by the members when we consider that the individuals joining the order were aware of this rule before doing so.


14. See chapter four (p.164) for Blanshard's statement on the absence of anti-clericalism. While I shall show in the conclusion that a trend is appearing in historical studies that lays some blame on the Church for some of the problems faced by the Irish, again this is a very small movement confined mainly to scholars. One such scholar whom I met was nevertheless a supporter of the modern Church.


16. The argument denying that lying and blarney enter the Irish personality by means of the colonial experience is made in chapter one.

17. What Bowlby explains as an ability to exchange roles, to act as both an independent person and, when necessary, to trust others when one is in a dependent role, is I believe, similar to what Laing means by a

...dialectical relationship between two persons, both sure of their ground and on this very basis, able to 'lose themselves' in each other. Such merging of being can occur in an 'authentic' way only when the individuals are sure of themselves.

(Laing, 1965:44)

Those without a well-developed sense of autonomy are liable to fear engulfment in a situation which requires trusting dependence, and therefore to seek help, but yet to reject or withdraw from the person offering (Laing, Ibid). I shall use this notion of the dialectical relationship in the following chapter on sexual relations.
18. Fighting among Catholics is called faction fighting, and is to be distinguished from that between Catholics and Protestants which is called party fighting, and was more serious in intent and consequence.

19. It is Connery who, when questioning the validity of the belief that the Irishman is the "supreme individualist", qualifies this statement by saying:

...he is a great conformist who is only too ready to accept authority and deride those who break with convention. Perhaps the balance is that within a rigid framework of conformity the Irishman revels in his obstinacy.

(Connery, 1968:89).
CHAPTER SIX

RELATIONS BETWEEN THE SEXES

The direct sexual instincts are not weak on the island, but they are so subordinate to the instincts of the family that they rarely lead to irregularity.

(Synge, *The Aran Islands*, 1979:122)

The Irish would appear to take with extreme seriousness the Christian injunction to control sexuality, which is given an emphasis in Catholic doctrine far exceeding the space or material dedicated to the subject in the bible. Traditionally, Catholic couples have been enjoined to engage in the sexual act only for the purpose of procreation. A contributor to a very comprehensive volume on Catholic theology praises a husband and wife, who, by mutual consent, refrain from exercising their conjugal rights. This theologian quotes from Tobias who recommends that a husband and wife, after matrimony, go to the chamber and pray together for three days, after which the man should take the virgin with the fear of the Lord, moved rather for love of children than by lust. A husband and wife who lose themselves in lust are under the power of the devil (Smith, 1952:1087). The Catholic Church modified its views on this matter in 1951 implicitly allowing room for pleasure in the sexual act by permitting the use of the rhythm method to control family size. But this theologian is still strongly advocating the refraining from exercising conjugal rights by couples for the prevention of too many children (Ibid).

In a more recent Catholic catechism from Ireland we find sexual concupiscence is still represented as man's worst enemy. The authors even go so far as to say that in heaven - that paradise which embodies man's ideal aims for himself - there will be no marriage. Mary is a model for those who choose chastity. She inspires people to bear witness to the ultimate meaning and final goal of salvation history, the heavenly city where there will be no marriage (Lawler et al., 1976:121).
Virginity for women and ascetic self-denial for men are ideals which Catholic doctrine throughout history and across cultures has held up to its adherents for emulation, with varying degrees of success in each culture. Mary and Jesus are the ideal models whose behaviour is emulated by priests, nuns and other religious persons, and some members of the society who remained unmarried throughout their lives in all Catholic societies, but perhaps nowhere more conspicuously than in Ireland.

Undoubtedly the dimension of Catholic teaching to which the Irish appear to have been most committed for the past century at least is that concerning the control of sexuality. While many other countries, Catholic and non-Catholic, and non-Christian alike were concerned in the early part of this century about the erosion of traditional moral standards which was aided by improved communication with cosmopolitan centres, increased availability of erotic or obscene literature, dance hall crazes and so on, Whyte believes Ireland's concern was the most extreme (1971:34). In the 1920s one observer wrote:

"After several changes theologians had fixed the number of deadly sins at seven; Irish parish priests in practice made courtship an eighth. For lovers to walk the roadside in Ireland when the average priest was abroad was a perilous adventure."

(Whyte:1971:27)

And according to my informants, some of whom had been courting in the early 1950s, it had sometimes been so in their youth also.

The stories one hears and reads about parish priests poking the hedges with their cane to rout out courting couples after dances are legion. The priest characteristically either beats those found or forces them into the confessional box, or to the altar, depending presumably upon the state of advancement of the courtship activities in which he surprised them, or the severity of his personality. As Whyte says, almost every area of the country has its folklore about local puritans and he provides several typical examples. Numerous references to priestly interference in the personal, sexual lives of parishioners are to be found in Connell's essay "Catholicism and Marriage in the Century after the Famine" (1968). Hell-fire sermons on the subject of sexual morals of which a very eloquent example can be found in chapter three of Joyce's A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man were delivered regularly in parishes until last decade during missions, and so frightened people that one informant told me that she and others attending felt they had no chance
whatchoever of getting to heaven for several months afterwards.

Now there are some grounds for agreeing with those whose observers who

...have suspected that the Irish Catholic preoccupation with sexual morality is subjective rather than objective in origin: that it is motivated not by evidence that this is a serious problem in Ireland, but by some kind of inner necessity that obliges Irish people to harp on the subject.

(Whyte, 1971:31)

For as early as the turn of the 19th century we find numerous eulogies to Irish chastity. Connell gives a number of examples. A French traveller in the 1830s remarked that:

'The Irish are remarkable for chastity; natural children are rare, adultery almost unknown'; to a German in the following decade 'the mass of the people are in the highest degree moral, and the women are more modest than they are to be found in any other part of the world'. To successive English visitors the poor Irish were 'remarkable for their chastity', their modesty 'the subject of remark and eulogy with every stranger'; the peasantry were 'signally chaste'; 'there are no more innocent girls in the world than the Irish'. Clerical observers, Catholic and Protestant, agreed that the Irish girl's chastity was 'wonderful', 'marvellous', or 'remarkable'.

(Connell, 1968:82)

As there were no statistics available before the census of 1841 we have to rely on such impressionistic accounts, and Connell thinks that from the evidence available, illegitimacy before the Great Famine was low. Certainly it was low in the years following the Famine, the lowest of fifteen countries in the world for which statistics were available in the 1890s, though marriage in Ireland was then late by international standards, and proportion of life-long bachelors and spinsters high. In 1871-80 only 1.63% of total births were illegitimate in the twenty-six counties of Ireland. Sundberg's international table of illegitimacy for the 1890s shows the ratio for England and Wales to be 4.1%, that for Portugal 12.1%, and that for Ireland 2.6% (1968:82-3). Figures on illegitimacy provided from Irish government sources this century are as follows:

2.6% of all births in the 26 counties in 1921-3
3.5% in 1933-4
3.2% in 1939
3.9% in 1944-46
1.6% in 1958-61
2.6% in 1969

(Whyte, 1971:31)
Nor was pre-marital conception high. In 1910-11, of the women marrying under the age of twenty years, fewer than 13% had babies within the year, compared to 33.4% in England and Wales for this period (Connell, 1968:119). 1

Within marriage fidelity seems to have been the rule also. Arensberg and Kimball said of rural Irish people in the 1930s that:

The sexual urges of the older people are deemed adequately satisfied in marriage. Adultery very seldom seems to come into the reckoning of small farmers. Marital fidelity is not only the ideal; it seems to be the fact as well. It seems even to be taken for granted, and any other course felt inconceivable. (Arensberg and Kimball, 1968:206)

Humphreys reports that the people said in the 1950s there was very little infidelity in Dublin families (1966:143). And Levine shows this has crossed the Atlantic where marital fidelity has been a very important image among Irish-American politicians who point out that they differ from Catholics from other countries in this (1966:193).

We are beginning to see here a sexual modesty and restraint that is self-imposed, rather than imposed by priests, and I shall look at how the Irish people have enforced their concern with sexual morality on non-Catholics in their country as well as upon themselves by means of legislation in the areas of censorship, divorce, contraception and abortion. I have mentioned that the Irish instituted a Censorship of Publications Act in 1929 to safeguard traditional moral values (chapter four). But people even acted as censors independent of this body. O'Faolain recalls that the first censors of drama were to be found among the laity, and so extreme was their stand that he "lay it to the eternal credit that the Bishop ... consistently frowned on these Manicheans" (Whyte, 1971:29). Even earlier we find riots over the great Anglo-Irish playwright J.M. Synge using the word "shift" (i.e. petticoat) in his Playboy of the Western World (see Kilroy, 1971), as well as over other non-obscene matters in his play. Akenson says that often moral vigilante societies were organised by the local clergy, such as that of the Catholic women of Limerick, the "Modesty Dress and Deportment Crusade", a campaign so successful in the west of Ireland that one archbishop described it as a "national crusade". There are many examples of this kind of thing (1975:138)

The key point in understanding the popularity of the priestly crusades is to realise that they were not imposed upon a
restive populace by an autocratic clergy, but that morality campaigns fitted almost perfectly with the existing social framework and sexual code of the average Irishman.  
(Akenson, 1975:139)

Let us take a look at an example of literature which was found to be offensive by the censors, and banned.

One of the finest authentic reproductions of traditional Irish peasant life is to be found in Eric Cross' novel, *The Tailor and Ansty* (1970), a novel which has had the dubious honour of causing one unholy senatorial row over the censors' decision to ban it when it was first published in 1942. For not only did this book appear inoffensive to some, but it was recognised as a fine piece of literature in its genre, and a valuable documentary of otherwise esteemed Irish traditions. It will suffice to draw attention to an offending section which elicited some discussion in the Senate. The editor Frank O'Connor says that one senator...

...insisted on reading from the book over the impassioned protests of the other senators who dreaded - it is on record - that pornographers would buy the proceedings of the Irish Senate as an anthology of evil literature, and that prize collection of half-wits ordered the quotations to be struck from the record.

(Cross, 1970:7).

Here is the section.

'What started it was a woman who walked down the road the other day while I was standing to the cow. When she saw the cow, I declare to God didn't she ask me if it was a bull or a cow -'

'A bull or a cow! Glory be! Asked if it was a bull or a cow!' echoes the chorus.

'-- and she wasn't a young woman either, and she was married by the ring on her finger--'

'Married -- and asked"Was it a bull or a cow?" Ansty is stunned with amazement. The joke seems too absurd even for her. 'Hould, you divil!' she hurl at the Tailor to check his extravagance. 'It passes all belief'.

'-- and she had been drinking milk all her life -- and manalive! She didn't know the difference between a bull and a cow!'

'Married and didn't know the difference between a bull and a cow,' Ansty muses, as though the Tailor's reiteration of the fact has weaned her from her former incredulity. Once or twice she repeats the statement until it is completely absorbed. Then she starts again.

'Gan rahid!' (Gan raht..May you have no luck). 'That was the queer kind of marriage. What was she married to? They must have
had the strange carry-on. Didn't know the difference between a bull and a cow, and married!' Whatever goes on in Ansty's imagination gives her great glee, to judge by the chuckles. (Cross, 1970:54)

The offending material here lies less in what the Tailor said, than in Ansty repeating it, and dwelling on it, for she was a woman, the symbol and epitome of Irish conceptions of sexual purity. No decent Irish woman would say such a thing, the censors felt, and if she did, she should not have the opportunity of corrupting others.

Compare this section with a paragraph to be found in Emile Zola's Earth written over half a century earlier in more liberal Catholic France, of a young peasant woman dealing with mating a cow which was too tall for the bull. Although reactions in France and England at the time were similar, only Victorian England, however, found it fit to ban the book on account of its sexual content.

With a calm and watchful expression, as if undertaking an important task, she had drawn nearer....There was nothing for it; she lifted her hand in a sweeping gesture, grasped the bull's member full in her hand and raised it up. And the bull, feeling himself on the edge of achievement, with vigour restored, went right in with a single lunge of his loins, deep. Then he withdrew. The job was done; the thrust of the dibble that buries the seed. Stolid, with the emphatic fertility of earth which is sown with seed, the cow had absorbed the fecundating jet of the male without a stir. She had not even trembled at the shock. And he was already down, shaking the ground under him once more.

Françoise, after letting go, kept her arm lifted. But now at last, she let it drop, and said, 'Well, that's that'. (Zola, 1954:16)

The Tailor's and Ansty's vulgarities are characteristic of some modern rural families' vulgarities in Ireland. Some examples of the former's are:

' 'Tis a small thing would put a man in good-humour again', as the man said when he heard that his wife was dead, and he went out into the yard and saw the cock mounting the hen'.
(Cross, 1970:40)(the tailor)

When talking of King Solomon and his excessive exercise of his conjugal rights, Ansty says:

'That wasn't a king. He must have been an ould tomcat...' (Ibid:95)

'Oho!' chuckles the Tailor, 'it was more like the case of the man who took his wife to the doctor in the old days. When the doctor took out his horn they had in those days for sounding a
a person, the man said, "'sound her with your horn, doctor. Sound her well with your horn.'" "'The divil a need', said the doctor to him 'by the looks of it you did that yourself long ago!'"

(Cross, 1970:132)

But as Arensberg and Kimball said: "The 'earthiness' and the ribaldry of the country people is not an antithesis to their strict moral code. Rather it reinforces it" (1968:200). Nor is this lack of serious vulgarity a modern phenomenon in Ireland, for Carleton says of the peasants in 1833, in his "An Essay on Irish Swearing":

Now, although Paddy's oaths are varied and bitter, yet there is scarcely such a thing to be heard in Ireland as a gross or indelicate oath, and never, under any circumstances, within hearing of a female ear.

(Carleton, 1979:302)

While sparing no criticism of the Irish, Carleton compared their sense of delicacy in this matter favourably with the grossness of the English peasant (Ibid). Perhaps some examples of my own experiences will allow the reader to judge the degree of modern Irish vulgarity.

In mixed company I heard the word "walloper" used, though the man's wife blushed and admonished him; and another man described a friend whose advances were persistently refused by his wife as having been placed "in dry-dock", without his own wife being embarrassed. A farmer drew a parallel between his and his wife's situation whereby he had made her pregnant though she was using the Billings method of birth control, and that of his ram which got in amongst the ewes too early in the season. Men are definitely more vulgar than women, especially in the latter's absence, and considerably more interested in discussing sexual topics; and possibly the Dublin working-classes are more vulgar than the average Irish farmer. The word "fuck" is used very freely by men amongst themselves and in the presence of a young liberal-minded woman. Some young females tend to use the word "feck" as a euphemism rather frequently, as they also do "shite". Women generally, however, are very modest and circumspect and do not themselves engage in vulgarity except in a disguised or allusive way. There seems to be no vulgar or vernacular word for male or female genitals at all for women who would, if necessary, refer to that area of the anatomy indirectly in regards to their infants, or if forced to be specific they would call it a "bottom". And in general, older people are less vulgar than younger ones.
Thus, it cannot be said that the Irish lack vulgarity, but it seems rather tame beside the vulgarity of another traditional peoples with whom I have some familiarity, the Greeks. In Greece I heard one respectable married woman call out in the street to a young man as he left her home after visiting the family, to make sure he washed his tool before his wedding ceremony which was to be held the following day. It is true no one but my husband and myself was near enough to hear her, but she was not particularly embarrassed about my husband translating it for me. An old respectable peasant woman of seventy years of age told an amusing anecdote to a small family audience of how her husband (ten years her senior) could no longer get an erection: just as he had shrunk in his old age, so too had his tool, she laughed. Jokes in a similar vein of a less personal nature are told in selected mixed company. And children are not protected from exposure to such ribaldry - all a far cry from Irish vulgar behaviour. But then, I have seen a Greek grandmother in Australia repeatedly and unashamedly kiss her infant grandson's little penis in a home in which I was resident as a lodger - an unthinkable act to Anglo-Saxon Australians, and Irish alike.

Evidence of their own imposed restrictions on sexual activities lies in the fact that the Irish have used legislation to disallow the importation of contraceptives into their country. Private individuals, usually Protestants, were able to get around this by having them mailed from Britain or bringing them in by person for their own personal use. Family Planning Clinics set up by community groups in 1969 circumvented the law disallowing the sale of contraceptives by requesting donations from clients. These are confined to the major cities and there is much evidence that despite their popularity, the bulk of the Irish people stick to the natural birth control methods, some of which are allowed by the Church. But there is evidence of a very high failure rate. For instance, of 112 women coming to a hospital in Ballinsloe who said their pregnancy was unintended, 78 were using some "natural" method of contraception (Provincial News. Magill December 1980).

However, views on contraception have certainly become liberalised during the 1970s as the latest legislation in Ireland indicates. The 1980 Taoiseach's "Irish solution to an Irish problem" in the form of the Family Planning Act of 1980 permits the sale of contraceptives for bona fide planning. However, the discussions before
and following the Act indicated that it might create more problems than it would solve. The most serious of these was thought to be its possible infringement of personal liberty by doctors who would be free to choose who was bona fide, and who not, and by pharmacists who, like doctors also, might refuse to sell them on grounds of conscience. It had been popularly thought that only married couples would be considered bona fide. In an article in the Sunday World Sweetman claimed the result of a survey conducted in 1979 by the Pharmaceutical Union showed that 42% of pharmacists had said they would not sell contraceptives for clients - with or without prescriptions.\(^2\)

Some peoples views on the matter were strident:

> Where would you see a piece of inert harmless plastic that a condom most certainly is, where else would you see this thing elevated to the status of drug, to be protected and controlled by professional bodies? \(^3\)

And this exploitation of respectable people wishing to control their family size is "merely to appease the moral mongers and all those afflicted with our National Sexual Neurosis" (Ibid). Others were pregnant with characteristic Irish wit:

> Why shouldn't people wanting condoms not have to apply to the Minister for Health for a permit to obtain them (and let him do his own dirty work), or get them through the Post Office on receipt of forms signed in triplicate by the parish priest, local chairman of the League of Decency, complete with passport photograph signed by the local T.D.? \(^4\)

*Magill* magazine has had no feature on the matter during 1981-2, but two reliable Dublin informants told me in November 1981 that the law seems to have changed nothing. With both doctors and pharmacists unwilling to decide who is and is not bona fide, people using contraceptives continue to avail themselves of the Family Planning Clinics which it was thought would become redundant following the new legislation.

Although a survey of 110 households in Galway city showed that 99% of people said that they felt contraceptives should be made more accessible to married couples,\(^5\) it would appear that there are many Irish people who hold more traditional views on the matter than this poll would indicate. I knew a number of women who, despite constant child-bearing being the greatest problem in their lives, would not avail themselves of the Family Planning Clinics in Dublin (for reasons to be discussed later), and one well-educated, middle-class woman who did not believe in any kind of birth
control for anyone. Looking beyond my own informants, we find a strong reactionary movement to this new legislation. Said the president of the Ovulation Method of Ireland, Dr. Barry:

'In this last year we had the enormous stimulation of the papal visit side by side with the overwhelming horror of our native parliament busily passing a Bill to facilitate artificial contraception -- a parliament be it noted made up of 95% reputedly practising Catholics!' 6

He told women that their task would now be rendered doubly difficult by competition from what he called illicit methods of birth regulations financed by the taxes they paid.

According to Dr. Barry the intrauterine abortion device is now one of the most common causes of pelvic inflammatory disease in women, while there were 137 listed complications of the contraceptive pill: 27 of them 'major and death-dealing'...'They are recommended because they make money for the doctor and they render women always available to satisfy men's lust. Lord protect women from liberating themselves if this is the result of women's lib.'...If asked whether natural family planning was perfect one must acknowledge, he said, that nothing was perfect, but that if it was well taught it was very good.

(Ibid: my emphasis)

Note that this doctor does not presume women might suffer from "lust", a common and correct Irish assumption, as I shall argue later.

With doctors like this interpreting the law it is hardly necessary for the bishops to come out with statements such as the following.

The Irish Catholic Bishops reiterated the official Church prohibition on 'the evils' of pre-marital and extra-marital intercourse, masturbation, homosexual acts and contraceptive intercourse by married couples. 7

Note how these diverse sexual acts are all lumped together and described as "'Sexual misconduct [which] remains an offence against human dignity'" (Ibid). Presumably having one's body swell and reside every year with an unwanted pregnancy does not detract from a woman's dignity. One would forgive the Irish person who felt that Fr. M. Cleary who has a regular column in the Sunday Independent was guilty of hypocrisy when he said:

In this country, our attitudes vary from the prudish depressing view that all sex drives and instincts are degrading signs of weakness and that marriage is a toleration of this weakness and a necessary evil,...[a view which might mar] many an otherwise potentially happy marriage. 8

Legalising any kind of abortion, of course, is unthinkable for the
majority of Irish people, although it is estimated that around 3000 girls do go to Britain each year for abortions now. Of course, Ireland is not the only western country with strong anti-abortion sentiments, but it would have the dubious honour of being alone in producing the following statements. In an article in the Sunday Independent it was reported that the British-based Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child was in Ireland trying to force the Irish Government to clamp down on women taking the "abortion trail" to Britain. One leading Irish female member replying to the journalist's question, was contraception not needed to avoid the need for abortion?, replied: "'No, the use of contraception led to abortion. The figures proved it. Indeed contraception, abortion, lesbianism, homosexuality and gay rights were all linked...one leads to another'".9 Or another similar kind of statement: "an argument for abortion must also justify infanticide under the same conditions and for the same reasons".10 And recently the Archbishop of Dublin, Dr. Ryan, warned that Irish people may have to leave the EEC rather than accept imposed laws from Brussels on abortion and contraception, though the President of the European Commission had tried to convince the Archbishop that the EEC had not got the power to impose moral legislation on the Irish Government.11

Despite much discussion about the matter in 1980, no legislation has been made to modify the law forbidding divorce in Ireland. Both the Catholic Church and the majority of people would appear to be in agreement on this.

Historical material on sexual behaviour

From the impressionistic material available from 1800 to the Great Famine, Connell indicates the kind of sexual restraint which followed the Famine may have preceded it for at least the 19th century(1968). But material for periods earlier than the 19th century gives us no unequivocal picture of sexual behaviour in Ireland at all. There is evidence of restraint of a severe kind at all periods as that practised by the ascetics who were the most extreme in Christendom. Even as unsympathetic an observer as Giraldus Cambrensis paid generous tribute to the exemplary chastity of the Irish priests in the 12th century (Dolley, 1972:96). Lehane says that concern with sexual restraint is preeminent in the penitentials of the early Irish monastic Church. Although avoidance of sex was a general aim in monastic institutions all over Europe, for some Irishmen "rejection of the other sex amounted to a sustained phobia"
(1968:60). After reading The Irish Penitentials (Bieler, 1963), this is a statement with which I would concur. Far more emphasis was placed on sexual misdemeanor than on social transgressions. However, MacLysaght may be being patriotic when he says that during the 18th century Ireland was freer of sexual irregularity than any other country in the world, for there is no way he can really know this. While in the 17th century there was unquestionably a greater laxity of morals, MacLysaght says that at no time was the excessive licence associated with the Restoration period in England to be found in Ireland. Even if the upper classes who were English and Protestant, had mistresses, this does not imply promiscuity (1969:47).

Families are said to have slept naked together in small huts in the 17th to 19th centuries, but MacLysaght says it was observed by some that the girls were separated from the men and boys even in a tiny one-roomed cabin (1969:66). Polygyny had been practised in Ireland from the earliest times among the chiefs at least, to the abhorrence of the monogamous non-Irish Europeans. In fact the Irish Parliament in 1634 found it necessary to pass a law to enforce monogamy (MacLysaght, 1969:49). But polygyny or the keeping of concubines by the chiefs by no means bespeaks sexual laxity among the population, as anthropologists know. Nor does clerical marriage – a source of contention between the Irish and Roman Catholic Churches in the early Christian period – bespeak sexual immorality. Some monasteries were secularised, and married abbots, though under major orders, passed on control of the monastery to their sons. Sons were seen to be necessary in fact, to prevent disputes about inheritance (Corish, 1972:43-4).

In the conclusion I will refer to the historian Larkin, who claims from the bishops' evidence, that immorality was widespread before the Great Famine. But this "immorality" or "incest" (as the bishops call it) seems to refer to the tendency of the Irish to marry within the proscribed limits of consanguinity set by the Church – that of third cousin. The rural Irish propensity for marrying close relations still obtains in some areas in this century. For instance, Kane found that in a small parish in Donegal, of the 311 marriages recorded between 1881 and 1919, 63 were between known kin (1968:246). While this was rare in my parish, in 1980 an itinerant couple sought and received dispensation for a marriage between first cousins once removed. The "immorality" also refers to the fact that the Irish marriage was sometimes considered a secular matter,
and so marriages were sometimes conducted without a priest. As late as the 1960s Tory Islanders sometimes married without a priest actually present, owing to the fact that one did not reside on the island (Fox, 1976:161).

The fact that Maclynsaght says there is abundant evidence that illegitimacy was not only common, but that it did not constitute a serious handicap in Ireland under the codes of the Ancient Laws (1969:54) 12 does not necessarily suggest sexual immorality either. He says that the Brehon code of gavelkind had allowed equal rights in property to illegitimate and legitimate children (Ibid), but when the British system of inheritance came into universal use, the illegitimate son no longer held a position of legal equality (1969:55). The shortage of land obtaining in the 19th century may have changed parental and community attitudes to a condition that by no means suggests promiscuity. For since the late 1960s in Ireland there has been a massive increase in the numbers of girls getting pregnant before they were married, to the point where by the mid seventies it was assumed by the community that every girl getting married was most probably pregnant. Yet this change from the strict pre-marital chastity only a decade earlier has not meant that women have become sexually "liberated". Almost all of the women I knew in this condition had only ever had one lover, the man who made them pregnant, the same man whom they usually married. And at least one extant community in Ireland which appears to be as sexually strict as others, had a rather liberal attitude to illegitimacy - the Tory Islanders (Fox, 1976).

Of some interest in trying to determine how to interpret the scanty evidence available on sexual morality before the 19th century is some material provided by Maclynsaght. He says that in reading the depositions collected by Miss Hickson in her book on 1641 (the Ulster Rising), in all that great mass of charges, complaints and allegations, comprising murder, diabolic cruelty and pillage, she did not come across a single case of rape (1969:51).

But undeniable evidence for a more liberal approach to the subject of sex lies in printed material available to us. The early myths and legends are, like those from the rest of Europe, and many other places in the world, explicit in their sexual imagery and symbolism, and in their references to copulation, seduction etc. And the monks who copied
these materials often did not censor pagan stories. Later Gaelic works such as the eighteenth century Bryan Merriman's Midnight Court whose translation was banned by the modern Irish, satirises sexual matters in rather vulgar terms. De Blacam states that while this kind of satire is not unique in Gaelic literature, this tradition nevertheless seldom lapses from chastity (1973:334). Joyce says that works in the early and middle Irish periods containing grossness that would not be tolerated now had less offensive material than the corresponding literature of other European classics (1920:539).

That people speak freely of sexual matters by no means implies promiscuity (though as I have suggested, those who do not may well suffer from sexual inhibition). Those Greek women to whom I referred earlier held to the strictest moral codes for themselves. It does mean, however, that attitudes in the past towards the discussion of sexual matters were more liberal than they have been for the past century and a half. But this is all we can say for certain has changed in the history of Irish sexual attitudes and behaviour. I am at a loss to provide an explanation for it.

Except for this one area, discussion of sexual matters, we have no reliable data for periods earlier than the 19th century on sexual behaviour in Ireland. So we cannot say that the change in land tenure following the Great Famine whereby only one son inherited the property, forcing the remaining children, except for one daughter, to be celibate if they remained in Ireland, made a radical change in traditional peasant sexual behaviour. The high levels of permanent celibacy in Ireland since the Great Famine and late marriage are common to Europe as a whole for this period. One of the reasons permanent celibacy and postponed marriage may have been greater in Ireland than other European countries was the lack of work available in industry which would have absorbed some of those forced to leave the land. But there is another reason I believe. As Humphreys who found late marriage characteristic of Dublin families also said, Arensberg's and Kimball's emphasis on a structural/functional analysis of the rural community in accounting for Irish chastity is inadequate. For the stem family in rural Ireland is essentially that of all north west Europe and the U.S.A. Why should there be such a strong code characteristic of the Irish community but notably less of other equally rural Catholic communities such as to be found in Italy, Spain, Austria, Bavaria which are similar in social
structure? More pertinently, an attitude similar to that of the countryman is far from uncommon in a city such as Dublin, new and old members alike, whose social structure differs radically from those of the farmers (1966). Humphreys thinks the reason for the high level of celibacy and late marriage lies in the Jansenist tradition of the priests trained at Maynooth, as do some others, but as I have constantly indicated, for such a powerful degree of chastity to be adopted by a culture, it must be generated from some experiential basis.13

Personal expression of and feelings about sexuality

We have seen cultural expressions of the Irish tendency towards sexual restraint, and cultural attitudes towards the subject: now we must turn to those manifested in personal behaviour. Endless comments have been made upon the apparent lack of Irish sexuality, such as those found in Fr. J. O'Brien's volume The Vanishing Irish (1955), many suggesting in one way or another that the biological urge seems to have deserted the Irish. Ussher says that "to all appearance the Irish really have no sexual life, beyond the minimum necessary to perpetuate" themselves (1950:122); "they are almost natural Manicheans; for them the World, the Flesh and the Devil are really interchangeable terms" (Ibid: 124, my emphasis). Sex seems to Connery "to be more of a function than a passion - a case of procreation without recreation" (1968:93) in Ireland. Messenger asserts:

Lack of sexual knowledge and the prevalence of misconceptions about sex combine to brand Inis Beag one of the most sexually naive of the world's societies.  
(Messenger, 1969:109)

And Ussher again:

The Irish coldness of temper is older than...Janseniuss...  
[and] St. Patrick; for it is an almost uncanny natural innocence, and not (like English puritanism) a matter of social discipline.  
(Ussher, 1950:122)

A contributor to the Bell in 1941 asked: "Why...does the habit of evading sex not only continue in Ireland but get worse and more aggressive?" (Whyte, 1971:29).

Most of these are the observers. What do some Catholic Irish people have to say? In his autobiography O'Faolain speaks candidly of his sexual innocence: he did not even know at twenty years of age (in the 1920s) where babies came from, though he and his school friends had many a furtive discussion on sexual matters (1963:21). We cannot suppose his
case is unique, and indeed a large number of Irish writers, particularly males (who predominate in the literary sphere), reveal that they (or their characters') pre-marital sexual desires were thwarted by ignorance, extreme timidity, a sense of sin, and shame about their bodies. Austin Clarke, James Joyce, Patrick Kavanagh, Brian Moore, John McGahern and Christy Brown are some. Furtiveness and guilt are the prevalent characteristics of Irish sexuality as seen by one of Ireland's few female Catholic writers, Edna O'Brien (e.g. 1963, 1971). Protestants too seem to have been affected by this overwhelming Irish Catholic trait, so that Yeats, for instance, who felt sexually frustrated throughout his early life tried to explain sexual frustration in Ireland as being due to political and social hatred which was so prevalent in Irish life (1972:71-2).

Humphreys says that though more open on the subject of sex, Dubliners too feel it is evil and suspect and still incline to give the sphere of private morality priority over that of the civic and public morality. Men and women said they knew little about sex when they married. One woman's husband said that even though he was working around in the pubs, he was innocent when he married. A quotation from one woman on the subject is worthy of reproduction:

'I think there is something wrong with sex and nothing will ever change me...And I think that is the general attitude. One woman friend of mine who is married told me once that she felt after she was married that the loss of her virginity was the greatest loss of her life. And I felt the same way about it. Even when Brian asked me to marry him, and I love him very much, even though I was glad, I felt very sad...just like she did. There is something repulsive about it and nothing will get that out of my system. And the women will tell you that it is the men who enjoy it, not the women - they get no enjoyment out of marriage that way. However, Maura (another close married friend) once told me: "To tell you the truth, Nell, I do enjoy it!". But I don't and never will.'

(Humphreys, 1966:139)

Humphreys states:

But women have no monopoly on this feeling of evil. One husband stated: 'We Irish have very peculiar ideas on the subject of sex, despite what anybody might say. Back of everybody's mind is the notion that there is something wrong with it, something bad. It is deeply ingrained in us. I know that is true of myself and most of the people I know'.

(Humphreys, 1966:139)

But ignorance, fear, shame, suppression have not prevented the Irish from maintaining the highest marital fertility rate in the western world:
In 1961, of women aged 25-29 years at marriage and married from 20-40 years, 42% had 4 to 6 live births, 16% had 7 to 9 live births, and 32% had 10 or more live births. The average number of children ever born to women in this age category in 1946 was 4.52 children, and 1961, 4.25 child children. This compares with 2.73 and 2.47 respectively for those years for non-Catholic Irish persons (Kennedy, 1973:187-8). The image of the Irish as sexually inactive then, is not quite correct, and for a more comprehensive view of the matter I shall turn to my own fieldwork, the initial aim of which was primarily to understand what relationship there may be between child-rearing practices, and sexual inhibition.

Bodily reserve and modesty

I would like to begin with an impressionistic account of Irish womanhood from an anonymous letter written in 1825, for it describes with a finesse I could not achieve, the demeanour of the contemporary Irish woman. It is the general impression of modesty, rather than specific details of behaviour which are consonant with contemporary Irish female behaviour.

'Laugh at me as you may, I cannot but think that there is, amongst the lower orders of Irish, a delicacy of feeling which is not generally to be met in the same rank in England; if it be not refinement, it very much resembles it, and produces the same effect upon the manners. There is a laughing, blushing modesty about the young women which is pleasing from its very artlessness, and which, in the the upper ranks, affectation often seeks in vain to imitate. There is, too, a degree of decency, a personal reserve, which I have never met with in the English peasant. If they come to ask for medicine, their symptoms are detailed in a whisper, and are explained in terms as little offensive as possible. When they desire to buy one of the undergarments provided by the kindness of our English friends, it must not be examined in the presence of the other sex, or, if that cannot be avoided, they turn their back, taking care to hold the obnoxious article so as least to be observed.' (O'Connor, 1971:178)

This is a description of the bodily and personal reserve of the kind described in chapter two here pertaining to sexual demeanour. Let us take a further look at female modesty. While it may be inculcated in schools run by nuns, the vast majority of Irish children have not attended such schools; and in my town in particular, very few women had ever been educated by nuns. While I did not see any emphasis on modesty in the home that I would have considered excessive, mothers did encourage it in children, boys and girls alike, in such ways as not undressing them in a visitor's presence once they were over two years of age or so; by placing towels around them as they changed clothes on the beach; by getting even
the youngest ones to close the bathroom door behind them when they used
the toilet; and by not allowing any sex play (or talk). While one woman
said that in her childhood her mother had not allowed her or her sisters
to see the baby boy cousin's nappy being changed (they had no brothers)
and Messenger reported that some Inis Beag people whipped their dogs for
licking their genitals in the house (1969:110), these would be extreme
patterns of behaviour today.

Even so, little girls especially seem to develop a modesty quite young,
one which is not commensurate with observed socialisation. I am suggest-
ing that to some extent bodily modesty is acquired spontaneously in
response not to explicit instructions, but to the child-rearing patterns
described in chapter two which create withdrawal and guardedness in the
personality, and in bodily communication. The bodily guardedness that I
have described must necessarily extend into the sexual domain which involves
a penetration of bodily barriers. Attitudes to breast-feeding may con-
stitute one example of bodily guardedness. At a time when all mothers
breast-fed, writers such as O Crohan freely refer to the matter: he was
at his mother's breasts until he was four years of age, he recalls (1929:1).
"Diddies" are still referred to, somewhat contemptuously by young people,
usually in regard to excessive size, much the same way as might be heard
in Australia. As a rule though, breast-feeding is a topic which can cause
embarrassment to women as young as twenty five, and I felt with some old
women who had breast-fed their babies, that the topic was too improper to
broach. As I mentioned in chapter two, breast-feeding is rare in Ireland
today. While mothers who experienced births in close succession clearly
found it hard to devote the time required for the task, this factor does
not obtain for the first child. When there was not this genuine excuse
most mothers said they felt it was vulgar, and anyway, they would be embarr-
assed if any of their friends or relatives (female or male) came into the
home and saw them thus engaged. Scheper-Hughes' informants made similar
comments on the subject (1979:146). One of my informants who suffered
from extreme bodily guardedness and control clearly saw it to be repugnant,
her response to it being similar in nature (though not degree) to that of
her husband's sexual impositions on her. As there is no evidence at all
that breast-feeding is not practised because it is thought to be inferior
to formulas, or that it is bad for the mother, it is reasonable to hypoth-
esise in light of the above information, that once bottle-feeding became
practicable and safe, Irish mothers took the opportunity to rid themselves
of this encroachment of their infants upon the integrity and guardedness of their own bodies.

Little boys too, can be seen to develop an almost feminine modesty which is a correlate of bodily shame, I believe. While it is an extreme example in a young family in 1980, the following anecdote will substantiate this. While visiting her mother, a woman with several young children left her two-year-old on a couch with his nappy removed, where-upon, feeling the freedom, he joyfully drew up his knees, took hold of his penis, and began singing, blissfully unaware of the horror of his grandmother and of his brothers aged five and six. Whispered one in amazed tones to the other: "Just look at...?", drawing the attention of the very properly behaved six-year-old, who, shocked to the point where he boldly pretended indifference, asserted "I don't care! Sure, I don't care!" It was not that this infant had not behaved similarly in my presence in his own home, but here in a stranger's home the person and body is more vulnerable, and more in need of protection. Shame, guilt or embarrassment are all responses to heightened vulnerability, in the case experienced vicariously by the brothers.

There is evidence of masculine modesty in adulthood also. Messenger says that Inis Beag men have drowned at sea rather than remove their clothes (1969:110). In the Maze Prison in Northern Ireland, the men on protest for political status use their boites in ritualistic defiance of the prison authorities. When told to stand to attention in front of the governor, the blanket-men would stand naked (Coogan, 1980:6). But we should be able to imagine what the psychological costs for the protesters using their bodies thus must be when we learn of the following. In their "battle of the bowels", the men refuse to use latrines, but urinate and defecate in their cells then smear their faeces on the walls: and while they fade away, maggots fester in their bodily wastes. But even under these nauseating, self-imposed inhuman conditions

(...)feelings of delicacy prove hard to suppress. Prisoners for instance have an unspoken rule that when defecating in a cell with one or more companions, a prisoner will either use his mattress as a screen or else advise his comrades to look out of the window.

(Coogan, 1980:13)

Personal reserve, restraint and fear in initiating sexual relationships

A heightened sense of vulnerability expressed in bodily modesty
finds parallels elsewhere in sexual matters. Fear of looking foolish and ignorant was the reason for one informant remaining ignorant about the sexual act before marriage. Unaware of what "the whole yoke was about" (yoke = thing) until her honeymoon in the early 1970s, the woman did not dare ask her friends - who may well have been as ignorant as herself- and for the same reasons, her mother, for fear of being seen to be stupid. For the same reason as a twelve year old she would not ask her friends what was the reason for the blood on a school mate's cunic, anxious though she was to solve the mystery of an apparent injury of which the girl seemed unaware.

As anticipated last chapter, it is fear of rendering oneself vulnerable by admitting one can be moved or influenced by another that accounts for the well-reported standoffishness of males and females at dances in Ireland, the most likely place in which the sexes got to meet one another in the past. Discussing this, a journalist says that a few years ago at a country dance, all the girls sat at one side, and most refused to dance when a man summoned up the courage to ask. He did not ask in so many words, but a hand gesture indicated his intention. Often, not one girl would even deign to notice the man as he moved along the row of grim, unwilling females in a ritual analogous to running the gauntlet. To ask "Would you like to dance?" would have been to break all the rules of male nonchalance and reticence; it would have revealed he cared whether he was knocked back or not. And the journalist's most recent experience at a dance in a wealthy eastern town revealed nothing had changed.  

It is the fear of rejection combined with a refusal to allow women to realise they need them that many men come to dances without ever asking a girl to dance: they stand with studied indifference against the walls and near the door, smoking, and chatting to their male friends. As one who enjoys dancing, I realised that as a newcomer I would probably never get a dance unless I first made myself open to the risk of rejection and asked men to dance myself, thereby breaking conventions and earning the respect of some women for my bravery, and the approbrium of others for my boldness.  I believe it is for similar reasons that Brody says the bachelors from twenty to fifty years in the bars in Inniskillane did not try to make contact with female tourists. It is rare to hear of sexual intimacy between them: these men are nervous of women and become embarrassed very quickly by encounters with them (1973:39). The same reason is given in Hugh Leonard's play Da by Charlie who says:
We always kept our sexual sights impossibly high: it preserved us from the stigma of attempt and failure on the one hand, and success and mortal sin on the other.

(Leonard, 1978:20)

And Brian Moore has his protagonist muse when considering his loveless life:

He was like a flower that had never opened. He felt foolish when he thought of that, but it was true. Like a flower that had never opened. He had been afraid to open, afraid.

(Moore, 1958:124)

And when confronted with an attractive, charming girl with whom he was in love and who asked him to make love to her, he suffered such a paralyzing vulnerability and bodily shame that he was unable to fulfil his task. In terror at the humiliation ahead of him, this man in his mid thirties thought:

He would fail. He did not feel able. He would fail. Desire was a fantasy, a sinful, secret lusting that ran wild with unfulfilment.

(Moore, 1958:146)

Moore's Mr. Devine reminiscences that it is not that he had not entertained plenty of sexual thoughts and desires in his time. It was not that he was not really a man (1958:16, 56). And so it is with most of these shy Irish bachelors. The very fact that they come to a dance and watch the women indicates an interest, one which can also be seen in interaction with them. A man who showed some interest in me shortly after I arrived in the town became so embarrassed at his inability to conceal his sexual interest completely (as evidenced by blushing) that he would cross the street rather than meet me in it, and he studiously avoided me at functions. At thirty five, this man was said never to have taken a girl out in his life, even though his interest in women was patent.

A similar thing happened with another bachelor, something of a folk philosopher, whose company it was evident I enjoyed. Because of this he was teased for my supposed "crush" on him, and after this I was never able to get him to talk to me again. But this man's friend told me he had twice been to London with him where his friend went with prostitutes. But at home, he had never had the courage to take a girl out. It is for such men that masturbation is said to be the "safety valve" of Ireland, meaning not that women are kept safe by such activities, but rather that men maintain psychological well-being through it (despite feelings of guilt in some, especially the younger ones). While such painfully women-
shy men as these were prevalent in the past, they are less common now. However, men's approach to women still reflects caution, and apparent lack of interest is meant to mask both the fear of rejection, and the unwillingness to let the woman know she has the power to affect him.

**Male approaches to sex**

It must be pointed out that gathering accurate data in this very private area of human behaviour is very difficult, the more so in cultures where the matter may not be broached directly. I have found that the following anecdotal material, provisional though it may be, has been valuable in helping me to gain an understanding of sexual behaviour at the phenomenological level.

As a single female in Ireland I had limited experience with men approaching me for sexual encounters, which gave me some first hand insights into such behaviour. But I do not have much explicit data from Irish women in regard to consummated sexual relationships with Irish men. However, an Australian friend whose youthful sexual affairs involved a veritable smorgasbord of cultures, gave me some interesting information on her sexual experiences with two Irishmen. Finding them generous and good social company, she went to bed with them, but after a rather poor performance by one which she assumed may have been the result of either sexual inexperience or nervousness with a new woman, she attempted, as she said, "to reach out to him" to comfort and reassure him that such things do happen to other men, especially with a new partner. But she found she could not "touch him", for he had withdrawn into a shell" and she was made to feel that even to offer such comfort was an imposition on his privacy. Although the other man did not suffer from premature ejaculation he had sex with her as though she were "one of those inflatable rubber females" made for the purpose of men without human partners. She felt she had not been allowed to give of herself in these relationships but was
sharply cut off from her partners' feelings and desires. It left her with a disturbed sense of isolation and inadequacy in what was, for her, usually a way of proving her worth as a person in one of the few ways she felt able at that time of her life, i.e., by giving pleasure to men, and thereby relieving her loneliness. Her Irish lovers had allowed her to do neither of these things.

Also admitting to the provisional nature of his data on these very private matters which the ethnographer him/herself cannot observe, Messenger says that among the Inis Beag, the coital act is brief and frequently followed by the spurning of the woman as well as the need to degrade her in her role in the sexual act (1969:78). There is no knowledge of female orgasm (1969:109). Fox says that among the Tory Islanders the coital act is also brief, keen anticipation of the act being reckoned to create excitement among the men, and immediate orgasm the goal and boast of sophisticates (1978:160). Among the former people coitus is achieved in a state of partial undress, while among the latter, it is clothed (probably partly because it is conducted in the cold open air). Such sexual behaviour can be seen to be geared entirely to please the man with little or no account taken of female interests.

It will be explained shortly why the sexual relationship is asymmetrical, not only in Ireland, but elsewhere in the world, women being seen to have something that men want. In affecting the man this way, the woman has power over him, and for the Irish man to admit it is to risk engulfment in the relationship, i.e., in Langian terms, to lose a precariously established identity. In Ireland a woman's power to give a man something he needs is feared, for in this irreversible position of power, the "victim" is placed under an unsolicited obligation, one which can threaten to engulf him if he acknowledges its existence. For the Irish there is no safe intermediate position between engulfment and isolation: there is no possibility of allowing a dialectical relationship between the two persons, both sure of themselves and both able to "lose themselves" in each other, without losing their autonomy (Laing, 1965:44-5), in this relationship which, more than any other made in adult life, entails an integration of identities in the course of sexual attachment.

Irishmen would appear not to be unique in the world in neglecting to give their partners sexual pleasure, as Davenport reveals:
In most of the societies for which there are data, it is reported that men take the initiative and, without extended foreplay, proceed vigorously toward climax without much regard for achieving synchrony with the woman's orgasm. Again and again, there are reports that coitus is primarily completed in terms of the man's passions and pleasures, with scant attention paid to the woman's response. If women do experience orgasm, they do so passively [i.e., contingently].

(Davenport, 1977:149)

However, they may be rare in refusing to let the woman realise they give them pleasure, and leaving them to feel they have been returned very little for what they have offered. For despite negative injunctions by the clergy in regards to sexual matters, Irish women have needed reminding that they have to fulfil a "duty" to their husbands (see Messenger 1969:109; O'Brien, 1941:39; Clarke, 1962:116; O'Faolain, 1963:21). The woman's attitude in approaching the relationship, however, is equally important in understanding Irish sexual relationships, and it is one in which men are perceived to be encroaching upon their bodily integrity, acting in a superordinate way, without compensating them.

**Female sexuality**

What, then, do we know of Irish female sexuality? I would note that less is said about their fear of men and refusal to let men see they can have an effect on them because wives so often appear to be dominant in the home, and because women are not obliged to make the initial move in any potential relationship. What Ussher describes as "the ferocious chastity of Irish lower-class women" (1950:111), is usually seen simply as the result of an ascetic religious training. But there is much reason for supposing that this chastity, which is principally conveyed by means of bodily communication, is a guard women place around themselves to prevent men coming too close to them. I have already mentioned the off-handed way women respond to men's approaches at dances, for example.

There are stories that circulate about women's sexuality, such as that in the past, some courting women "relieved" men of their sexual desires by manual masturbation. This was the favour James Joyce's wife performed for him before she fully committed herself to him as his *de facto* wife (Davies, 1975:138). To Connery a girl is reported to have said:

'Because a boy and girl both agree that they shouldn't go all the way she will let him take a great many liberties. It's a substitute for the real thing, I guess.'

(Connery, 1968:178)

Connery states that "It is widely felt that anything goes so long as it
stops just short of the finish line" in a steady relationship (1968:178).

Now this would not be uncommon in societies where birth control was not available and girls allowed on dates with boys, but I did know one married woman, one of only two in the town who had both a husband and lover, whose sexual relationship with her boyfriend was thus characterised, I believe, though she made use of contraception. I went out socially with her and her boyfriend and a few other friends several times. They would take two cars, and following the evening's entertainment, leave the other members of the party waiting in one car while they adjourned to the other, somewhere on the road between towns, the car, though not the occupants usually in sight of her companions. After fifteen minutes or so the man would return looking a little sheepish and the woman proud. Despite this woman's "brazenness", her public demeanour was discreet, and as she was in an extremely exposed position in the car, I would be surprised if, on these occasions, they actually engaged in copulation. In fact, I sometimes thought that her very manner of arranging their meetings in this way may have been to prevent him copulating with her, without, however, failing to offer him some sexual gratification, for they did meet alone at other times.

In masturbating a man, a woman does not submit to him, but rather has control over him. While she may lose her sense of sinlessness in such pre-marital activity, she does not lose her "chastity" - to be distinguished from virginity which she may or may not have lost - nor does she submit her body to the man. Messenger said that the girls on Inis Beag who were said to allow pre-marital fondling, for instance (which does not imply manual masturbation), did not consider it sinful as they did not enjoy it (1969:110). This woman I have just mentioned had an extremely powerful personality - the only one I knew who dared to send her children into the pub for her husband, a likeable, but very weak man who could not really keep a job but pottered inefficiently about the business his wife created and maintained. He was held in benign contempt for his general inadequacy by the townspeople, and for permitting his wife's carryings-on. Similarly her boyfriend was also a very timid man whom she clearly dominated. Far from submitting to her lover and husband, she was in control of the relationships, and one of the ways she enacted this control was by not submitting her body to her boyfriend's sexual desires. Further, she fulfilled his desires sometimes without subjugation to him at all.
Another anecdote revealing the same bodily guardedness and desire to remain in control of her own body, but lack of real chastity, was told to me by a middle-class American man married to an Irish woman and living in Dublin for the past fifteen years. It concerned an encounter an American friend had with an Irish woman, and was meant to reveal his beliefs about typical Irish female sexuality. He said his friend (who may well have been the man himself, afraid to admit pre- or extra-marital experiences) had been chatting up this Irish woman in a pub and she agreed to go back to his flat where she said she would do "anything" for him, but at the same time refused to get more than partially undressed, or to copulate with him. The "anything" turned out to be manual masturbation. The story-teller felt, as his friend had done, that if this were her attitude, she should not have gone to his flat at all.

Within regular marriages I had the very powerful impression from a number of women that their husbands' sexual demands were the bane of their lives. For four women, three of whom deeply loved their husbands in the classic romantic sense, it was the source of all their arguments as far as I could see. For the husbands of these three women were, unlike many others, dutiful husbands and fathers, good workers and providers for their families, and very tolerant of their often screamingly angry wives. One of these three women once said that she and her husband got along very well before they got married, but soon discovered they did not on their honeymoon. This woman had been a virgin at marriage—something she was very proud of and did explicitly state. This couple had had a long engagement of eighteen months, and more than most others often discussed their personal feelings, so it was unlikely they discovered a personality clash after marriage. Nor was it that this woman failed to carry out her duties as a housewife, nor did her husband interfere at all in this domain. This was the same woman who had said to me she was ignorant of what sex was about before she married. On another occasion she revealed she had had cystitis in the early years of marriage, without realising I might guess its possible cause. When a middle-aged Englishman who was in her house discussing business with her husband had been talking of his many (probably imaginary) girl friends in her presence, he remarked to her that she had mud on her shoes, and she was very indignant: he had been looking at her ankles, "the filthy thing" that he was. It was in the same angry, disgusted tones that she announced her latest unwanted pregnancy. She often made snide remarks about "the pleasures of marriage"
indicating in no uncertain terms that these pleasures belonged entirely
to her husband. Her fury at her numerous pregnancies was so great as to
defy description. And she had once suggested that the reason for two of
her female relatives in their mid thirties not being married was that they
feared marriage. When I enquired what she meant by this, she averted her
eyes and asked me had I never feared the "physical part of marriage?"

When I was talking once to a woman about eating too many cakes and
putting on weight as I had done in Ireland, she said "Oh well, who cares":
I replied that husbands usually do when their wives put on weight, and
perhaps her husband would not be interested in her anymore, she answered
without hesitation "that would surely be a good thing". When pregnant
yet again shortly after her last child she said she hated having to go
and tell the doctor (whose surgery was always half-filled with such women)
because she felt he thought "the dirty woman has been at it again". She
gave me oblique information that led me to believe for the first few
months of marriage she had been unable to have sexual intercourse with her
husband at all, possibly owing to vaginismus, a tightening of the vaginal
muscles owing to fear. A doctor running a clinic for people with sexual
problems in Dublin is reported to have said that she believes this to be
the most common cause of non-consunnated marriage in Ireland. American
medical journals say vaginismus is rare in America, but eight out of nine
of this doctor's patients suffered from this (remediable) disorder
(Sweetman, 1979:162).

Only one of these four women would use contraceptives, though two
felt themselves cursed with constant, undesired pregnancies. All sorts of
reasons at different times were given, including that they were not
"natural", and therefore an interference with bodily processes. However,
the woman who said this was an avid user of prescribed drugs for the
smallest illness. Although I have no doubt the Church's rulings played
an important part in women's attitudes to contraception, nevertheless,
once a number of other practising Catholic women had reached the point
where they could no longer tolerate further pregnancies, they would ignore
the Church's rulings, saying the priest was not the one who had to spend
all night up with babies, all day washing and cooking and housekeeping,
and face the constant battle of making ends meet. In two cases I believe
their refusal to use contraceptives may have been to prevent their husbands
having constant sexual access to them: the Billings method of birth control,
which both women practised, gives a woman at least seven days other than
when she is menstruating in which her husband should not have intercourse with her if contraception is to be avoided.

Perhaps most revealing about these women, as about many other engaged or married Irish women, is their extraordinary sexual jealousy in circumstances where it seemed to me to be unwarranted. Such women fear that certain others might "give themselves" to their respective husbands, that they might acknowledge that these men could affect them, and even enjoy sex, as the women's liberation movement in Ireland has made it known is actually possible, in a way that these wives could not. 19

The attitudes of these four women appeared to be far from unique. Although there were some who gave the impression that they enjoyed their husbands' embraces, most apparently did not, and some seemed to hate it with an intensity I have not seen equalled outside Ireland. I have already cited a female informant of Humphreys earlier on the matter. Here is a quotation from a female doctor, substantiating my claims.

'The older people had queer ideas about sex. Most of the older women thought it was a nuisance. They got no pleasure out of it and wished it might happen only once a year. And the refinements of the matter were simply unknown. The husband was the authority and boss in this respect and the wife just put up with it. There was no consideration of the woman's part in it. I know that as a doctor. And that still exists to a great extent among the younger women. They come to me to ask me about limiting the family by rhythm because I am a Catholic doctor....Well, one thing leads to another, and it is surprising how little most of these women know about the matter.' 20

(Humphreys, 1966:140)

And a quotation from that astute observer of things Irish, Ussher:

I have heard mothers of large families who have confessed, not without a certain sense of virtue, that they had never at any time enjoyed a satisfactory physical relationship with their husbands; and I believe their case is not untypical even today. (Ussher, 1955:156)

What we are seeing operating simultaneously in Irish marriage, which is where the majority of sexual relationships end up, is at once a mutual need, yet a fear by both parties of giving themselves, in their complementary ways, to one another. It is in this relationship more than any other that there is a heightened sense of vulnerability, a greater porosity of one's boundaries, which, by this very fact, can result in a merging of the persons to achieve the "oneness" that lovers so often talk about. Afraid of being engulfed by her love, a man pretends his partner
has no effect on him, but demands sex as an obligation of his wife to whom he gives no pleasure in the act. She is seen as the "giver" here, and he as the "taker", one who takes her precarious sense of integrity. We shall see shortly why it is that things should be thus arranged, and also why the woman then withholds certain services and satisfactions from her husband because he has given no return for what he has taken. Afraid of having her man impose upon her body, of taking something of her integrity when he will not compensate her psychologically, she tries to prevent coitus; or else, when in a position to bargain, such as outside marriage, offers such sexual gratification to the man as does not require her subordination. How often she feels obliged to compromise within marriage - or since the 1970s, outside of marriage in steady relationships - rather than alienate or lose her man altogether, is something neither the frequency of births, nor the now high percentage of first-borns conceived out of marriage, would reveal.

But the degree of mutual fear of couples, or of individuals contemplating a sexual relationship can be measured for instance by the fact that Scheper-Hughes found a central theme in her TAT records of both hospitalised and normal people to be both a fear of and a longing after intimacy (1979:117); and that Opler and Singer found among Irish-American male psychiatric patients a dependency on women yet an hostility towards them, a fear of intimacy and a mistrust of love (1972). It can also be seen in the pretended mutual indifference of even antogonism between courting couples who might roughly throw a packet of cigarettes to each other rather than pass them gently or politely (see chapter two p.54). It finds expression in the fact that some Irish couples rarely refer to each other by first names but use instead the indirect "him-" or "herself" (Scheper-Hughes, 1979:107). It can be seen in the fact that romantic love is so often the subject of a mockery that denies its existence, as pointed out by Mercier (chapter five p.239). So obvious is the tension between Irish men and women that an Irish journalist has observed:

If it is still true that the sexes war and that women are deprived throughout the world, in no other country do men and women seem to dislike one another as much as they do in Ireland. In no other country do men and women seem to feel such embarrassment in a situation that may become sexual. One wonders how long it will continue that men end up retreating to pubs, and women to church.
Sociobiological explanation of the differential psyches of men and women pan-culturally

We must now turn to the realm of sociobiology to try to understand the differential approaches and responses of the sexes in sexual relationships. In his seminal paper "Parental Investment and Sexual Selection", Trivers formulates rules across taxa for reproductive strategies on the basis of natural selection. He argues that in species in which one sex invests more than the other in offspring, this sex will become a limiting resource, and members of the other sex (males in most birds and mammals) will compete among themselves for access to the former, i.e., the female. The result will be greater male than female variability in reproductive success, (i.e. the number of reproducing offspring), a variety of special adaptations for fighting in males, and for nurturance in females. Female choice will be seen to guide the course of male evolution by selecting only certain males for fertilization of ova. Sexual dimorphism of varying degrees will result. Species high in sexual dimorphism will exhibit high male variability in reproductive success, high promiscuity or polygyny in the successful males, low male parental investment and high male-male competition. Those at the other end of the continuum will exhibit pair-bonding with relatively low male promiscuity, low male variability in reproductive success, low male-male competition, and high male parental investment (1972).22

Humans are generally considered to be approaching the latter end of this continuum, but not at the end, many species of birds being more strongly pair-bonded. Thus, we can expect human males will still be impelled to maximise their genetic representation in the next generation by competing among other males for females and spreading their genes widely while preventing their females from accepting the genes of other males. This is institutionalised in cultures which practise polygyny and embodied most clearly in cultures such as those of the Middle-East where, until quite recently, a man's harem was protected from assault by other men by the use of eunuchs as guards. Females, however, having more of their reproductive capacity at risk in any given fertilisation will therefore be more selective about permitting copulation. Dawkins good-humouredly calls the reproductive strategies adopted by females of species seeking help from their mates as the "domestic-bliss strategy". Looking the male over and trying to spot signs of fidelity and domesticity requires a long engagement in which impatient, potentially unfaithful males will be weeded out constitutes the behaviour of human females. It generates the quality
of coyness which is very common among the females of many animal species (1978:161).

Taking Triver's theory as a starting point, the sociobiologist Symons makes further investigations into human sexuality, using among other kinds of studies, much cross-cultural data in what I consider to be a major contribution to our understanding of the topic, in his book The Evolution of Human Sexuality (1979). Symons argues that Triver's theory about relative sexual dimorphism is not an accurate index of the intensity of male-male competition in humans. For sexual selection seems to have favoured non-fighting, competitive strategies among males, such as sequestering females for instance. From ethnographic data it would seem that simple pugnacity per se is less useful in male reproductive success than the intellectual and personal qualities which achieve the cooperation of others in one's ventures in planning strategies, negotiating deals, and in acquiring and maintaining wives. Thus, the moderate sexual dimorphism of humans belies the degree of their differential reproductive strategies, and therefore, the profound sexual differences of the human psyche (1979).

Symons demonstrates that there are intractable differences between men's and women's desire for sexual variety. A woman has nothing to gain reproductively, and much to lose by desiring sexual variety per se, no matter how low the risk, but a man has a lot to gain in Darwinian terms by inseminating as many women as he can, provided the risk is low enough.

It is widely believed in many cultures that a man's sexual needs exceed those of a woman, and this opinion persists even in cultures that grant equal privileges to each sex, and where a man is considered to be a failure if he does not please a woman sexually and bring her to orgasm. Females lack the male's autonomous sex drive which is closely related to the notion of dissatisfaction or discomfort accompanying sexual abstinence and lack of orgasm. Scientists frequently call attention to the fact that many human females experience sexual abstinence and lack of gratification without experiencing significant discomfort. Indeed, in most societies, some women never experience orgasm and in some societies probably no women experience orgasm. On the other hand, all physically normal males experience orgasm and the great majority probably do so regularly for most of their adult lives (1979: 265)

However, Symons points out that he is not saying women lack sexuality: rather, there is a necessity to distinguish
...between sexual responsiveness (or consummatory behaviour) and autonomous libido (or appetitive behaviour); for example, among people such as the Mangalians and Trobrianders, women may typically have stronger sexual responses than men but weaker sex drives.

(Symons, 1979:291)

We should now be able to appreciate why it is that when sexuality is repressed, for whatever reason, as it is in Ireland for both sexes, that male sexuality surmounts its restrictions to some extent. Both sexes guard their psychological and bodily integrity fiercely (males more so the former, females the latter), which result in excessive female modesty. But most men's compelling sexual needs break through their modesty. However, it must be pointed out that the general inability of women to enjoy sex does not mean Irish women cannot fall in love in the classic romantic sense, and remain in that condition throughout marriage, severely tested though such romanticism may be, and weakened though it may become with the passing years. Symons points out there is no cross-cultural evidence to suggest that the development of strong mutual attachments between men and women requires sexual intercourse. One scholar notes that women who have undergone adrenalectomy and ovariectomy and who have thus been deprived of almost all androgens, exhibit

'...an impairment of the purely erotic component of sexuality but no impairment of the affectionate, anaclitic component. This is an important reminder that the affectionate component of sexuality is not physiologically dependent upon the erotic component.'

(Symons, 1979:123)

One of the most persuasive dimensions of Symons' arguments about human sexuality concerns male and female homosexuals whose extreme forms of their respective sexes' behaviour represents the profound differences in the male and female psyche. He argues there is no reason to suppose they are different from heterosexuals except in their sex-object choice. What Symons shows is that lesbians, with their extreme initial sexual caution, and male homosexuals, with their extreme search for sexual variety are like heterosexual women and men respectively, but more so. Unlike heterosexual men, homosexual men are not constrained by necessity to compromise their masculine predilection for a variety of partners. (1979: chapter nine). And while he does not state this, I would add that something about lesbians retards them from compromising their sexual caution with their lovers. The question I wish to ask is, what induces the sexes to make their respective compromises?
Now from the foregoing sociobiological information we should be able to understand why women should be seen as the "givers" and men as the "takers" in all sexual relationships: the female is everywhere a scarce resource, and her willingness to copulate a service to men. When a particular woman engages in a permanent sexual relationship with a man she allows him to feel that she has given herself, a scarce resource, to be "owned", protected and provided for by him (this, despite male political, as distinct from psychological control over women as objects). This in itself is a source of psychological fulfilment in a condition usually recognised as romantic love. In addition, because she remains with him faithfully, and looks to him as the protector of herself and their children, this gives a man an identity as father and husband, an obviously higher status than bachelor. Only a woman can give him this identity, an identity which requires as Laing says, another, some other, in and through a relationship with whom self-identity is actualised (1971:82).

Under these circumstances a man will compromise the actualisation of his desire for sexual variety for the psychological satisfaction of acting as a woman's protector as well as for the fulfilment of the social identity of husband and father. As homosexual men do not ask for or elicit protection, their partner cannot then offer it; the complementary pair protector/protected is thereby not formed, with the result that the male partners' desires for sexual variety is not compromised.

And on the other hand, when a woman feels that a man has offered her this protection then she will compromise her sexual caution. As women do not successfully convey a capacity to act as protector, then it should not be surprising to find lesbians more sexually cautious in new relationships than heterosexual women entering relationships with men. That this complementary pairing constitutes the essence of sexual attachment/romantic love in which state a woman will allow a man sexual access and the man will forgo seeking sexual variety, is, without doubt, evolutionarily adaptive. The woman and her offspring are more likely to survive if she can be assured of the protection of a particular man: a man's offspring are more likely to survive if he is somehow motivated to offer such protection. That there is cross-cultural and historical evidence to support the existence of the association of protector/protected with romantic love or sexual bonding, and marriage shall now be demonstrated.

In the abundance of European legends, female subjects are almost invariably the passive objects of male quests. She proves her worthiness
as a wife or potential wife through skill in household tasks, and in her loyalty, neither of which requires assertion or dominance, while he proves his in heroic and manly feats which will prove to either a real or potential wife he is capable of being a good protector and provider for his future family. A substantial number of these tales involve romantic love developing as the woman proves her faithfulness and loyalty, and the man his capacity for warrior-type skills which demonstrate he is capable of defending her and her potential children. The medieval lady typically gave her blessing to a particular knight and she would passively watch or wait for him while he engaged in his knightly activities. In Harris' collection of quest-type legends from across the world, many of which involve romantic attachments, the same division of activity as we have seen in European legends prevails (1974). The women's liberation movement notwithstanding in the western world, the picture is fundamentally unchanged, although women are no longer depicted as helpless and passive as the medieval lady. That the romantic image of the woman and man as protected/protector is still alive and thriving is testified to in a variety of domains, not the least of which are in films of even an anti-social content, such as Badlands made in the mid 1970s, as well as in the extant image of mankind in a state of primeval bliss and innocence as in the forty different film versions now made of Tarzan — with Jane of course. It is no coincidence that initiation rites usually occur at adolescence, the time of transition from boyhood dependence on the mother to manly adulthood, and they typically involve severe endurance tests for male initiates: female rites at adolescence are less common and do not generally involve severe and violent endurance tests (see Tiger, 1970:chapter six).

However, I shall now illustrate my argument with material that emanates more from the unconscious of its creators. To some extent this should obviate the necessity of a tedious reply to the feminist argument that men use the notion of romantic love in which they have the superordinate role to maintain the suppression of women. Elbl-Elbesfeldt says that Lorenz stated (1943) that the behaviour patterns of caring for young and the affective responses which a person experiences when confronted with a human child are probably released on an innate basis by a number of cues that characterise infants. Some of these characteristics are large eyes, round, protruding cheeks, rounded body shape and elastic body surfaces. These physical attributes are further enhanced by behavioural ones such as clumsiness. When an object possesses some of these
characteristics (and some others I have not mentioned) it releases affects and behaviour patterns typical of those towards young children. Experiments by other scholars have demonstrated the soundness of Lorenz's hypothesis (1975:490–92). The emotion typically aroused in adults by infants is that of a desire to protect. Ribs-Eibesfeldt says that the relative child-like physical characteristics of females compared to males - their smaller size, greater subcutaneous fat (giving a rounded body shape and elastic surfaces) and relatively hairless body - suggest that female morphology may act to release care-giving in males (1972).

Angularity and well-developed muscles in women, though they may advertise possible genetic fitness, do not appeal to men sexually, as one so frequently hears from them - and also from female critics - during television programmes on women's swimming competitions, for instance. Not so the strong, but yet delicate appearance of the petite, graceful female gymnasts, however. It is because it elicits protectiveness that I believe women in the western world make up their faces to imitate some aspects of the infant face, i.e., defined and enlarged eyes, and highlighted cheeks.

There is some evidence in our modern western culture that women's desires for their physical appearance are aimed primarily at eliciting protection, even running counter to advertising their reproductive fitness which, with the benefits of modern medicine, can now be virtually taken for granted. As women become less helpless and dependent on men, and more assertive and competitive, it is not surprising that waif-like thinness which elicits a man's protective instincts, should become fashionable and aspired to by all women. Ironically, Symons shows that moderate plumpness is the female physical characteristic that men find sexually attractive both cross-culturally and historically (1979:198). Nor is it surprising perhaps that females as young as eleven years, with their inevitably child-like adolescent faces are becoming leading models for adult women's magazines. Perhaps the recent spate of female child pornography has similar origins. For plump, well looked after, independent, assertive, liberated adult women do not appeal to men's desires to protect, perhaps at least as important a component in sexual relationships as sexual desire per se.

Perhaps the quintessence of a cultural creation of a female in doll-like helplessness, whose very gown required several assistants to enable her to walk, can be found in the recent royal wedding of Lady Diana
Spencer to Prince Charles. The groom by contrast, was a lithe, unencumbered figure, sporting a "warrior's" uniform with medals to affirm his established bravery and high status, all announcing his readiness and capacity to protect his delicate bride. That this wedding which was surrounded with explicit statements of romantic love that would endure "for ever and ever" according to the legendary conventions for good princes and princesses, was viewed extensively and with much interest across the world, reveals its universal symbolism. 25

As I would analyse male sexual behaviour, it has two principal components: that of sexual desire per se, and that of a desire to protect. Although they are concomitants, the former quality can exist without the latter, or the latter can be less strongly developed than the former. I believe it may be an absence, or relative absence of the latter dimension of male sexuality that characterises male homosexuals and certain promiscuous heterosexual males in the western world. No matter how potent a "non-protector" may be, he is likely to suffer a sense of inadequacy about his masculinity, and for this very reason perhaps, seek to compensate in the area in which he is competent. Thus, it is not only that a particular homosexual's partner does not elicit the need to protect that makes him so promiscuous, as I suggested above. It may be that he seeks to prove his masculinity by compensating in the number of sexual encounters for his inability to offer this quality which women seek from a sexual partner. There would be some basis for making a similar argument about some heterosexual men who tend to be promiscuous and to jeopardise a permanent relationship with a woman which they value, by their philandering. Homosexuals and some philanderers have in common the tendency to boast of or make public their sexual encounters in a way that is often felt to be somewhat immature by men who do not feel a need to do this. I say "some" philanderers, for I would distinguish two groups of relatively promiscuous heterosexual men: there are those who appear not to suffer form a poor sense of their own masculinity, whose affairs are likely to be more discreet and private, and whose motivation appear to be primarily those of sexual desire, romance and excitement, rather than proving to others, especially to other men, that they are "real", potent men.

We can see how useful this distinction of male sexual behaviour into sexual desire and desire to protect can be when looking at what Irish women may be seeking in their relationships with men. I suggested earlier that the need to be protected on the part of the woman may be associated
with sexual bonding, and I have referred to the fact that Symons demonstrates that a woman's incapacity for sexual arousal need not influence affection for her sexual partner. Indeed, some Irish women were as "besotted" about their husbands as they were intense in their hatred of their sexuality. As it will be shown shortly that Irish women do seek more protection from their mates than women in comparable cultures, it may be that Irish women are seeking to arouse their men's protectiveness, but not their sexual desire. However, in all heterosexual men, however poorly developed it may be, protectiveness is a concomitant of their sexuality: in eliciting protectiveness, sexual desire is aroused. This argument distinguishing male sexual behaviour in two dimensions and suggesting that Irish women seek to arouse only one of these parts, is strengthened later in the chapter when I show that the ideal bond with a male for some Irish women is one in which they enjoy the protection of an unmarried adult son, i.e. a man who will devote his attention to the woman who is his mother rather than to a wife, but not seek sexual gratification from that woman. To this end, Irish mothers are keen to have at least one son in the family who is a priest, that is, a man whose sexuality is ideally suppressed altogether.

From a sociobiological perspective it should not be necessary to argue why women, who are encumbered for most of their adult lives with dependent children, should be in need of, and feel in need of, male protection in the environment in which man evolved, no less than in agricultural societies (see footnote 23). But it would give substance to my argument to show that there is some evidence from studies in human behaviour that females are actually more fearful and timid than males, evidence which would ideally reveal this before socialisation occurs to any extent, and if possible, demonstrate it exists cross-culturally. If this can be found to obtain, it may be supposed that women might seek male protectiveness under certain conditions.

Freedman suggests that the higher frequency of smiling to be found in girls and women, and a lower threshold at which smiling is elicited cross-culturally, reflect an affiliative tendency, a tendency to placate the other, and it is behaviour that expresses a certain degree of fear (1974:71). I suggested in chapter two (p82) that detachment and rebelliousness that feature more prevalently in boys' responses to anxious attachment as Bowlby has shown may reflect greater courage in relation
to the mother than can be found in girls who respond to the same treatment more by anxious clinging. While Bowlby himself does not make any correlation in the differential responses of boys and girls to anxious attachment with courage or fear, there is some basis for supposing this to be the case: for the differential responses found in childhood are reflected in adulthood where anxiety is more common as a neurotic symptom in women than in men, and conversely, delinquency is more common in men than women (1975:261). Elsewhere in his works Bowlby does cite a number of scholars who have made this observation. These scholars, who come from a number of different schools and theoretical backgrounds have found that there are some differences in susceptibility to fear between males and females at all ages, females being more afraid in the same circumstances than males of comparable ages. Although culture has a role to play in magnifying or reducing such potential differences as there may be, nevertheless the evidence points to the difference being in part, genetically determined, Bowlby states. A difference in the opposite direction - that females tend to show less fear than do males - seems not to have been reported (1975:219-220).

Irish data that would support some of the foregoing arguments

Having said this about women in general, I would now like to move back to Irish ethnographic data to show to what extent women might be looking to men to protect and provide for them in the domain outside the home. The Irish women's obvious dominance of the home does not extend beyond this domain: rather, it appears they typically leave to husbands, sons, fathers or brothers entirely the tasks of running the country. It was remarked by several contributors to the volume Women in Irish Society (ed. MacCurtain and O Corrain, 1978), that Irish women's role in post-revolutionary Irish politics has been very small, and where it has existed, it has been through the activities of husbands or male relatives. For instance, since the founding of the Free State until 1978, over 650 people have been elected to the Dail, of which only 24 or under 4% have been women over a period of 55 years. None has ever held office as a Minister and only one has ever been a Minister of state (Manning, 1978: 93). Nineteen of these women were widows of T.D.s, or children or grandchildren of dead patriots. Only five of these twenty four women made it on their own, and only one of these served more than one term in office. The picture in the upper house is not totally different (Ibid:94). While only Denmark in the EEC has a significant number of women parliamentarians
(16% in 1977), the 4.6% of British women parliamentarians have for some years been making it without the reputation and votes substantially established for them by husbands or male relatives. Furthermore, unlike Irish women parliamentarians, their contributions have been very substantial to British political and social life (Ibid:99).

Now this absence of women in Irish politics could be argued to be the result of males not allowing preselection, and no doubt this must be a force to be reckoned with, but it is significant that women seem to have been absent from political discussions including those which affected themselves, though their voices can be heard loudly and clearly in the home. In Whyte's treatment of the mother-child scheme in the early 1950s - a very significant political and social issue in the Republic's history, and one of profound interest to women - Robinson points out that there appears to have been no public voice expressed by women (1978:61). Within the workforce women are poorly represented in the higher status, demanding jobs. On the basis of the 1961 census figures, 941 women were listed as "administrative, executive, and managerial workers" as against 12,439 men in this category: the proportions of women to men dentists, doctors and lawyers were 1:10, 1:5 and 1:17 respectively (Connery, 1968:162).

The fact that only 3.5% of the total workforce and less than 14% of the female workforce comprised married women in 1971 - one of the lowest participation levels in the EEC (McCarthy, 1978:104) - may be the result of the fact that the married Irish woman also has the greatest fertility of those member countries, which mitigates against her working outside the home. And in a small number of cases, perhaps, husbands will not allow their wives to work. Furthermore, this figure does not represent farm housewives' contributions to the economy. Notwithstanding these facts, Torode's study of women industrial workers in Dublin provides information of interest to my argument. He found that single women workers said they enjoyed their freedom and independent incomes before marriage, but chose to leave work after marriage, even before child-bearing began. Once married, women lost their enthusiasm for work and absenteeism was high, even without dependents. A manager of a clothing factory had such expectations of them, and although he could not do anything directly to get them to leave when they married, he did so indirectly (pers. communication, 1980). I personally found it revealing that when I informed the people in my town with whom I continue to correspond that I had got married about nine months after returning from fieldwork, they immediately presumed I had stopped working on my thesis "to look after my husband". It was a though his life would be mine now, and my previous
commitment and devotion to my work, which they actually admired, was now to be put aside for my real and ultimate task in life.

MacCurtain's paradox that when Irish women had the freedom to hold political office but did not, and remained subordinate in a society they had helped to create (1978:56) may be explained thus. It is either that Irish women tend to have little courage to perform in the world of men, as women do to some extent elsewhere in the western world, and therefore seek the protection and providence of men to act on their behalf, owing to their poorly developed sense of independence and competence generated in childhood: or it could be that they willingly forgo such competition with men in order to more readily elicit their husbands' protectiveness, because their husbands' autonomy also being poorly developed is not likely to allow them to develop a strong conception of themselves as 'protectors'. As Kennedy points out, many Irish people feel that a working wife is an indication of the failure of the husband to provide a standard of living acceptable to his family (1973:160). Or perhaps both reasons obtain.

The universal trend of lack of competitiveness in females in the public domain

To return to the general again, we should note that Irish women's absence from the public domain is only an extreme manifestation of a worldwide pattern of female behaviour. As women have phylogenetically been excluded from competition with men by virtue of their role as child-rearers, it should not really surprise us that even where there are opportunities to compete with men, few women take them. In my own university in 1981 we find that women constitute 42% of the undergraduate population. But only 20% take up the more demanding competitive postgraduate research, and a similar percentage constitute full-time academic staff. As we go higher up the hierarchy we find only 8% of females represented among the professors, associate professors, senior lecturers, post-doctoral and research fellows. It could be claimed that some male bias may be operating in the appointments of women on the staff, but it is indisputable that none operates at the level at which postgraduate scholarships are awarded. However, it must be noted that the percentage of full-time female staff is commensurate with those pursuing postgraduate studies. As women on the staff are on high salaries they could afford both child-care and some domestic help in the event of their being left largely with the housekeeping tasks unaided by husbands.
This picture showing a general lack of female desire to compete with men in the public sphere is not confined to Sydney University, or to Australia. It is consistent with that found all over the western world, capitalist and socialist alike, where women have, for the first time, been freed of compulsory child-rearing. The most cogent argument supporting the view that women seem not to desire very competitive achieving activities, but prefer those associated with services, especially with the care of children, comes from Tiger's and Shepher's work in the Israeli Kibbutz, Women in the Kibbutz (1975). Far more consistently than any other, the kibbutz movement has demonstrated a rigorous sexually egalitarian position, and has met most major criteria for radically restructuring the western family life. But here, where socialisation de-emphasises sex differences, where women are truly freed from child care by twenty-four-hour nurseries, and where they are positively encouraged to participate in political activities, the sex-typing is obvious, running at from 70-80%. Agriculture, industry, and auxiliary shops, management, economic and political activities, movement or outside work are predominantly male. Service, consumption and education are predominantly female. When women engage in military service, the overwhelming majority do secretarial and service jobs there. There is a much lower level of female participation in politics at all levels, and when they attend meetings, typically they are very quiet. Generally the higher the level of authority of an office or committee, the lower the percentage of women in its personnel and in the highest echelons of authority, kibbutz women are severely under-represented. Yet men encourage women to participate more in kibbutz political activities (1975).

In so far as kibbutz women are dissatisfied with their lives, the dissatisfaction emanates not principally from the polarised division of labour and politics and an oppressive familism as it so clearly does elsewhere. Rather, it is because familism does not yet provide women with as much feminine activity and family life as they desire (1975:259). When a couple leaves the kibbutz it is usually because the wife feels she is unable in that structure to enjoy her family as much as she wants. The authors believe that in re-establishing the old forms of mother-child relationships, the younger women may be responding not only to their need to be close to their children, but also to their children's ability to elicit these feeling in them. Modern kibbutz women are returning to a pattern more typical of our species, and perhaps more appropriate to a mammal with our evolutionary history and need for
extensive socialisation (1975:273-4).

The men and women of the kibbutz clearly have not learned about sex as a transaction between older, manipulative or importuning men and younger, resisting, quasi-virginal women – and this is a major difference between socialisation here and elsewhere in the western world (1975:168). Furthermore, the kibbutz has been conspicuously successful with other aspects of its ideology such as its communal economic and social organisation, its direct democracy, and its system of collective education (1975:269). People of the kibbutz are aware of the discrepancy between ideal and action, but despite attempts to correct it, sexual division in labour is becoming even more polarized among the young, who are often third generation kibbutz members. I agree with the authors of this persuasive study that the job choices of the two sexes reflect their respective hopes, desires and predilections. Men and women everywhere choose to work in ways that reflect sexual specialisations of a phylogenetic origin (1975:182). It is the phylogenetic specialisation of the two sexes that constitutes the powerful pervasive force or forces intervening between the intentions of kibbutz ideology and the reality of kibbutz social structure (Tiger and Shepher, 1975:116).

Universal trend of women looking to men to realise their desires for high status and protection

From solid ethnography to the more speculative, I would now like to suggest that women everywhere may often seek to have the status that comes of successful competition with others in the public sphere, but have not the courage nor the self-confidence to engage in that competition. Rather they typically engage in hierarchical relationships in which on the one hand they nurture children, and on the other, look to husbands for protection. It is through their husbands' competitive activities that they seek to acquire status, and to this end, they get them to act on their behalf in the extra-domestic domain. It is instructive to look at children's play and social activity for the light it throws on my hypothesis.

That boys are universally more adventurous, aggressive and socially intrusive and play in larger groups than girls who form pairs or dyadic groups and engage in less rough and tumble and competitive play, is now a cliché among the ethologically-inspired studies of child behaviour (see Maccoby and Jacklin for a review of studies, 1974; and Freedman, 1974, and Symons 1979 for additional reviews and observations). Boys
play equips them for their more risky, competitive tasks in the adult male world. Ethologists have observed that girls tend to engage in the less adventurous play involving the manipulation of dolls, and in play requiring linguistic skills - both of which will equip them for motherhood.

Perhaps because most of these studies have been among children of similar ages scholars have failed to notice a very important element of female play - that of playing mother to younger children on the one hand and in turn being mothered by older children on the other. McGrew observed in his British studies of pre-schoolers that some little girls could be seen to act as "little mothers" to newcomers when the latter were distressed (1972). And it has been observed from a number of studies in several societies that during free play, outside of stressful situations, girls spend more time near adults than boys (Harper and Sanders, 1978:64). Thus, we have limited information that girls tend to mother others, and in turn to seek to be mothered more than boys. However, I have observed both in Ireland, and in Australian mixed cultural groups of children of mixed ages, that girls tend to enact these two tendencies in play. Older girls can be seen to place a younger one in a "baby" role frequently in their play, and take on willingly the implicit role of "mother" to this child. The younger one often happily complies, but in turn plays "mother" to a still younger child, of either sex, thus revealing the dual tendency of adult women both to mother, and to seek protection. Rather than engage in competition like boys, girls are gaining their self-esteem from nurturing others, and in turn being cared for or protected by others.

In addition I have observed both in Ireland and Australia that girls act to elicit from boys protectiveness. Of course it is known that sisters do this to brothers, but what I am concerned with is the way in which girls in mixed sex groups will, when they cannot get their own way by discussion and negotiation, sometimes withdraw and cry and try to make out the boy has hurt them or has been cruel or unfair. The boy typically argues his innocence and rights, but at the same time will often compromise when his emotions are thus acted upon. The girl has manipulated him in a way that boys generally do not do to each other, except at the risk of being considered less than manly. On the other hand, as I said above, I have frequently observed girls trying to mother boys, including older ones in Ireland, an activity which takes the boys
out of competitive play into an hierarchically structured position. It is for these two reasons - that girls act to elicit boys' protectiveness on the one hand and to mother them on the other - that I believe the often-discussed but never-resolved problem by the child ethologists of why boys separate from girls spontaneously in play may be understood. Boys have the expectation that girls will not compete with them in their strivings, but rather hinder them. Indeed, one observant Australian mother told me that most of the fights that occurred between her ten year old daughter and seven year old son were due to her desire to act as "mother" to him and the boy's desire to be free of the restrictive role of "baby". This childhood play is the precursor of adult behaviour, I believe.

It is the manipulation of a man's potential for protectiveness, as realised substantially through his competitive activities, by his wife that I am concerned to establish is the way in which women often achieve high status for themselves. Throughout the history of Europe we find powerful women not in the forefront of politics, but rather acting as a force behind men, usually their husbands (though sometimes also sons). It is no less true for its being a cliché that "behind every successful man stands a shrewd woman". Women may cede to men formal political and economic superordination (or in most cases they have no choice), but this does not imply the man has a free hand to act as he pleases on behalf of his wife. But how is it that women have this psychological power to manipulate men in their competitive activities with other men?

Women manipulate men in their competitive, extra-domestic activities, and culture attempts to control this manipulation

To answer this question, I must return to Symons work and the notion that women are everywhere scarce resources, and their willingness to copulate a service to men. Now Symons speaks only of material payments or gifts being given by men seeking a woman's sexual services, payments which are meant to express a commitment to the relationship. The psychological need for such an expression is so strong in women that Symons points to an instance of an American woman who was a committed feminist, very financially comfortable, still requiring this gesture from her male partner (1979:259). But I believe women require more than the material expressions of commitment to a sexual relationship: I would suggest they also demand a more "human" cost of their men.
A woman giving a man the opportunity to become a husband and father, a status which, unlike the woman's, has to be earned, is in a position of power, a power so great that a man sexually attached to a particular is capable of being manipulated by her. Perhaps to some extent this has been evolutionarily adaptive, for a man's protectiveness would usually be most valuable if it were elicited when the woman herself felt threatened, rather than when the man decided this, as I suggested earlier. Ideally, I would like to argue more extensively for the existence of this female power over men in permanent sexual relationships in which the woman is not only seen as a sexually desirable object, but as a person who gives the man an important part of his own identity. However, this is not really the time or place, and this task will have to await the completion of another research project. Perhaps it is sufficient here to say that many cultures have very strong taboos separating men from their wives in societies such as those found throughout Melanesia, India, and in much of the Islamic world, and powerful institutions to control the power of wives over husbands. One example of that found in an Islamic society will be mentioned below. Furthermore, in the Catholic religion which prevailed in the different European societies for up to 1000 years or so until the Protestant Reformation, and in a few major ones for about 1500 years, one of its most salient and enduring messages has been the attempt to separate men from their wives sexually. As I showed at the beginning of this chapter, couples are enjoined to copulate only for the sake of procreation. All this control of sexuality, both cross-culturally and historically begs an answer. I suspect it has much to do with limiting the power of women over husbands - power acquired as I have just argued - in the husbands' formations of those crucial male bonds which link the fragmentary domestic domains of women and children to the body politic or the macro-structure.

My suspicion is given some support by the work of Tiger (1969) and Tiger and Fox (1971) on the formation of male groups among many primates, which act to defend the group of females and young, the bonding tendency among these males being augmented in man's evolutionary history by the development of hunting. These male groups into which, in the case of man, younger males are initiated in rituals which demand proof of courage and loyalty, constitute the societal macro-structure which links the fragmentary units of individual mothers and their offspring, and act both to protect and provision them.
The male, then, is concerned with the whole community of mothers, mates, and children, while the female tends to be more narrowly occupied. Thus she cannot act as focus of cohesion, nor can she effectively form the kinds of bonds males form to achieve those male ends that affect the interests of whole communities. (Tiger and Fox, 1971:106)

Women present a potential source of disruption to the unity, loyalty and trust necessary to the effective operation of male groups, and even in modern sexually "emancipated" societies, women will be excluded unless they can establish they will not divide the group by enticing males into bonds with them (Tiger and Fox, 1971).

...at all times and in all places men form groups from which they exclude women. The male 'block', described in our typology of the social system, asserts its exclusivity, assigns to itself certain privileges, undertakes a number of specific tasks, and both promotes and controls competition among its members. (Tiger and Fox, 1971:94)

On the other hand the male-male bond often interferes with the bonds of husband-wife, mother-children, but the men must ensure that the mating bond does not undermine male solidarity (Tiger and Fox, 1971:95). 28

Repressive sexual legislation in Ireland to control women's power over men

It is the power of wives over their husbands' competitive actions in the extra-familial domain that threatens to take away Irishmen's already precarious sense of autonomy. They feel any attempt to interfere with their autonomy will make them the mere puppets of their wives. And it could be argued that the even greater confinement of women to the domestic domain in Ireland than elsewhere as shown earlier - for whatever the reason - might render them more desirous of controlling their husbands' extra-domestic activities. It is not necessarily that Irish women have no power to get men to act in certain ways in the public domain, although when they do, it is not always on behalf of the women. I saw a number of men persuaded and encouraged by their wives to act in certain ways, e.g., forcing parents to legally hand over the farm to the inheriting son who was that particular husband. But in such cases it was at least as much in the man's as his wife's interest to do this. Even so, in such cases, he will not give the woman any psychological satisfaction in the achieved task, typically denying her contribution. In the same way, and for the same reasons the Irishman refuses to let his wife feel she gives him any pleasure in the sexual act, anything of emotional value, and while quickly reaching orgasm, cuts himself off from his partner's feelings and retreats into self-protection, leaving the woman with a sense of indignation at being so unrewarded for her sacrifice. Perhaps the dynamics of the man's
behaviour at the phenomenological level are best analysed by Laing.

A prototype of the other as giver but not receiver, unresponsive or impervious, tends to generate in the self a sense of failure. ...To make a difference to the other is victory. To allow the other to make a difference to him-is defeat. Incapable of genuine reciprocity, he never finds it. He fears everyone in case they make a difference to him. If the other gives him love he will spurn it, if he feels that he is given anything; or he will despise it, if he feels the other depends on him to receive anything. (Laing, 1971:84)

We can now begin to understand why in this secular state the Irish laity, usually comprising married men who presumably have enjoyed their sexual activities with their wives, should have implemented such severe legislation regarding sexual matters. It has not been to control the sexual activity of women so much as men. Symons has shown that women generally are not the readers of pornographic material (1979), and Irish women are no exceptions in this. Hence, the Censorship of Publications Act has been instituted by men to prevent men being sexually aroused. The most significant legislation in the sexual domain concerns contraception which more seriously affects women than men. There is no doubt that women would try to obey the Church's rulings on contraception, and some have personal motives for not using it, as suggested earlier. However, if contraception is not available, women will try to stop their husbands having frequent access to them, and responsible men will practise self-restraint: the less men have sex with women, the less intimate the relationship and the less power the women can have over the men. That women are expected to be the principal controllers of men's sexuality can be seen in the following statement made to me by the parish priest concerning contraception:

Just as a woman has a man in the palm of her hand while they are courting, so she must use this power after marriage to guide him on the right path with prayer.

(The power he is referring to is, of course, that of romantic attachment, and the women is presumed to remain a virgin until marriage). State and Church laws may not necessarily suppress male sexual activity as the high birth rate indicates, but it does result in men resorting to "snatch and grab" sexual tactics, which keep them emotionally separated, if not alienated from their wives, thereby reinforcing the same effects generated by the condition of mutual personal guardedness. But it needs to be stressed that personal guardedness only has the effect of denying to the woman that she has any effect on the man: it does not imply that she cannot quite successfully manipulate his extra-domestic activities. The Church regrets the fact that its policies may generate alienation and urges women to bear with the problem and try to guide
husbands away from their desires by prayer, although it also expects them to
fulfil their "duty". But when marital relationships threaten to tear asunder
with the tensions partly caused by the State and Church, both these bodies
act to protect the institution of marriage by disallowing divorce. Laws
forbidding abortion by both bodies are (like those on divorce) supported by
the majority of Irish voters. They are meant to buttress laws forbidding con-
traception: those who cannot refrain from engaging in sexual activity must
pay its price (even if the price is heavier for the woman who has not
enjoyed the experience).

Thus, men have instituted legislation backing up the traditional
Catholic injunction to control sexuality, and to separate men from their
wives, because in Ireland, men's competitive activities - those which
help to create and maintain the political state of Ireland - are more
threatened than those of comparable societies by their wives' psychological
powers over them. In addition, the 1937 Constitution gave a special place
to the family, and in particular to the wife and mother, of a kind which
sanctioned her absence from the competitive public arena: Irish married
women should not be"obliged by economic necessity to engage in labour to
the neglect of their duties in the home" (Lyons, 1971:540).

Chapter seven will demonstrate just how precarious male bonds are in
Catholic Ireland. Here I argue that one of the principal reasons for
their failure to maintain the sovereignty of their country has lain in
the Irish perennial divisiveness. While mothers may have created sons
with personal qualities that inhibit mutual cooperation with other men,
by the end of this chapter, the fathers' role in this will also be revealed.
So I am not suggesting that Irish women alone are to blame for dividing men
among themselves. Rather, I am suggesting that Irishmen are faced with
even greater difficulties than men elsewhere in maintaining male bonds, so
even more rigorously than in comparable countries, they seek to control
the power of wives over them. 29

Irish women deny their men the right to feel they are adequate protectors

We should note that an Irish woman does not feel she has lost much
autonomy by having a man in a superordinate position, acting on her behalf
in the public sphere. It is only when he asserts that superiority ultimat-
ely by demanding something of her which takes away her control of those
areas of life in which she wishes to be superordinate: in Ireland where
a man happily leaves a woman in control of the home, the area he does
impose upon of which the woman feels she should be in total charge, is that
of her own body.
Losing out in *feeling* she has any psychological power over her husband in the way that she had expected once she had given herself to him sexually, the Irish woman will often deny her husband to some extent the right to feel he is her and her children's protector. Rather, while simultaneously desiring him to protect her, she will typically demean his masculinity, especially his sexuality, which is widely held in contempt by Irish women. In Irish literature women often hold men in contempt, and it is often warranted, but in chapter two I introduced the idea that sometimes this was not deserved. At that point I was concerned to show its purpose in alienating the children from him: here I am concerned with the woman's interest in establishing, rightly or wrongly, his inferiority to herself. A fine picture of a "typical" household in which a woman holds her husband in contempt and does not "appear" to have an affectionate relationship with him, is given by Doheny, a rebel Irishman on the run in 1947 seeking refuge in a very poor cabin in the west of Ireland. The picture he draws is one of squalor and poverty in which stands the pillar of the house, a noble mother, erect and handsome beneath her tattered rags and unwashed face. Her eyes had pride, passion and disdain, attitudes expressed particularly towards her husband.

He was her drudge, her slave, her horror and her convenience. Her ruling idea was a wish to have it understood that the match was ill-assorted and compelled by necessity; though the last ideas bespoke a youth of shame....and she scowled ominously on her stupid husband, whose rigid, impassable stolidity seemed impervious to all prospects and chances of pleasure and of gain. (Doheny, 1951:236)

However, that Irish women are ambivalent about this contempt is revealed in one characteristic example where a woman holding such a view of her husband nevertheless acquiesced approvingly of her husband's sexuality (revealed in her numerous, loathed pregnancies when they were practising the Billings method of birth control) at such times when he would deride the lack of masculinity, and sexuality, of friends or relatives; and she was proud of the fact that he had given her mainly sons, and suggested that husbands of several neighbours who had mainly daughters would be well advised "to go to bed with their boots on".

Irish women desire to be superordinate in sexual relationships

Yet there is another way for the Irish woman to restore her sense of integrity which her husband takes away, and to enact the power which he denies her by virtue of her giving him the position of husband and father. She can offer to him maternal succour. As their own mothers have created
in them a substantial dependency on maternal love for their psychological
well-being, maternal succour offered by a wife is hard for most Irishmen
to refuse altogether. Thus, a woman typically oscillates between allowing
her husband to feel he is her protector, and denying it on the one hand,
and acting in the superordinate position of mother to her husband's filial
needs on the other. The degree to which any particular woman gives pre-
eminence to the mother role over the "protected" role varies, of course,
from individual to individual. But the following information should give
us some idea of how important, it can be for some Irish women not to let
their husbands get away with sexual superordination when those husbands do
not let their wives feel they have psychological power over the husbands.

In most countries in the world women require men to show some evidence
that they will be able to support them and their children before they will
accept them as sexual partners, so that men who are on the bottom of
the social scale, such as tramps in the industrial world, miss out on sex
except when they pay for it (Symons, 1979:268-9). But in Ireland, this
position can sometimes make a man attractive. There was for instance, one
man who was in an advanced state of alcoholism and whose "slobbering"
public behaviour made him almost socially unacceptable, even in this country
where excessive drinking is widely tolerated. He had ruined his family
by drinking away his inherited farm, now completely run down and in the
hands of a mortgagee. Yet at a dinner dance when he took a passing fancy
to a young woman who, unlike most, was not displeased by his attentions,
his wife who was looking after him in a motherly fashion was furiously
indignant and carried on all night about the girl's boldness. The man
could not even walk without assistance, so was most unlikely to have
remembered this girl to pursue the matter further when he sobered up.
Helpless piece of humanity that he was, with "no more self-knowledge or
self-control than a baby" 31 this man was the object of the deepest
affection of his wife.

More remarkable was the case of another, sometimes reformed alcoholic
who went on periodic binges during which time he was utterly unable to
work and little more competent to walk or look after the most everyday
matters in the course of living. Owing to his inability to keep regular
jobs and use what money he did earn carefully, he lived in poverty,
sometimes in run-down rented accommodation, at other times in a caravan.
He took little care of his health, or his appearance, so was poorly
nourished, prematurely aged at forty years, unkempt and generally unshaven,
and divorced to boot (in England). Despite what even many Irish people considered serious handicaps, he attracted at least three women in the town (two of whom were widows), including an attractive eighteen year old whom he made pregnant. She kept the baby out of love for him knowing there could be no marriage (as Ireland does not recognize divorce), and that he would never be able to maintain her or her child. But as I knew this man quite well I came to understand what made him attractive to some women, apart from his very generous nature - it was his preparedness to submit to substantial female domination either within or outside sexual relationships; to allow women to feel they had psychological power over him.

The examples can be multiplied of very low status men, or men in a poor state of health with no prospects, being attractive to what was in one case even a very beautiful girl. Furthermore, I found several instances of relationships with wide disparities in ages in which the male was younger - up to half the age in one case - so that the woman could act as "mother" to the man, while it must be noted, also seeking his protection.

In fact, in several instances, I saw women content with husbands who could not either stay at jobs or find them, and who therefore contributed nothing to the family upkeep - men who were like this before they married - precisely because these women could always feel superior to their husbands. Three such relationships were very loving ones, and in two cases I felt the wives might not have been opposed to all of their husbands' sexual desires. But at the same time I wondered if they would have been so affectionate to men of higher status who were more in command of themselves, and therefore less amenable to the commands of their wives. Taking cognizance also of information given earlier about the fact that some women in pre-marital (and one in extra-marital) affairs try to prevent male dominance in the sexual relationship by offering manual masturbation to the man, it would appear that the one way in which Irish women would seem to be prepared to accept men's sexual impositions, is paradoxically, when they are able to treat them as subordinates, or at least to hold them in contempt. They oscillate between this state, and that of seeking his protection. It would seem that a wife gets psychological satisfaction from the fact that her husband needs her maternally, that he is her dependent, as she does from her children being in a similar role. There is no material reward for her in this, for in a state of dependence men are not motivated to provide for a woman, or for her children. When Irish women do act to dominate their husbands, and
husbands seem in some ways to accept their position, what is happening here is a bonding of a maternal/filial nature, the same kind as that found between the mother and her children. The wife gives succour as the husband's mother once did: he responds with an attitude of filial subordination. This does not imply there is a perfect fit between wifely/maternal succour and husbandly/filial submission, however. Usually the former is stronger than the latter requires.

The maternal quality of the Irish wife is noticed by other Irish scholars and commentators. Messenger says that:

Within marriage husbands tend to relate themselves to their wives as they have to their mothers when single. The wife is the 'strong' person in the household, on whom the husband is emotionally dependent, even when their relationship is one of mutual withdrawal and unco-operativeness.

(Messenger, 1969:78)

That this kind of relationship is widely recognised by the Irish themselves is expressed in the well-known adage which one mother told me regretfully in regard to her own young sons:

A daughter is a daughter for life,
But a son is a son
'Til he gets a wife.

It recognises that daughters look always to their own mothers for maternal succour, and offer it to their husbands, thereby largely replacing their own mothers. It is because they replace her that the Irish mother is so well-known for putting obstacles in the way of her sons getting married, and is full of dislike for real or potential daughters-in-law.

In fact, it is widely thought that Irish males have Oedipal complexes because of their strong filial relationships with their wives and love of their mothers (see Opler and Singer, 1972; Messenger, 1969; Schepers-Hughes, 1979). The following letter to an Irish newspaper reveals this. The writer is commenting on a GAA Song Talent Competition which disqualified an Irish song written by an Irishman over a lovers' breakup, because it was said not to be "Irish enough". It was not a rebel song, a song of love of country, or a dandling song. The angry writer asks:

Is Irish love restricted to that man among us with an Oedipus complex, swearing undying love to his lovelorn mother machree? ...Even as I write, discussion mounts as to the impressions of one American writer met in an Irish pub who was honestly naively under the impression that Irishmen did indeed have such a mother oriented love life.
The effect of maternal superordination on male sexuality among primates, and cross-culturally

However, I would argue that far from maternal behaviour by either wives or mothers eliciting men's sexual desires, it acts to dampen them. In order to support this assertion, it will be necessary to return to sociobiology again. Reynolds says that today we know from well-documented studies of the societies of a number of species, including Japanese macaques, rhesus macaques and chimpanzees, that even in species where mating is more or less wholly promiscuous mother/son mating is nevertheless rare, or at least uncommon within families. Mother/son mating is extremely infrequent in wild primates, and brother-sister mating less frequent. In years of observation up to 1968, Lawick-Goodall reported that of the hundreds of observations of copulations over many years, none had been between mother and son, and only a few between brothers and (unwilling) sisters (1976:63). This is also true of human societies in some of which mother/son incest is unthinkable (Hiatt on Australian Aborigines, pers. comm.). Shepher demonstrated that out of 3000 kibbutz marriages over three generations there was not one between men and women who had been brought up together during the ages of three to six years despite the fact that marriage within the kibbutz is encouraged (Tiger and Shepher, 1975:7; see Bishoff, 1976:60-1 for similar findings by other scholars on the absence of brother/sister incest). There may be a connection between female dominance and male fear causing impotence that might explain the absence of mother-son incest. Freedman points out that in many species it has been observed that where the male is fearful or has been defeated by the female, successful mating will almost certainly not occur. It has been shown in a wide variety of species that males who are submissive to a female will not mate with her unless and until a reversal in relative dominance has occurred (1974:71). From my earlier discussion on sociobiology it was seen that dominance and male reproductive success were concomitants. Among chimps then, who seem always to remember mothers and siblings, an adult son may be formally of higher status than his mother, but following a long childhood of twelve years or so of dependence on her, it might be speculated that he would forever feel psychologically intimidated if you like, by his mother, as do most humans to some extent.

From his own observations, and those of three other scholars, Sade has found son/mother mating rare among Japanese and rhesus macaques, and that the reason may lie in the subordination of the son to the mother.
The only male that Sade observed who rose in dominance rank above his mother also mated with her. It appears, he says, that the mother's high rank inhibits the son from mating with her, but the inhibition is broken if he successfully challenges her dominance.

It appears that a male is inhibited from mating with a higher-ranking female only if she is his mother, since males will copulate with higher-ranking unrelated females. The inhibition is therefore specific to the parent-offspring relation. The role of infant in reverberating in the relations of the adult male towards his mother is apparently incompatible with the role of mate.

(Sade, 1968:32)

Among many sub-human primate males, then, infantile or childish dependence and sexual behaviour (which is assertive in nature) in relation to the mother are incompatible to a large degree. And this would appear to be true among human primates who are capable of conceptualising figures other than the actual mother as "mother". Not a few cultures are aware of the power of either the mother or mother-like person to suppress male sexuality. Although she takes a psychoanalytic view of the matter, which considers mothers to have been unconsciously sexually desired by sons in their infancy, Kakar says that as an Indian wife matures she moves dangerously close to the intimidating mother of her husband's infancy in his unconscious ideas. This can be seen for instance in a myth in which a man is allowed to copulate with the wives of the gods: they object to his mother who decides she will take the form of whatever woman her son is about to seduce. Thus, the wives all take on the image of his mother and he becomes passionless. The psycho-sexual consequences of this fantasy of the wife who grows into the mother is impotence, with which the Indian psychiatrists are familiar (1979:94-5).

The Moroccan Moslem society even uses the implicit awareness of the power of the dominant mother figures to extinguish a man's sexuality, or at least to control it, Mernissi shows (1975). She says Islam accepts sexuality in men but constantly tries to deny and thwart the conjugal bond which makes men attracted to women. Heterosexual involvement, real love, is a danger which must be overcome, and Islam demands certain religious rituals of men before sexual intercourse to create a distance between husbands and wives and prevent the man succumbing to the chaos of the woman's embraces. In fact, she sees polygyny as an institution allowed by the Muslim state to be an attempt to divert a man's attention from a particular woman and loosen her control over him. In Muslim societies,
Furthermore, not only is the marital bond weakened and love for the wife discouraged, but a man's mother is the only woman he is allowed to love at all. In most societies, a man is invested with some kind of ritual allowing the son to free himself from his mother before marriage, but in Morocco, marriage is a ritual by which the mother's claim on the son is strengthened. A man is encouraged to love a woman with whom he cannot engage in sex, and discouraged from lavishing affection on his wife (Mernissi, 1975:62-9)

As I interpret this information, Moroccan Muslim culture seems to have a profound awareness of the great power of a woman's sexual love to control her husband in such a way that the society may feel takes a man from his task in maintaining that society: a mother's love does not have such power over a man. However, what we have seen here is that sexual and maternal love are mutually exclusive, the latter acting to dampen or annihilate the former for men.  

An Irish wife's maternal behaviour does not annihilate her husband's sexual desires, however, for the husband oscillates between seeing her as a wife and mother. Even if she acts to control it to some degree, it may become diverted into other forms, as recognised by the painter Paddy Graham whose concept of the quintessence of Irish marital relations was expressed in a painting exhibited in a Dublin gallery in 1974 entitled "Women Pray and Men Masturbate" (in Coogan, 1975:100). While a man typically oscillates between sexual desire/desire to protect and filial love for his wife, his wife oscillates between a desire to be protected/romantic love and maternal love for her husband.

For all the distance that these tensions can generate in Irish marriages, nevertheless I found the majority to be characterised by mutual fondness, even if the partners did pretend otherwise. It is partly because wives do act as mothers to husbands' filial needs so generously, that husbands feel guilty about their sexual impositions on unwilling wives, I believe. The Irish woman has classically been seen willingly to slave for her husband (and sons) in the home, to give them the best food, and to eat after they had had their fill in traditional Ireland. While most Irish homes now have sufficient good food to go around, there was one woman with a large family whose husband rarely contributed to its maintenance, and whose food therefore was in short supply and of poor quality: but she gave that man far better food than herself and her
children, sons included. In the face of such goodness, I believe married men feel ashamed not so much of their sexual desires – though they may do to some extent – but of the fact that they feel compelled to express them in ways that injure these good motherly wives, both by their impositions upon their bodies and their inability to let them feel they have given them (the men) pleasure, and by the consequences of this in the form of more children than can be comfortably cared for or enjoyed.

The power struggles in sexual relationships: men cease to be good protectors and providers

I have argued that because Irishmen deny to their wives the psychological satisfaction of allowing them to feel they give them pleasure, and of exercising power over them, that Irish women then seek to undermine their husbands' importance as family head and protector. This can include attempts to alienate the children from them. There can be no doubt that one of the great motivating forces behind a man in his activities in the extra-domestic domain is the powerful sense of a loving wife and children who are dependent upon him for protection and his successful performance in the economic/political domain. It is interesting to note, for example, that productivity of bachelor farmers in Ireland is considerably lower than that of married men for equivalent properties (Schepers-Hughes, 1979: 47; also Bax, 1976:24). Indeed at the end of the following chapter it will be shown that the image of Ireland as a woman in need of protection has been a very powerful symbolic and emotive force, even exploited by the Free State to motivate Irishmen to protect their country and keep her sovereign. I am not saying that the majority of married Irishmen feel entirely psychologically wifeless and childless, only that they feel substantially more so than married men in comparable countries. Jealousy, aloofness from, coldness and cruelty towards their children by Irish fathers can now be better understood where they do exist. (Many husbands withdraw from their problems and present a rather ineffectual, but affectionate manner to their children). So too can the relative absence of some of the qualities found in the spirit of capitalism. An Irishman might command his family's obedience, but not their love and respect. There is no doubt some satisfaction in having this command, but it is substantially less rewarding than the role of the mother to whom loyalty and obedience are given more freely. This is something Arensberg and Kimball who did not do intensive studies of particular families, did not realise when they pictured the rural Irish father as a "regal paterfamilias", which Brody and Schepers-Hughes felt was so much at odds with what they encountered on closer family investigation where they found the father
often held in contempt by his family. Furthermore, Arensberg's and Kimball's observations were largely in the domain beyond the home where the father does indeed act for the entire family, and excludes his sons from participation.

A man bonded to his wife in filial devotion is not considered a real man in Ireland, as elsewhere, nor indeed is a boy too controlled by his mother considered a likely masculine adult, "cissiness" being a constant worry for boys and men alike. However, because a man is inherently motivated to be "manly", to perform competitively in the outside world, he has less to fear from a wife seducing him into filial subordination than he has of her engulfing him in their sexual relationship. So concerned to show his wife she has no power over him either as wife, or substitute mother, many Irishmen seem committed either to uncooperativeness or anti-authoritarianism in relationship to their families. Many spend much of their non-working hours in the pub with friends (or their working hours too in the case of poor providers) who console each other implicitly, if not explicitly for their unfortunate condition (or when malicious, do the contrary); some do wild impetuous, daring things to prove their masculinity, such as heavy gambling, or recklessly driving their cars. Many simply cannot under any circumstances be persuaded to do a thing in the house, either to repair it, tidy the yard, mow the lawn etc; and to look after the children for a more traditional man is almost unthinkable, though his wife may be worn out with child-bearing and rearing. The recalcitrance of Irishmen in these matters was summed up by one woman who said that until the last few years she had always thought "men were the most useless yokes out". The ungallant behaviour of Irish husbands towards their wives is often mentioned by the Irish, and considered intelligently in an essay by Ussher (1955). Connery's chapter on "Love and Marriage" deals very substantially with the thoughtlessness and neglect of Irish husbands towards their wives, and their tendency to live with all the privileges of bachelors within the state of marriage (1968:chapter six).

Until very recently few men would even walk up the street in a rural town with their wives and children, and many still refuse, or when they do accompany them on the rare occasion, look exceedingly embarrassed and uncomfortable. When I came to the town first in 1979 very few men could be seen sitting with their wives in the church, and this has been a long tradition in Ireland, though within a year a substantial change had taken place in this regard. Both these instances of husbandly behaviour run
counter to women's desires for their husbands to accompany them. The utter opposite of the proud Italian man who parades his wife and children up the street on Sundays is surely embodied in the traditional Irishman who would nowhere be seen with his wife and children in public.

A husband alienated from his family both by his wife, and by forces within himself, is unlikely to behave adequately as his family's protector. Though he is prevalently the breadwinner and therefore suffers as well as his wife when he has a large number of children, he can frequently be found refusing to cooperate in natural birth-control methods, as Irish people will commonly say. For what this snippet of information is worth, of 112 women coming to a hospital in Ballinsloe who said that their pregnancy was unintended, 78 were trying to use some "natural" method. In the socio-political domain, Irishmen have been very neglectful in legislating for the women of their country to protect them in the event of desertion or death of their husbands. Robinson points out that there has been a lack of priority given to reforms in family law, matrimonial property law, widow's allowances, deserted wives and services for unmarried mothers. When they have come, they have come late compared with other European countries. The EEC has made certain directives that have ameliorated conditions for women, such as those concerning equal pay and job discrimination (1978:66). However, the lack of reform in divorce law does not represent only male interests, for females were even more opposed to it as far as I could discern, although it was they who suffered most when men deserted them and left the family without economic support.

Harris reveals that rural women in a traditional area of Ulster provided for the entire household's consumer demands from the money they made from their hens. In practice they were expected to manage almost entirely on their earnings, and they received no other money for any purpose from their husbands (much of their food came from the farm). The man's money made from the farm went into buying farm machinery, replacing stock, buying more land and maintaining buildings (1972:54). But as these were small, poor and unproductive farms it is not evident that the man's earnings all went back to where Harris suggests. One wonders how much went on men's drink and perhaps even gambling, leaving the wife to manage on what must have been pitiful sums of money for the household's requirements.

An index of men's relatively superior material conditions of life can be found in the fact that until the 1950s the Irish women had
relatively lower longevity in relation to males than women in comparable countries. They outlived males, but by a lower margin: for example, between 1871 and 1946 Irish females lived from 0.1 to 1.9 years longer than males; in England females lived from three to five years longer than males for the same period. As women in most western countries have had longer longevity than men in the order of the English example for the past century or so, the relatively lower longevity of females in Ireland has probably been due to a poorer diet, harder work, and longer hours of work than men, Kennedy thinks (1973:55-6).

Mothers look to children for self-realisation, and to sons for protection, instead of to husbands.

We are coming now to filling in the last "transform" of the cybernetic model (see chapter one) which will link the second chapter dealing with the dominating and powerful mother to this chapter on sexual relations, showing how the entire personality tied in with culture is maintained.

The forces that we have seen at work in Irish marital relationships militate against a husband being a good provider for and protector of his family, and in quarrels and power struggles that are at work in the marriage, the woman may come to look to her children through whom she can realise her existence. Messenger noted that Irish women desired children in part to compensate for the lack of affection from their spouses (1969:78). Instead of women's dependent needs being met by their husbands, they look to their children for their self-worth. But this situation is not the equivalent of receiving husbandly protectiveness, for in this event she is looking not upwards, but downwards for her sense of self-worth: she is imaging herself by contrast conception to her children as analysed in chapter two. In order to realise herself through her children the mother tries to tie them to her permanently, and although adult sons who marry project the resultant life-long desire for maternal succour onto their wives, their own mothers are never totally replaced. However, to some extent, mothers attempt to acquire protectiveness from sons in lieu of husbands. For from an early age, both sexes display the characteristics of their species - maternalism and a desire for protection on the part of girls, and adventurism and daring that bespeaks the possibility of a protector on the part of boys.

It was not at all evident in the majority of families I knew that baby boys were preferred to girls, although this was probably less true
in the past. In one propertyless family where the children were very closely spaced and the mother's reactions to each child less likely to have been due to her expectations of the two sexes than of her reactions to their responses to her, I found she did not particularly like her six and four year old daughters, though she treated her infant daughter as lovingly as the small boys. And it took me a long time to discover why, apart from the as yet small jealousy about their nurturing behaviour with their brothers and father, and competition with the latter especially for his affection. It was that when she corrected these girls, who were as a rule, like girls in other families, more obedient than the boys, they would sulk, and be unforgiving for some time following. The boys, by contrast, quickly forgot the punishment, and therefore forgave the punisher; and on the other hand, they also more readily committed the same misdeed than did their sisters. And when I questioned other mothers on this, most quickly agreed that girls sulk when corrected, and boys do not, but are also more mischievous, though there were some exceptions to this rule.

The above information reveals that the Irish mother's traditional favouritism of sons may not be based on the fact that they will inherit the property and look after the couple in their old age. Apart from the fact that only one son inherits and he could be picked out from others early in life and lavished affection upon exclusively if this were the reason, as well as the fact that only mothers, not fathers, favour sons, though they both may need caring for in old age, it has not been explained why this favouritism has continued unabated into the city as late as the 1950s. Here, as Humphreys shows, there are no extended households, and no economic bases for mothers holding onto sons and trying to prevent them from marrying (1966). My data reveals that most Irish mothers intend to love girls as much as boys, but as boys mature they seem to capture the mothers' affection more than girls. However, it must be noted that it is daughters who have the best and most enduring relationships with their mothers as adults, precisely because, unlike sons, their mothers are not replaced in their affection as the sons' new wives replace the mother.

The reasons for mothers becoming more fond of and therefore more clinging to sons are that when corrected, boys more quickly forgive their mothers than do girls; they do not compete with the mother for the affection of other members of the family in the same ways as daughters, but rather are the subjects of maternal solicitude by their
sisters; and most importantly, they seem impelled to live more adventurous lives than girls, to do more daring and manly things which promise to give them a potential to become what their fathers are not – their mother's protectors, without making sexual impositions upon her integrity. And many mothers quite early grow to expect protection from their sons, a protection that can be directed and controlled to a large extent, precisely because as sons they are at the same time in need of their mothers' succour. While it has to be pointed out that I rarely saw the traditional extreme devotion to sons in preference to daughters as depicted by Scheper-Hughes and remarked upon in the literature, and none of my informants would have openly admitted to a lack of equivalence either between sexes or among their children, nevertheless the traditional favouring of sons over daughters is still evident.

Thus we can understand why it is often said the Irish mother acts as a wife surrogate to sons in all but the sexual sphere (e.g. Messenger, 1969:69); and we might recall the lines of Kavanagh's poem which play upon this idea:

Maguire was faithful to death;
He stayed with his mother till she died
At the age of ninety-one
She stayed too long,
Wife and mother in one.

(Chapter two p.39)

Indeed if Kavanagh was perceiving the typical rural Irish mother he was indeed correct in locating the cause of "the great hunger", a substantial part of which is sexual frustration and denial: for the Irish mother acts as a pseudo-wife in that she elicits the sons's protectiveness – a behaviour pattern in adult life usually directed towards females who offer a man sexual gratification – without providing him with sexual gratification. And perhaps a measure of the desire of the traditional Irish mother to truly secure this relationship with at least one son forever can be seen in her characteristic zeal to have at least one son a priest (it is far less true of the contemporary scene however): for the priest will never give his protection to a woman who can offer what his mother cannot – her sexuality. Nor will he ever replace his own mother with another in the form of a wife. An Irish son who becomes a priest will substantially satisfy his mother's need for high status and protection on the one hand, and her needs to succour on the other. And she must feel very gratified that this man of high status is her own personal creation. We can now understand what is meant by the Irish saying that "A mother often has a vocation, but the son has to work it".
We should also be able to appreciate the paradox that the Irish mother can become so desperate for protection from a son that she will use mechanisms to secure him that engulf and destroy him, as Scheper-Hughes has so eloquently revealed. It is no coincidence that it is males, especially single males, who predominate among the mentally ill in all age groups except over seventy five years in Ireland. More generally, however, her projections of all her hopes and desires onto her children, her attempts to keep them dependent on her succour, mean that dependence is prolonged into adulthood, and both sexes can become so fearful of the ultimate parental disobedience - the expression of their sexuality which Bishoff argues is the antithesis of dependence (1976) - that they are never able to marry. This is the principal reason for the higher levels of permanent celibacy (including priests and religious personnel) and later marriage than elsewhere in Europe for the period from the mid 19th century to about 1970, I believe. And fathers, feeling excluded from their wives' affection by the children, are jealous of them and act in either cruel or repressive ways as described in chapter two.

Now to the cybernetic model in reduced form which links the second chapter to this chapter.
1. Irish Catholic child-rearing are conductive to the development of anxious attachment in the individual, resulting in a poor sense of personal autonomy.

Generates 2.

(i) Authoritarianism (ii) Anti-authoritarianism
on the one hand, and expressions that
and supplication deny dependence.
to authority figures on the other.

3. Relations between the sexes

Females fear husbands' sexual impositions on their bodily integrity and try to prevent men having sex with them except when they, the women, are in a superordinate position.

Males fear engulfment in sexual relations: they fear the psychological power that a wife has over them in manipulating their protectiveness.

Males act to deny that women have any psychological power over them either as wives or as quasi-mothers.

Women become resentful that men have taken their integrity without allowing them a return in the form of psychological control. They refuse to acknowledge that men in fact are their protectors.

Men cease to act adequately as protectors and providers for their wives and families.
Playboy of the Western World: an interpretation

I would like to end this chapter with an analysis of Synge’s internationally known *Playboy of the Western World* (1958) which crystallises the argument in my cybernetic model. Its performances in both Ireland and America provoked much controversy, including riots in America, for reasons which will become clear. The plot is as follows: Pegeen, a nubile, attractive and vivacious woman of twenty years of age is talking with her betrothed, a cowardly, spiritless young man Shawn who is mortally afraid he may have to pass the evening in her father’s hotel with her alone tending it, when in comes a brave young fellow Christy, who claims to have murdered his father. His father, he says, was a hard man, often "raging", "cursing and damming and swearing oaths", a man who would put fear into anyone. This act was precipitated by his father trying to force him to marry a widow Casey described in truly mythological terms as "A walking terror from beyond the hills, and she two score and five years, and two hundred weights and five pounds...and a blinded eye, and she a woman of noted misbehaviour with the old and young". In addition, he says she suckled him for six weeks when he was a baby. His father did this because he said "I was wanting a protector from the harshness of the world" (though Christy believes he had other motives).

Pegeen is attracted to him for his bravery and daring to kill his father, realising such a man would protect her well. And as word gets about, several other nubile women attempt to attract Christy’s interest also. He is flattered and surprised, for as he says, till the day he murdered his father he had been quiet and unobtrusive and no girl had ever taken any notice of him. They are joined by the commanding, inquisitive Widow Quin who in the past murdered her husband, not in a brave way in a spirit of anger like Christy, but in a "sneaky kind" of way that "did win small glory with the boys itself". She immediately makes it clear she also thinks Christy’s bravery gives him sexual attraction and vies for his interest with Pegeen, suggesting she would be a better partner. What she offers him is not herself to protect, but rather her own house for his protection and her to look after him. She advertises her economic skills in the garden and in "thatching, or mowing, or shearing a sheep" she has no peer in Mayo. Pegeen’s skills are those of physical attraction in loyalty and housekeeping. She points out the lack of womanly attraction in the older Widow Quin. Christy is flattered to have the two women fight over him and rejoices that he has killed his father as it has for the first time made him attractive to women.
It is assumed by all the women that Christy is good at competitive male activities. He develops self-esteem and courage from this and from Pegeen's admiration of his bravery. "And I'll have your words from this day filling my ears", he says. He gets so much self-esteem in fact, that he goes on to win at some masculine sports being held on the beach: and he suddenly acquires a poetic ability he did not have before to court Pegeen.

In the meantime, Christy's father, Mahon, turns up with nothing but angry contempt for his cowardly son whom we learn has merely hit his father on the head with a shovel. His father describes Christy as a lazy, heedless, irresponsible lad, hitherto afraid of girls, and with no manliness about him at all. When Christy, who is hidden behind the door, hears this he is angry that his father should provide information such as would lay "desolation between my own self and the fine women of Ireland". Once Pegeen discovers he did not murder his father she is contemptuous as she has been towards her betrothed, Shawn, and angry that she has been taken in by him. Christy responds to his father's attempts to grab him with defiance and anger, and hits him over the head again. But Pegeen is not impressed, for "but what's a squabble in your back yard, and the blow of a loyal have taught me that there's a great gap between a gallous story and a dirty deed". Christy grabs the legs of the table to prevent the crowd, now responding like Pegeen pulling him away to be punished for his behaviour towards his father, kicking and biting ignominiously. At the point where the crowd in the pub tries to drag him away, Christy's father recovers from his last blow, and becoming protective of his son, tells him they should go home now, away from these fools. Christy agrees, but only if he goes "like a gallant captain with his heathen slave": he will be master of his father from now on. But Mahon is amused, though complies saying, "I am crazy again" with a broad smile (which I read as a knowing one). Christy begins to romance again, to dream of the brave things he will do in the future, and so the play ends like its title, making an ironic comment upon him. Pegeen is now to marry Shawn whom she holds in contempt and laments that she has lost "the only Playboy of the Western World".

My interpretation of this play is somewhat different in several respects from those given by its critics and interpreters: it is an interpretation inspired by the foregoing analysis of Irish sexuality and sexual relations. I see the Widows Quin and Casey (who is only spoken of in the drama) to be alter-egos. Both are motherly type figures, old
enough to be Christy's mother, the latter even having once acted as a surrogate mother to him. At one point they are explicitly compared by the girls teasing Christy after he has given the reason for his killing his father—being the fact that he was to be forced to marry the Widow Casey: the girl suggests that perhaps God sent him on the road to marry the Widow Quinn. Christy is not attracted to these dominating mother figures, one of whom is described as a truly devouring figure, the other as one who actually slyly murdered her previous husband—quite the contrary in the case of the Widow Casey. This Oedipal-type story involving the slaying of the father provides a counterpoint to the classical myth in that here the protagonist kills the father not to marry the mother, but because he does not want to marry his (surrogate) mother. Congruent with my Irish data and analysis, the mother figure Widow Quinn offers not a need to be protected by Christy in a potential sexual relationship, but rather she offers to him her nurturance. And the Widow Casey was offered to Christy in marriage because his father said he thought he was in need of protection.

However, the two widows are alter-egos of Pegeen, I believe, the two sets of figures representing the two dimensions of Irish womanhood which Synge, as myself, has perceived—the dominating, devouring mother, and the sexually attractive girl. Pegeen's potential for growing into the former is clearly seen in her sharp tongue and temper, and her dominating ways. When Christy's sweet talk woos her she reveals an awareness of this, as softening to it she says: "And to think it's me is talking sweetly, Christy Mahon, and I the fright of seven townlands for my biting tongue". And when Christy becomes afraid Pegeen will no longer be interested in him he says she will be "speaking hard words to me, like an old woman with a spavindy ass". The youthful dimension of womanhood is attracted to manliness which is explicitly associated with protectiveness: the motherly dimension offers nurturance to her partner. However, the motherly figures are also sexual ones, but the sexuality is of a devouring, consuming, destructive kind, as depicted in the Widow Casey, a sexually promiscuous hag of enormous threatening dimensions, and the Widow Quinn who actually killed her last husband without the justification of anger such as Christy's towards his father. Interestingly, when Pegeen discovers Christy is not manly and brave she rejects him: the Widow Quinn however, remains interested in him as a partner.
That the feeble, cowardly Shawn and the boastful, pseudo-manly Christy are alter-egos is, however, more obvious, and usually recognised by critics, both because of their age and intentions, and the fact that the only difference between them is that one has fooled people into believing he is courageous and protective towards women and does in fact make some attempt to be so. Shawn is frequently compared negatively to Christy in the early part of the play before we become aware the latter is a fraud, as for example where the Widow Quin says jeeringly to Shawn "It's true all girls are fond of courage and do hate the like of you". Coward though we discover Christy to be, it is noteworthy that when other people have given him that identity of a courageous "da-slayer" he not only begins for the first time to believe he is a real man and attractive to women, but he also actually achieves well in competitive activities. (It might be recalled I have argued that the consequence of Irish women withholding from their husbands identities as good protectors - whether in fact they are capable of being so or not - is that there is a loss of desire and ability to protect and provide).

Unhappily, Christy's little game is uncovered by his intimidating father who characteristically, holds his son in contempt. Having rebelled like most Irish sons, his father does make some concessions to super-ordination, however. But despite what some critics argue about the play's ambiguous ending, for me there is no ambiguity at all. Mahon acquiesces to his son's claim that he (Christy) will accompany him back to the farm (where typically, as I have shown, fathers remain in control until their death) "like a gallant captain with his heathen slave", with a knowing smile and the words "I am crazy again". When he said he was crazy before it was shown that in fact he was not: Mahon was attempting to identify his son in the distance saying "but I never till this day confused that dribbling idiot with a likely man". He was correct in his identification and in his attribution also, for Christy is shown to differ from Shawn only in having made an attempt to be manly. Indeed at the end Christy says he will continue from now on to go "romancing through a romping lifetime" in precisely the same way as we have seen him do in the play, behaviour which has earned him its ironic title. And Pegeen laments the loss of this potential of manly competitiveness, achievement and protection in a husband, a loss embodied in Christy's alter-ego Shawn whom she will now have to marry, with the final words of the play "Oh, my grief, I've lost him surely. I've lost the only Playboy of the Western World". Synge has dramatised the picture I have been trying to
create in this chapter, that there are no real "playboys" for Irish women to marry in Ireland.

When Synge wrote of the Aran Islanders that

The direct sexual instincts are not weak on the island, but they are so subordinated to the instincts of the family that they rarely lead to irregularity.

(Synge, 1979:122)

he might have seemed at that point in the book to have been referring simply to filial obedience. But his profound insights which I believe are revealed in *Playboy of the Western World* would suggest a deeper meaning. Acute Irish observer that he was, Synge implicitly understood what I have been trying to explain in the cybernetic model that makes an explanatory link from the second chapter to this chapter. So great is filial subordination, and the forces that maintain it, that it acts to interfere seriously with the establishment and maintenance of relations between the sexes in Ireland.
1. However, it is necessary to point out that the figures for the past two decades provided by Whyte may be distorted by the fact that they do not include girls who go to Britain to give birth to illegitimate offspring. Their numbers are not known, but guesses of around two to three thousand per year are sometimes made. This would not drastically increase the figures provided, however, as Whyte points out (1971:31).


3. Dr. A. Rymne "Family Planning Act" Letters to Editor *Irish Times* 12 July 1980

4. Dr. Ryan "Family Planning Act" Letters to Editor *Irish Times* 27 August 1980


7. T. O'Mahony "Bishops condemn 'sex evils!'" *Irish Press* 1 March 1980.


12. However, this "abundant evidence of illegitimacy" is, on further inspection, not so unequivocal. MacLysaght's data is taken not from statistics, but from impressionistic observers who, as this thesis testifies, can often be very useful. However, observers of the past must come under closer scrutiny than those of more recent times whose impressions can be matched with more objective data. For instance, MacLysaght draws on statements of the seventeenth century observers that the "'ordinary sort of people take a sort of pride in prostituting their daughters or kinswomen to their landlords' sons or kinsmen" whose illegitimate children were kept and loved by the woman's family and given a share of the patrimony (1969:54). But this may be a misunderstanding of another custom which involved mothers sometimes naming their children after the landlord, though they were not his offspring. Nicholls shows that there was a custom of changing paternity - either by the mother of the children, or by the children themselves when they grew up (1972:72-8). This may have been one manifestation of the Irish system of buying the protection of a great man, for Nicholls says this system was a most characteristic and important institution of late medieval Ireland. Some lords never denied a child claimed to be his (1972:42). As an observer says, the children whose mother named them after the lord later followed him as swordsmen (Nicholls, 1972:77), perhaps this is
why it was in his interests not to reject claims of paternity. It is not clear why women sought to do this, but as they were in those times sometimes divorced - as well as being widowed - in neither case having a claim to their husband's property, it may have been such husbandless women who sought their lord's protection for their offspring by means of this institution.

13. In 1851 the proportion of permanent celibacy among males was the same in Ireland as in England, and slightly less for Irish than English females. From 1871 to 1911, 16% to 29% of the male population in Ireland never married, as compared to 10 to 12% in England and Wales for the same period. The figures for female celibacy in Ireland for the same period is slightly lower than that for males. In 1951 permanent celibates constituted 31% of the male population in Ireland: 9% in England and Wales (Kennedy, 1973:141-4). The country with the closest rate of permanent celibacy to Ireland during the period 1871 to 1911 was Scotland with 18% of its people over the age of 55 years never married. In the U.S.A. by contrast, the percentage was 10 (from data provided by Humphreys, 1966:254). In 1945 the average age of grooms was 33 years in Ireland, though there were eight other European countries in which the average age of grooms was 30 years or over. Brides in Ireland in 1945 were 28 years on average; in 10 other European countries, the average age was from 26 to 28 years (Kennedy, 1973:141-3). By 1969 these had dropped to 28 years for males and 25.3 years for females (O'Higgins, 1974: 53), and the ages continued to drop during the seventies. In 1946 the average age of marriage for Irishmen in non-agricultural production was 31 years; among professional people in particular, it was 33.7 years; and the labouring class, 30.4 years (Humphreys, 1966:77).

14. As late as 1978 there were only 19,105 pupils in private primary schools (Coochalan, 1981:182), the remaining 545,197 being taught by lay teachers operating in denominational schools (Tbid:170). (These figures include the small Protestant population.) Until the past three decades or so, few children have gone onto high school - particularly in rural areas - where the majority are run by religious orders (see chapter four p.160).

15. I suspect, however, that Messenger may be taking the consequence of a very real masculine modesty too far. In the cold Atlantic the survival rate for those thrown overboard is not high for most months of the year, especially if they do not swim, which most people living on the seaboard and islands do not.

16. C. Toibin "Don't worry, it'll never happen" - she said, and she was right" Magill June 1981.

17. It should be noted that such behaviour is far less evident at the disco dances for the young, thereby demonstrating the development of a much more powerful sense of self among the youth, despite what often appear to have been fairly traditional kinds of child-rearing experiences.

18. Such information as follows was not, of course, given freely or knowingly, although another woman whose child-bearing years were over and who had lived in England for some years did say several times that men were only interested in getting "relief".

19. While unmarried men in committed relationships could be jealous of
their women who were free to end that relationship at any time, I never saw male sexual jealousy where wives were concerned (except in the unusual case of the unfaithful wife mentioned above). This may be the result of the extreme fidelity of married women in Ireland and their very circumspect personal behaviour outside the home or in the presence of men in the home. To a lesser extent it may also be due to the shyness and lack of initiative of other men, though after a few years of marriage, this shyness often decreases.

20. Humphreys' informants spoke more openly to him about the subject of sex for four possible reasons I believe. (i) He engaged less in participant/observation which involves frequent visits to people's homes and watching their daily personal interactions, than in a series of interviews. (ii) He was not involved in a community, so when his work would be published people could feel their anonymity would be assured. (iii) He was a priest (American), a celibate, and at other times a confessor, albeit not to his informants. (iv) Perhaps most important, he did his fieldwork in 1951, long before the Irish women's liberation movement, so women had not become subjected to the idea that women elsewhere can, and often do, enjoy sex, and so ought they.


23. While it is commonly assumed that romantic love only exists in cultures which have such an ideology, on the basis of myths alone, I would challenge that romantic love may be found universally, even where there is an ideology denying its existence. However, as this challenge cannot be made here, I shall use the terms "sexual bonding" or "sexual attachment" where the notion of romantic love is used in reference to cultures other than those found in the western world.

24. The protection a woman with her dependent offspring requires is, in the environment of man's evolutionary adaptedness, that from the environment - e.g. predators, exposure to the elements, food shortages etc. - and from hostile men who have no commitment to caring for her offspring. This is not to deny women's very substantial maintenance of their families' economic needs in many societies. However, even in modern welfare states, the women and children of husbandless families are usually at some material and social disadvantage.

It is postulated that from the ambition to protect, and the need to be protected, in men and women respectively, emanates emotions which result in an attachment bond here called romantic love, or sexual bonding/attachment (see footnote 23).

25. None of this is to deny the fragility of man-wife bond even where cultures allow full play to sexual bonding, compared to the enduring quality of the mother-child bond. Nor is it to say that cultures do not often interfere with the process of sexual attachment by such means as arranged marriages; or place the burden of providing protection for the woman and her children more on consanguines than on the husband/father (confer Tiger and Fox, 1971:chapter three).

27. This, however, does not imply that women do not generally compete at all. Women compete with each other, sometimes very intensely, for certain desirable men, and to produce the most materially, socially or educationally successful children.

28. I am aware of the debate between the 1970s "sociobiologists" and the "ethologists" who preceded them on the matter of individual selection versus group selection. While Tiger and Fox do take the latter position, I see no reason why their argument cannot be fitted within an individual selection framework. Many sub-human primates form groups - which are held together more on an agonistic and cooperative basis - because it is in the individual primate's best interests (i.e. his reproductive success) to bond with other members of his own kind. It has evidently been in each human male's interests to bond with other men cooperatively and distribute his time and energy among them, in addition to taking care of the immediate needs of his offspring. That youths should need a certain amount of "coercion" (through initiation rites) in no way detracts from the idea that they have a genetically-based motivation to bond cooperatively with other men. In initiation rites, youths have this tendency reinforced and enhanced, and guided in the direction felt most suitable by elders who have much information that is to be culturally transmitted, information that will help to maintain the existence of that society, and therefore the offspring of those elders, and ultimately of the initiates.

29. Just the same, it is worth considering the extent to which Irish wives may be partly to blame for their manfold's divisiveness, for the only group of men in Ireland consistently showing a united front for the past 130 years has been the Catholic clergy - men unattached to wives and children.

30. The husbands' responses to their wives denying them the feeling that they are the families' protectors will be dealt with below.

31. Frank O'Connor's description of his mother's affection for his intemperate father; see chapter two p.37.

32. C. Butler "Song not Irish enough?" Letters to Editor Irish Independent 31 March 1980.

33. This in no way contradicts the sociobiological notion that polygyny is desired by men to fulfil their need for sexual variety and to guarantee more offspring than one wife could produce. In the variety of marriage types practised by different human societies, it may need to be asked why some societies, as distinct from individual's desires, should allow polygyny, while others do not.

34. Oedipal myths such as Sophocles' Oedipus Rex would appear to constitute a challenge to my argument that men do not desire their mothers sexually. However, in an unpublished manuscript entitled "The Passion, Death and Resurrection of Christ and Oedipus Rex: Transformations on the concern to control male sexuality" I have argued that these two symbolic constructs may be understood to be inversions of the single concern to control male sexuality. In the former, the hero forswent his sexuality entirely, and became a model held up for all humanity in the Christian world to emulate; in the latter, the
protagonist failed to control his sexuality, but enacted it (hypothetically) in the worst possible way— with the wife of his father. I interpret Jocasta not to be Oedipus' "real" mother, the one to whom he was attached in the way that Bowlby describes for infants to their mothers, and against whom the real incest barrier would have been acting. Rather, Jocasta and Laius are his symbolic parents: in fact, the "parents" of the whole society, being as they are Queen and King. See Sheleff (1976) for extensive references to anthropologists and psychologists who have rejected Freud's notion of the Oedipal complex, either on the basis of empirical evidence cross-culturally, or on theoretical grounds.


36. Although the majority of Protestant farmers were more progressive in their farming methods, less traditional and more wealthy, it would seem that Harris is also including a few Protestant families in this description of farm and household economic management.

37. In the age range 25–44 years, 63% of all hospitalised psychiatric patients are males, with 88% of these being single. The prevalence of schizophrenia— double the average rate of other western societies — is 50% higher for males than females in Ireland (from figures in Schepers-Hughes, 1979:67–9).
CHAPTER SEVEN

NATIONALISM

O my dark Rosaleen,
Do not sigh, do not weep!
The priests are on the ocean green,
They march along the deep.
There's wine from the royal Pope,
Upon the ocean green;
And Spanish ale shall give you hope,
My Dark Rosaleen!
My own Rosaleen!
Shall glad your heart, shall give you hope,
Shall give you health, and help, and hope.
My Dark Rosaleen!

Over hills, and thro' dales,
Have I roam'd for your sake;
All yesterday I sail'd with sails
On river and on lake.
The Erne, at its highest flood,
I dash'd across unseen,
For there was lightning in my blood,
My Dark Rosaleen!
My own Rosaleen!
O, there was lightning in my blood,
Red lightning lighten'd thro' my blood.
My Dark Rosaleen!

All day long, in unrest,
To and fro, do I move.
The very soul within my breast
Is wasted for you, love!
The heart in my bosom faints
To think of you, my Queen,
My life of life, my saint of saints,
My Dark Rosaleen!
My own Rosaleen!
To hear your sweet and sad complaints,
My life, my love, my saint of saints,
My Dark Rosaleen!
Woe and pain, pain and woe,
Are my lot, night and noon,
To see your bright face clouded so,
Like to the mournful moon.
But yet will I rear your throne
Again in golden sheen;
'Tis you shall reign, shall reign alone,
My Dark Rosaleen!
My own Rosaleen!
'Tis you shall have the golden throne,
'Tis you shall reign, and reign alone,
My Dark Rosaleen.

Over dews, over sands,
Will I fly, for your weal:
Your holy delicate white hands
Shall girdle me with steel.
At home, in your emerald bowers,
From morning's dawn till e'en,
You'll pray for me, my flower of flowers,
My Dark Rosaleen!
My fond Rosaleen!
You'll think of me through daylight hours,
My virgin flower, my flower of flowers,
My Dark Rosaleen!

I could scale the blue air,
I could plough the high hills,
Oh, I could kneel all night in prayer,
To heal your many ills!
And one beamy smile from you
Would float like light between
My toils and me, my own, my true,
My Dark Rosaleen!
My fond Rosaleen!
Would give me life and soul anew,
A second life, a soul anew,
My Dark Rosaleen!

O, the Erne shall run red,
With redundance of blood,
The earth shall rock beneath our tread
And flames wrap hill and wood,
And gun-peal and slogan-cry
Woke many a glen serene,
Ere you shall fade, ere you shall die,
My Dark Rosaleen!
My own Rosaleen!
The Judgement Hour must first be nigh,
Ere you can fade, ere you can die,
My Dark Rosaleen.

Dark Rosaleen
by James Clarence Mangan (1803–49),
translated from the early 17th century
When the English embody their nation, she sits by the sea-shore, crowned with the triple fork of Poseidon to rule the waves: helmeted, and her shield by her side like Athens; Queen of her own isle, and in her mind, Queen of all the seas. She is a poetic figure, but belongs more to the pride of life than the passion of poetry. But when Irish poets imagined Ireland, she sits, an uncrowned queen, on the wild rocks of the Atlantic coast, looking out to the west, and the sorrow of a thousand years makes dark her ever youthful eyes. Her hair, wet with the dews, is her helmet, and her robe she has herself woven from the green of her fields and the purple of her hills. This Virgin Lady of Ireland, in the passion of her martyrdom, was the subject, after her conquest by England, of a crowd of Gaelic poems, and is the subject still of English poems by Irish poets. And many names are hers ... Dark Rosaleen, Silk of the Kine, Innisfail, the Little Black Rose, the Rose of the World, and others too long to number...

That which is conceived with imaginative truth often fulfils itself in reality.

(Brooke and Rolleston, 1900:xx-xxi)

Sean Cronin has stated that "the two strongest forces in Irish life were, and are, religion and nationalism" (1980:89), forces which have sometimes been in conflict with each other. And Whyte has posed a problem which must have puzzled every scholar on Ireland, no matter what his specialised field, about the opposition between these two forces: he observes that

This ability of Irish Catholics to remain loyal to the Church on some matters and not on others is an interesting characteristic, and it is to be hoped that some day an investigator will seek an explanation for it.

(Whyte, 1971:11-2)

(The"others" of course, are matters pertaining to nationalism). In this chapter, the last linking personality to culture and society, I attempt to understand this problem, and explain much else that has seemed peculiar to outsiders in Irish nationalist political behaviour. I have placed it after the cybernetic model which draws together Irish culture and personality because the analysis of the place of women in nationalism requires an understanding of sexual relationships in Ireland. As a manifestation of anti-authoritarianism, however, it does constitute part of that cybernetic model.

Loyal Catholics though the Irish may be, anthropologically speaking there exist two religions, two "gods", in Catholic Ireland - the one commonly practised and worshipped in many parts of the world, the other, nationalism and love of country. While in the former the worshippers
accept and even seek the position of humility, obedience and dependence, the latter is its inverse, typically involving strong sentiments of self-assertion and rebellion. The two religions are manifestations of what I have shown Laing argues to be the consequence for the person who experiences an inadequately developed personal autonomy. Just as the individual oscillates between dependence on the one hand and withdrawal and assertions of independence on the other, so this is reflected in the Irish Catholic culture where an oscillation between submissive, supplicant worshipping of the faith, and rebellious assertion of the ability to stand alone, self-sufficient and self-governing in the country, may be found.

As these two religions are transformations of the single concern that is an inadequately developed sense of selfhood, we might expect to see in the polarised domains common features and symbols. Thus, nationalist rebels have claimed their cause to have parallels with those in the bible, and rebels who went to their deaths were "martyrs"redeeming their country in the same way as Christ redeemed mankind by his death. Martyrdom, suffering in order to achieve, is popular in nationalism as it has been elsewhere in Catholic Christianity. A virgin mother stands at the apex of each religion, a symbol of emotional power in nationalistic strivings as in the Catholic faith. And while relying on popular sentiment freely given, nationalist leaders have frequently been every bit as authoritarian as the Catholic bishops.

To substantiate my claim that Irish nationalist activities are for many Irishmen a form of religious activity, I must give a brief introduction to Irish nationalism. While a sense of nationalism existed well before the Norman invasion which helped the Irish to cement the concept of Ireland as a nation (Boyce, 1982:28), a nationalist movement encompassing the mass of the Catholic people did not really begin until the peasants were mobilised by Daniel O'Connell, with the help of the Church, for the achievement of Emancipation (full political rights) in the 1820s. Cronin begins his book on the subject of nationalism at the time of the French Revolution which stirred the first strong feelings of republicanism. But the ideology of United Irishmen was conceived among the Presbyterians of Belfast who suffered discrimination and suppression at the hands of the established Church, were denied political representation, and suffered like all of Ireland under England's interference with her economy and developing industries which she squashed every time Ireland threatened England's monopoly in trade. The United Irishmen
believed that Ireland's interests would be best served by self-government, and although they believed in a united Ireland free of religious differences, and welcomed all persons regardless of faith, their ideology does not appear to have spread far among the Catholics: the rebellion of 1798 was essentially a Protestant affair. Beckett's material contradicts Cronin's beliefs about the involvement of Catholics in the movement. He says:

In Irish history 'the boys of Wexford' often figure as champions of national freedom. The truth is that they were moved mainly by local grievances; neither the objects that they fought for nor their conduct of war reflected the spirit of the United Irishmen, with whom they were connected by accidents of time and circumstances, rather than any real community of ideas. It was in the radical north-east, the cradle of the United Irish movement, that the doctrines of revolutionary republicanism found their only clear expression in 1798.

(Beckett, 1966:264)

It was really O'Connell's movement for Catholic Emancipation in which we see the first real stirrings of Catholic nationalism, though this was not a republican movement. Republicanism came to the Catholics in the 1840s with the Young Ireland movement, which was not a constitutional one like that of O'Connell, but a physical force republicanism. While O'Connell, and later in the century, Parnell, motivated the peasants with the help of the Catholic Church, both constitutional leaders, as well as all rebels were opposed to clerical interference in politics. It was not until the Fenian movement, a non-constitutional rebel movement, that we can begin to see that extreme nationalism clearly constituted a rival religion to Catholicism. In the constitutional movements, people were motivated and led by authoritarian figures: the rebel movements were self-motivated. And as Beckett says, the Fenians believed in "the absolute divine right of nationality" (1966:359).

The conception of the Irish as God's chosen people is an idea found in Old and Middle Irish literature (see Lehane, 1968:196), but it was resurrected and rejuvenated during the Gaelic Revival at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries. This equation of nationalism with religion finds its most powerful expression in the writings and speeches of the three poets who participated in the 1916 Rising - Pearse, Plunkett and Macdonagh. Pearse said:

'Like a divine religion, national freedom bears the marks of unity, of sanctity, of catholicity, of apostolic
succession. Of unity, for it contemplates the nation as one; of sanctity, for it is holy in itself and in those who serve it; of catholicity, for it embraces all the men and women of the nation; of apostolic succession, for it, or the aspiration after it, passes down from generation to generation from the nation's fathers.'

(Edwards, 1979:253)

Loftus says the Irish poet who writes about his homeland is not unlike the holy man who writes hymns to or about God. Having accepted this point of view, the Rising poets took the paraphernalia of mysticism - themes, images, symbols - and used them to express in their verse the sacred truth of Irish nationalism. In his poem "The Rebel" Pearse gives to the cause of revolution an implied religious sanction by taking his theme, imagery and even rhythm from the Old Testament (from Exodus). The Irish rebel, like Moses, has spoken with God and received a divine command to free his people. Like Moses he will lead the chosen people who have endured captivity out of bondage. There are other references to and images from the Bible which reveal that the rebel is a racial and national archetype, symbolic of the God-given natural desire of the Irish race for independence. There is a fusion of religious fervour and nationalism in Plunkett's verse and MacDonagh too informs his poetic expression of nationalism with religious symbolism. In MacDonagh's poem "Barbara" he speaks of "Ireland still the mystic rose" comparing her thriving religion with the godlessness of the rest of Europe. In the image of the rose he is synthesising the ideals of religion in nationalism (Loftus, 1964:147-9).

Loftus also says that the Rising poets were aware to some extent of the contradiction involved in justifying militant nationalism by reference to a religion that urged men to the practice of meekness and long suffering. In his poem "Renunciation" MacDonagh rejects the way of contemplative vision and chooses instead the path of militant nationalism. Each of the Rising poets justified violent insurrection by invoking the sanction of religion: theirs was a holy war (1964:149-50).

While the poetry of Plunkett and MacDonagh did survive a couple of decades or so following the Rising, it was, as Cronin points out, Pearse's writings that were treated as Holy Writ in the first fifty years of the Irish Free State. In expressing his nationalism in terms of the Catholic faith, Pearse turned the earlier rebels, Tone, Davis, Mitchell and Lalor to whom he looked to justify and inspire his own political position, into the four "evangelists" of Irish separatism (1980:100-1). The writings of
Pearse were of a more popular genre than those contemporaries whose works had more literary merit, and his works and ideals were inculcated into children in all primary and some secondary schools, long beyond the time that this cause had become relevant to the Irish situation, Edwards says (1979:339-41). And just as Pearse who both reflected the Irish people's sentiments as much as he inculcated them in his evangelical nationalism "worshipped" his predecessors, he, and to a lesser extent his fellow rebels of 1916, became secular saints once they were executed by the British.

Pearse's apostolic approach to nationalism has been evident in varying degrees since his time in members of the IRA, and the present H-block cause is certainly no exception. The following pictures are illustrations in the IRA's weekly newspaper Republican News (24 November 1979) of Christmas cards put out by Green Cross 73, a prisoners' dependants' fund raising organisation.
Patently blasphemous in Christian terms, the first shows two blanketmen with the infant Jesus, evocative of the Three Wise Men, an evocation made more salient by the printing of another card in a series of only five, with the Three Wise Men and the Virgin and child Jesus. A third conveys the same idea - a prisoner behind bars enlightened by the Star of Bethlehem. Note the striking thematic congruence with Pearse's poem of 1916 written in prison immediately before his execution, to his mother.

Dear Mary, that didst see thy first-born Son
Go forth to die amid the scorn of men
For whom He died,
Receive my first-born son into thy arms,
Who also hath gone out to die for men,
And keep him by thee till I come to him.
Dear Mary, I have shared thy sorrow,
And soon shall share thy joy.

("A Mother Speaks" in O Buachalla, 1979:28)

The recently published "The Diary of Bobby Sands", the IRA prisoner who was the first to embark on and die of hunger-striking in 1981, written while on hunger-strike and published by the political wing of the IRA, Sinn Fein, is pocket sized like a book of reference such as the Bible (though much slimmer in volume) and its cover decorated with the scrolls
used in the illuminated manuscripts of the early and middle Irish periods. By this means is his cause at once informed with historic sanction, and holiness. While we cannot know just how much the contemporary IRA members know of Pearse's writings, we should not simply assume this is history repeating itself: rather the same symbols and images which Pearse was motivated to use also inspire today's rebels, because they meet with the same concordance in their own personal life experiences.

Even the Peace People's movement was not without its Messianic visions. Essentially Catholic in composition (though it had a substantial Protestant membership) it was set up in opposition to violence in general, but in particular, to that of the IRA in their midst. One of its three leaders, Kieran McKeown, wrote a pamphlet on its aims which he believed were:

'...an attempt to create a society closer to the tenets of Christianity than perhaps anything since the days immediately after the death of Christ himself.'

But when receiving the Nobel Peace Prize, the Norwegians were amazed at the three leaders' naive belief they could offer an example to the whole world and one newspaper recommended "'a little less of the crusading spirit and a bit more humility'. In fact, the unreality of its vision may be measured to some extent by the fact that this ebullient movement lasted effectively for about one year.

Perhaps a measure of the rivalry of the rebels' causes to Catholicism may be seen in the Catholic Hierarchy's opposition to their activities over time. The Church's policy has generally been opposed to all activities which have involved the use of force, or secret societies. Thus, it was opposed to the 1798 rebellion, and to all other rebellions including the present one in Northern Ireland (but not to the non-violent civil rights movement). Cardinal Cullen who ruled the Church for thirty years following the Great Famine believed Fenianism would destroy religion given the chance, and he excommunicated Fenians. The anti-treaty IRA who maintained the civil war of 1921-3 and the republicans of the twenties and thirties were similarly excommunicated.

However, it would seem that the Hierarchy's opposition has principally been to republican "fanatics", to men such as Pearse for whom republicanism was an end in itself, a form of self-realisation more than a means to an end. While there are a number of scholars and writers, one of whom is Cronin, who believe the Hierarchy has repeatedly sold out the Catholics on
national issues, and is in fact the traitor in the house (although this is more implied than explicitly stated), this is a somewhat unjust view, I would argue. It was the Catholic Church which mobilised the peasants for O'Connell's Emancipation movement in the 1820s and many bishops were in favour of Repeal of the Union with Great Britain in 1842. The "tenant protection society" in the second half of the 19th century was often under the guidance of the Catholic clergy, and they worked in close collaboration with the Home Rule party under Parnell. Throughout the 19th century they were in favour of just treatment for Irish Catholics and believed had this obtained, revolutionaries would have disappeared. When the Pope expressed concern about the illegal revolutionary activities of the Irish, while ostensibly bowing to Rome's commands, the Irish Hierarchy made it sufficiently clear that they were unwilling to commit themselves to rigorous opposition to the tenants' movement (Lyons, 1971:183). While opposed to the Sinn Fein party before the 1916 Rising, they supported it afterwards, for their policies (as opposed to their means) differed little from the constitutional platforms of the parliamentary party. Even the modern IRA whose activities they condemn, receive the benefits of clerical administration in prisons where priests frequently act as social workers and mediators between the prisoners and other bodies. Nor do they refuse to conduct the funerals of these men, including those dying of hunger striking, which are frequently accompanied by para-military forces in guerilla attire forming guards of honour and giving military salutes to their fallen comrades (which is illegal), though the Church disapproves of it.

The Church's opposition appears to have been to nationalist movements which glorified violence, and to secret societies. It is true the Catholic Church was buttressed in the 19th century by the British administration, and it was not in their interests, therefore, to favour movements which would jeopardise their position. But there is more to their opposition than mere conservatism and opportunism. In the two major constitutional movements of the 19th century led by O'Connell and Parnell, it was the Church which motivated the people more than the people who initiated and maintained the movements. The Church could therefore feel that such nationalist movements were quite under their control. Only in the rebel movements which had very small numbers actively involved, though a much larger body of passive sympathisers, were they motivated from within the people themselves. The single exception to minority rebel movements was the popularly-based Land League founded in 1879 to which the Church was opposed. This was not a revolutionary movement and it was ideally non-
violent, but it did settle disputes in total disregard of the ordinary law of the land and during this time, Lyons says, agrarian outrages increased, as did the number of evictions diminish (1971:162). The Church's opposition to it may have been for its disregard of the law, but also to the fact that it was a movement initiated by the people, rather than by the Church. Rebel movements with their vigour and extreme dedication were possibly seen to be a spiritual threat to the Church, which may have lost out to a small extent after 1916: having opposed Sinn Fein before the revolution, they supported it afterwards. This too is the possible reason for the qualified support given to the contemporary IRA - either join them or lose them, may be the Church's philosophy. This is certainly becoming the practice in other major areas of secular change in Ireland, such as sexual behaviour, and in education.

But Cardinal Cullen was wrong in believing that the Fenian leaders were agnostics and Fenianism would destroy religion given the chance (Cronin, 1980:88), for most nationalist extremists have been almost or equally devoted to Catholicism as to rebellion, as Coogan reveals among the prisoners in Northern Ireland today. In fact, in their breakaway from the Officials, the Provisional IRA accused the Official IRA in the early seventies of seeking to establish "'extreme socialism leading to dictatorship' endangering 'Irish and Christian values'" (Cronin, 1980:204). The statement that there is no opposition between Irishmen's religion and their politics, "'The man who is a good Catholic is a good Nationalist'" (Boyce, 1982:219) made by a nationalist in 1890, may well be correct. The Church need never have feared their rival "religion" would obviate people's need for them, for each of these two religions has an important function in the Irish culture as a result of individuals' inadequately developed sense of autonomy: the one gives succour and comfort to the supplicant seeking it, the other enables him to assert he does not need these things. Pride lost because of dependence is restored by a belief in the self-sufficiency embodied not only in revolutionaries' policies, but in the very names they give themselves, such as Sinn Fein - Ourselves Alone.

It is worth pointing out that it has often seemed surprising to outsiders that a people who are so submissive in their religion could be so rebellious in their politics. A commander of the military forces of the Paris commune who collaborated with Fenianism was astounded that so radical a movement could take root in Ireland, "'hitherto a stranger to any sentiment except the faith and clerical rule'" (Cronin, 1980:90). It is precisely
because the Irish feel so ashamed of their submissiveness to authorities, one of which is the Church, and so in need of emotional support from such bodies, that they engage in nationalist causes with such rebellious spirits, I would suggest. They feel the need for a cleansing of these "unmanly" characteristics, usually blamed upon the subjugating English. And that cleansing is achieved through sacrifice, sacrifice with a Messianic vision with many images drawn from Christ.

Loftus points out that the men who helped shape the Irish cultural revival sought to ennable the Irishman's soul and by so doing make him worthy of his ancient heritage. Yeats set out to remake the Irish nation to fit the specifications of his own aristocratic vision and like the leaders of the Gaelic League regarded this movement as a cultural one to ennoble the race (1964:47). Pearse's primary objective was to instil into his students at the experimental school he created and ran, St. Edna's, the idealism of Christ's sacrifice, together with the heroic idealism of CuChullain. Pearse frequently informed his polemics on Ireland's revolution- ary cause with imagery drawn from Catholic ritual commemorating Christ's sacrifice (Ibid:160-2). Pearse, MacDonagh and Plunkett were all concerned with rebellion as an act of spiritual importance and a necessary purgation for the shame of Ireland's servitude and believed it needed a blood sacrifice to restore her racial integrity. In fact, in all three poets and rebels, the theme of sacrifice takes precedence over the motif of the climactic struggle between the forces of good and evil, justice and injustice (Loftus, 1964:151).

In the introduction to the Collected Works of P.H. Pearse (1924a), Browne says some stories and poems are weighted with the concept of a nation inheriting an original sin of slavery, for whose salvation the death of one man is necessary. The ever-recurring thought is of the apathy of his nation. The ideas of sacrifice and atonement, blood of martyrs that makes fruitful the seed of faith become vitalising factors in the struggle for Irish nationality (1924a:xiv-xvii). Pearse said "'There has been nothing more terrible in Irish history than the failure of the last generation'" (Beckett, 1966:437); and

'...bloodshed is a cleansing and sanctifying thing, and the nation which regards it as the final horror has lost its manhood. There are many things more horrible than bloodshed, and slavery is one of them.'

(Edwards, 1979:179)

Although of an entirely different political persuasion, that of marxism,
Connolly, the leader of the small rebel group the Irish Citizen's Army (as well as an intellectual influence in Irish politics), shared his mystical compatriot's view.

'...deep in the heart of Ireland has sunk the sense of degrad-ation wrought upon its people - so deep and so humiliating that no agency less powerful than the red tide of war on Irish soil will ever enable the Irish race to recover its self-respect or establish its national dignity.'

(Sheehy, 1968:67)

Pearse, Plunkett and MacDonagh were building on a long tradition in Ireland which canonises one who has deliberately sacrificed himself for a national cause, one which remains to this day as the world has seen in the recent deaths of ten hunger strikers. Wolfe Tone and Emmett accepted the consequences of military defeat, one which Emmett in his "street-scuffle" of 1803 knew to be inevitable. Wolfe Tone was a prototype of Irish rebels, O'Faolain says: "The Rebel was devoted to failure. He was a professional or vocational failure", and some laughed cheerfully at their probable fate. "Death did not mean failure so long as the Spirit of Revolt lived" (1969:98), through his sacrifice. Although the Fenian rebellion of 1848 came to nothing and very few of the peasantry joined them, they won the admiration of nationalists everywhere, even those who disagreed with their methods, Cronin says. O'Leary said:

'...the heart of the country always goes out to the man who lives and dies an unrepentant rebel. The rebel can reckon upon nothing in life; he is sure to be calumniated, he is likely to be robbed, and he may even be murdered, but let him once go out of life, and he is sure of a fine funeral.'

(Cronin, 1980:90)

It is the rebels' selfless sacrifice that moves Irish people, and Pearse and his fellow rebels were explicitly aware of it. They moved the Irish people into a revolution.

An analysis of why the Irish should be so moved by heroic sacrifice rather than creative action achieved by constitutional means will be suspended for the time being while we look at what it is that Pearse and others felt their country needed to be redeemed from.

Political apathy

I have often reiterated Laing's concept that the person who lacks a sense of his own autonomy oscillates between dependence on the one hand and withdrawal and assertions of self-reliance on the other, each being
equally unviable: between these two states is despair and/or inertia. These conditions may all be clearly seen in Irish political history. The people were at once emotionally dependent on their religion and clergy to an extreme degree, as well as on landlords when these were not absentee and were paternalistic, and upon their own strong leaders when these existed, leaders who led them "slavishly" (to use a much-quoted epithet) to achieve national ideals. For the most part the people were apathetic though complaining, about their bad conditions. Rebellion, the other pole of the continuum, meant to assert self-reliance, was never systematic, sustained, nor involved a unification of forces to form a common front to the enemy, and rebellions only ever involved a tiny proportion of the population. These groups comprising individuals whose motivation was to prove their independence of others, were committed to little more than a concept of "freedom" of the nation: they lacked an overarching ideology which would have linked the discreet individuals into a united group. For these reasons rebellions were unviable and rarely came to anything except to deepen the British intention to govern Ireland more firmly. It is from apathy, dependence and an inability to achieve reforms by themselves unless led by strong leaders that some few Irishmen feel the need to redeem the others by rebellions which are often quite hopeless and doomed to failure from the start: and because people feel the need to be redeemed they accord to such men the status of martyr. I shall now return to the ethnography to support this argument.

The condition of abject submission to fatalism and apathy is often mentioned about the Irish and has been referred to in chapters three and five. One historian says that the Irish accepted Henry II and the Anglo-Norman invasion fatalistically (Watt, 1972:36). Daniel O'Connell was one of Ireland's three great leaders who welded the peasantry together in the 1920s with the help of the Catholic clergy to form the first peaceful mass movement of Catholics stating its aims for Emancipation, followed by reform and repeal of the Union as mentioned earlier. But O'Faolain, his biographer, points out that O'Connell had extreme difficulty rescuing the people from their landlords and from acquiescing to their conditions. Between the 1817 famine and the 1822 famine he tried everything the human mind could devise to stir his people (1980:207). In fact a quotation from O'Connell to a friend at the beginning of this biography embodying the nature of O'Connell's struggle to motivate the peasantry reads thus:

'I never will get half credit enough for carrying Emancipation, because posterity never can believe the species of animals with which I had to carry on my warfare with the common enemy.
It is crawling slaves like them that prevent our being a nation.'
(O’Faolain, 1980)

The Young Irelanders with whose rebellious methods O’Connell disagreed faced the same problem and phrases such as "sunk in servitude" were commonly used to describe the peasantry whom they were trying to arouse. Like Pearse however, they blamed the British government:

'...self-reliance and self-respect which misgovernment had nearly extinguished from the mass of the people...'
(Cronin, 1980:68)

were the qualities they advocated be acquired by the peasantry. Pearse believed the great majority of his generation had sold themselves to the foreigner though were unaware of it (Cronin, 1980:102). After the Union with Britain the Patriot Party of Henry Grattan comprising mainly Irish Protestant reformers was dead and there was no nationalist party in Parliament. In 1799 Ireland was politically bankrupt and after the Union there was no political activity on a national scale, although among the peasantry there was much resentment, often expressed in intermittent agrarian crime. For two decades after the Union the struggle for Catholic Emancipation was concentrated at Westminster and carried on by Protestant champions, who received but feeble and divided support from the Irish Catholics. When Emmett tried to revive the United Irish spirit for a new rising in 1803 he could get almost no support, and his rebellion ended in a scuffle in a Dublin street (Beckett, 1966:284-295). Following O’Connell's achievement of Emancipation he lost a lot of support and realised he must raise the battle cry for Repeal of the Union with Great Britain, and reform of existing legislature, particularly that which concerned the land and peasantry. But he could arouse little enthusiasm among the peasants and the Repeal Association languished with only a handful of members returned in the general election in 1841 (Beckett, 1966: 323). As with Emmett's abortive rebellion in 1803, Young Ireland's rising in 1848 was but a brief skirmish with the police, the whole affair having a tragi-comic air about it (Ibid:348).

The tenant-right movement, despite its weaknesses, did at least succeed in keeping alive the question, not only in Ireland but also in Westminster, Beckett says (1966:356). But with the disintegration of the tenant-right party at the end of 1852 Irish politics seemed to lose all sense of purpose. The national enthusiasm that had marked the general election of that year died away in disappointment and could not be revived.
The few members who still maintained an independent course at Westminster had little popular backing at home. Beckett does not attempt to explain the peasants' apathy in the face of such profound need for reform, but suggests the slow but marked economic improvement in Ireland following the Great Famine when the population was smaller and families had more land on which to keep themselves, contributed to the lack of interest in reform (Ibid:357-8). Later in the century, the Home Rule Association which would give Ireland a federal position in the United Kingdom included all sections of the community, Protestant and Catholic of all classes, but it was small without representative character. Isaac Butt who was its leader found he could not attract voters by home rule alone, but needed local connections, personal reputation and support for other causes with strong popular appeal such as denominational education to get a candidate elected. One candidate even gave independence of the pope the first position on his programme (Beckett, 1966:379). And when Parnell died, the excitement and enthusiasm of his time was succeeded for many years by apathy and even cynicism, Beckett says (Ibid:414).

The people in 1916 did not rebel. The farmers had never been so prosperous, Cronin says. They did not agree with Pearse and his fellow rebels and their goals and when the prisoners were caught by the British and herded through the streets of Dublin to the docks for internment in Britain, they were booed by their fellow Catholics. While the fighting was going on in the streets between the rebels and the British forces, the Dubliners pillaged the damaged shops. The middle-classes in Dublin who had to pay for the damage were angry with the rebels and hoped punishment would be meted out to them (Lyons, 1971:375). Only a small minority of Irishmen supported the Irish Volunteers which had 16,000 members in April 1916, and only 10% of the combined forces of the Volunteers and the Citizen Army were involved in the uprising (from Lyons, 1971:340, 366). Indeed the tragi-comedy of 1916 is one of the vents among a number of other rebellions included in Denis Johnston's bitter satirical play The Old Lady Says, No! (1977) and is the subject of Sean O'Casey's satire The Plough and the Stars (1966). Cronin says the Irish people were war-weary in 1921 and accepted the Treaty with Britain which gave Ireland dominion status similar to that of Australia, Canada and New Zealand instead of republican status which they had sought, and partitioned the country into two states. They did not want to engage in the civil war that followed on account of some of the rebels believing that the Irish had sold themselves short in their deal with Britain (1980:153). However, it would appear that
in the North at least, apathy made the decision. Here, Cronin says, nationalist resistance (one third of Ulster was Catholic and therefore, by definition, nationalist) to partition collapsed in a wave of demoralisation (1980:153). This continued until the Civil Rights movement. Gibbon et al. assert that until this time the Catholic masses showed no considerable apathy towards their own political forces, and actual numbers involved in any of their own organisations was minimal (1977:165), behaviour quantified by Rose who found from his questionnaires concerning the approval of Northern Ireland's constitution that 49% of Catholics were apathetic (1971:190). (His survey was completed before the present troubles.) This lack of participation in their own political forces finds expression in the Republic as I argued in chapter three.

Cronin, an evident nationalist, has provided us with information that could lead to the analysis I am making. However, he seems to want to suppress his awareness of what Pearse and others have acknowledged, but have deflected responsibility onto the British. Thus Cronin points out at the beginning of his book that the Irish have been solid and courageous rebels: in the 16th century there were three major rebellions; in the 17th century there were also three; in the 18th century, one; the 19th century, three, and in the 20th century, four rebellions. They failed, he says, not because the Irish have lacked determination, but because of England's power (1980:7). In saying this he has chosen to ignore what must be unpleasant for any Irish person or sympathiser to realise. But a fatalistic attitude to life in which the person approaches problems as though they are too great for him to deal with is, and has been, an all-pervasive feature of Irish culture, celebrated even in song and poetry, as discussed in chapter five (p.242). As Brooke and Rolleston point out in their collection of Irish poetry:

The peasant meets overwhelming trouble with the courage and the endurance of a fatalism which is only modified by his profound religion. He dies in silence and submission...

(Brooke and Rolleston, 1900:xxvii)

The exceptions are those few who periodically rebel against their fate and by so doing, see themselves as the saviours and redeemers of the majority who do not. The majority do not let such sacrifices go unnoticed, however, and usually accord to such heroes the status of martyr.

There has even been an explicit awareness and admiration of this quality in the post independence period, paradoxical though it may be. Edwards says following independence there appeared at the top of the
Department of Education some new men steeped in the mould of the Cork republicans of the civil war whose aim was to inculcate in children the Gaelic outlook:

'Prayers and ordinary salutations and expressions breathing a high spirituality,...and a deep spirit of resignation to [God's] will are dominant elements in the Gaelic outlook on life. (Edwards, 1979:340)

Apathetic though the majority of Irish people may have been, their rebellions were numerous enough: but these were conducted by a minority, were melodramatic, unsustained and fraught with internal conflict. Although Irish people may have been sympathetic, they were not usually supportive, as the above information on apathy reveals. This internal conflict is worthy of closer scrutiny.

Divisiveness

The Irish have always had great difficulty pulling together politically. Before Ireland was fully welded into a nation state during the 17th century by the conquering English, it comprised many petty kingdoms ruled by Irish chiefs or Anglo-Norman lords, who were often very Gaelicised, who paid nominal respect, if any, to the English governed Pale - an area which varied in size but at its smallest point was little bigger than county Dublin. Even after the nation was under more or less effective English rule, divisiveness continued among those in whose interests it was to present a united front. Beckett says King James who was supported by Irish Catholics against the Protestants led by William of Orange in 1690 lacked confidence in his Irish troops and exchanged 7,000 of them for French troops. He lost to William in Ulster, but when besieged in Limerick in 1691, the city was split by Catholic factions. Beckett says what the Irish suffered from in this war was not lack of men, but lack of unity. The same intrigues and suspicions had done much to ruin the confederate cause in 1640. William could hardly have been averted, but the disastrous outcome of the campaign of 1691 was certainly hastened by lack of mutual confidence (1966:145-7).

However, I feel that Beckett may be a bit severe when he makes the same criticism of the Irish in the 1798 rebellion: for unity between Catholics and Protestants could hardly be expected following a hundred years of penal laws imposed upon the former by the latter. Beckett says Wolfe Tone's plans for the creation of a republic were foiled not so much by the strength of England and hesitation of the French in sending them help, as much as by the deep-seated religious division among the people of Ireland
(1966:266). But it should be noted for the purposes of my argument, that it was the yeomanry and militia of Ireland which crushed the rebellion, both altogether Irish in composition - and the militia was mainly Catholic.

MacDonagh states that after O'Connell, in the 1850s, no new party or programme emerged to replace his powerful leadership. During the early 1850s various fundamental divisions in political purpose, partly concealed before under his leadership, came to surface in constitutional politics (1968:46). Similar divisions occurred among the non-constitutionalists: Cronin says that Fenianism was an Irish international conspiracy directed against the British government. Its plots were potentially dangerous, but it accomplished little because its leaders feuded amongst themselves and were unable to work out a coherent policy or maintain unity (1980:89; also Beckett, 1966:335). Parnell was able to maintain unity in his Home Rule party but following his death a split occurred which meant his party, now divided into the "Parnellites" and "anti-Parnellites", distracted and discredited the home rule movement for years, weakening Irish influence at Westminster and helping to prepare the way for its final collapse. It was said that "one-man power was replaced by eighty-man powerlessness" (Beckett, 1966:413). Although Beckett believes this quarrel was substantially of Parnell's own making, its persistence cannot fairly be blamed upon his previous presence in the party, but rather upon his present absence as divisiveness continued. Only his strength of personality and character could hold the party together, it would seem.

As a result of the Fenians' feuding, almost all their elaborate plans for rebellion resulted in arrests, betrayals and executions (Cronin 1980:89). Informers seem to have been a common feature of Irish history, as as Ussher points out. The whole history of Irish revolutionism had, until 1916, been one long pitiful story of betrayals, he says. Shaw's Peter Keegan of John Bull's Other Island says that Ireland might as truly be called the Land of Traitors as that of Saints (Ussher, 1950:32). Liam O'Flaherty's novel The Informer (1980) which gives a gripping account of the pursuit of one such man during the civil war is showing us a significant and common feature of that period.

Edwards states that there was only superficial unity within the General Post Office in the 1916 rebellion, the Volunteers and ICA having a deep mutual antagonism which was hard to overcome (1979:284). Between MacNeill and Pearse, there was distrust and recrimination at the most
critical moment of the modern history of the country (Lyons, 1971:356).
A lack of unity in the country in the moment of triumph, the achievement of
dominion status in the British Commonwealth in 1921, precipitated a
civil war between those prepared to accept a slightly lesser status than
republic, and those prepared to settle for nothing less than a republic.
Although two parties, Fianna Fail and Fine Gael have dominated the polit-
cical life of the Free State, there has nevertheless been a large number of
independent candidates and members of parliament. Under the wing of a
parent body, small groups break away and survive, at least for a while,
Chubb says. About twenty to thirty candidates in each election have stood
alone from 1921–65, their support being largely personal (1970:87). While
proportional representation which enables members of the same party to
compete against each other may enable this to happen, unlike Chubb, I do
not believe this electoral system is the cause of this political behaviour.

For while it is generally thought that proportional representation,
designed to safeguard minorities, is the cause of multiple parties, the
same position obtains among the Catholics in Northern Ireland where propor-
tional representation does not exist. Here the fragmentation of parties
is extreme and the ratio of parties to parliamentary seats is by far the
highest in the western world (Rose, 1971:219). Although this applies to
Protestants also, albeit to a lesser extent, they do present a united front
to the Catholics. Catholics, however, had never presented a unified front
to Protestants until the Civil Rights movement which accomplished substan-
tial legal and social reforms. But this movement was quickly followed by
a split between those supporting parliamentary parties and the physical
force movement. In addition, during this period there were splits among
the republicans with the Provisional IRA and Provisional Sinn Fein being
breakaways from the Official IRA and Sinn Fein. Even the 1976 Peace
People's movement which at its height could attract as many as 10,000
marchers, the majority of whom were Catholics, began to disintegrate less
than a year later, seemingly because of the authoritarian manner of the
small executive which would not consult the rank and file in decisions.
(although it may also have been because of the lack of reality in its
vision as suggested earlier (p.335)). By Christmas 1977 it was getting
only pitiful support and was virtually dead by 1980.5

In chapter five I argued that the Irish have a poorly developed sense
of community solidarity owing to anti-authoritarianism (and also to the
existence of an ego-centred, particularistic, world view (p.233)).
Many writers reveal that divisiveness mitigates against the successful formation of cooperative ventures. For instance, Eipper says that local initiatives were continually paralysed by divisions within the community and that community leaders recognised the problem. However, in complaining that their fellow countrymen had no "staying power" (1980:127), they were referring less to divisiveness I suspect, than to apathy, which blights community ventures no less than national ones.

So great has been the lack of unity in Irish politics that Victor Turner believes that the penitential pilgrimages of Lough Derg, and of Croagh Patrick, may have been a means whereby the Irish attempted to atone for their perennial divisiveness (1978:132). Shaw said that sometimes he is tempted to think that the Irish are "impossible people politically, destined to be ruled forever by nations who want to get things done, and not merely quarrel over them" (1962:207). While I do not agree with Turner's interpretation of the symbolic function of the pilgrimages (see chapter three pp.112-3), and Shaw has been proven wrong (by the stability of the Free State), nevertheless these two persons' opinions reveal how ubiquitous divisiveness in Ireland seems to appear.

One could begin an interpretation by saying that Irish divisiveness is caused by the fact that where people feel dependent they will try to refuse to let others whom they need, to enact that power over them, as argued in chapter five. But where leadership is required, followers must, to some extent, forgo their individual claims to independence. And conversely, as revealed most clearly in the Peace People's movement for instance, some leaders may have such strong needs to control others that they impose upon their followers' integrity too seriously without offering them sufficient compensation. That anti-authoritarianism may be the cause of divisiveness is revealed most clearly in an anecdote provided by Cronin. In the second World War, German intelligence found it difficult to work with the IRA. They had dealt with the Flemings, Bretons and Croations, but the IRA did not fit into any of these patterns. One Nazi agent wrote after the war:

'In spite of the fine qualities of individual IRA men, as a body I considered them worthless. One leader once boasted to me that he had in a certain district...5000 sworn members. I answered him that I personally would be completely satisfied with 500 men who knew how to obey an order. I would march them to Belfast and destroy the Harland and Wolff shipyards, and these men would have done more for Ireland than 5000 talking about the Second Dail and Third Dail and their legality.'
(Cronin, 1980:162)
One could argue that rebel movements in Ireland generally have lacked unity principally because the motives behind rebellions are to prove the individual participants' personal independence. This would receive much support from quintessential rebels such as Pearse, whose self-idolatry was often evident. Displayed prominently on a fresco at his school, St. Enda's, was a saying to which Pearse was deeply committed - that of CuChulainn: "I care not though I were to live but one day and one night provided my fame and deeds live after me" (Edwards, 1979:344). If each rebel is performing an act of anti-authoritarianism, then this very quality prevents him sinking his differences within his own cause. For any organisation which hopes for unity and thus effectiveness, requires its individual members to make compromises of their integrity. Anti-authoritarianism mitigates against the development of diverse hierarchical groups or of individuals, developing a conical structure with a single leader at the top, except in rare case which I shall discuss below. And perennial divisiveness makes it very difficult for a nation to fight off aggressors or colonisers, or achieve reforms or concessions once under a coloniser's yoke, notwithstanding apathy which means any such movement is unlikely to be sustained. But there have been some exceptions to Irish divisiveness which have involved strong leadership, and these will now be looked at: the Anglo-Irish war is another exception. Here, for the first time in their history, the Catholic Irish sustained a movement themselves, without the strong leadership of one man.

Most rebel leaders believed that the peasants might be motivated to seek justice if they had proper leadership: there was always a great mass of discontent which required only leadership and organisation to weld it into a new national movement, Beckett says (1966:358). Lalor who led Young Ireland, said that he was convinced that the peasantry could be stirred into revolt if "'somewhere, somehow and by someone'" a beginning could be made. He was not a strong leader however, as the peasantry did not join him when he mobilised one night in September 1849 following the abortive rebellion of the year before. Indeed it has been under three strong Irish rulers - O'Connell in the first part of the 19th century who won Catholic emancipation, Parnell in the second part who defeated landlordism, and de Valera who governed for thirty years or so after 1927 - that the mass of people have been motivated. These are men who, it would seem, can provoke Irish people's energies for their cause and at the same time thwart those divisive tendencies which are essentially anti-authoritarian in nature. All three were highly authoritarian, mobilised and conducted political
machines which were very centralised and tightly disciplined, and excited feelings of near-idolatry in their followers. The party organisation Parnell built was described as "a model of authoritarian control under democratic forms" (Sacks, 1976:30). Cronin says it is one of the weaknesses of contemporary nationalism that no similar authority or charismatic leader such as these men exists to state its demands (1980:217).

It should not surprise us to discover this after the argument of chapter three, but it would be interesting to make a study of just how these men did at once behave in an authoritarian manner, yet suppress the anti-authoritarian tendencies of their followers for the light it would shed on the Irish personality. It should be kept in mind, however, that in de Valera's era, freedom had already been achieved. It is worth pointing out that while it is charismatic figures alone who can weld people together into an effective political body in Ireland, in other revolutions in Europe it has been more ideology which has achieved this, or a combination of ideology and strong leadership.

Absence of ideology in nationalist politics

The political structure of Ireland seems to be that of fragmented groups of individuals comprising small personalistic, hierarchically-structured groups as can be clearly seen in the patronage networks of politicians, which are weakly attached to each other - if attached at all. As Bax says of the ego-centred, political machine in which the leader is located at the centre, even if the people in a machine were party members, one could not call it a corporate group. It is not the fact that the people are members of a particular party (or cause) that makes them belong to the machine: it is their relationship with the common focus, the leader, which forms the basis of machine membership, and these relationships may be structurally diverse. Thus, all the elements of this group-like phenomenon are kept together by their common orientation towards the leader (1976:70). In Ireland rebel groups are attached to each other by the cause of freedom, ostensibly national, but I would argue, essentially personal freedom transmuted onto a national plane. The resulting particularism is inimical to the development of ideology precisely because ideology is a shared set of ideas, not persons, upon which its believers are "dependent", but also which those believers create themselves. In a political system in which goods and services pass up and down a personal hierarchy, where people interact on a one to one basis, the concern is with individuals and particular instances, not with social or generalised issues (see chapter
four pp.167-8). Although many political movements in the world may be maintained by personalised groups which lead in conical shape to a single leader, as has happened in Ireland, unlike Ireland, they are usually informed - at least at the upper levels - by an ideology which has more than mere "freedom" as its contents. Let us look then at this absence of ideology in Ireland's nationalist history (as foreshadowed in chapter four p.164).

As mentioned above, Beckett states that it was mainly local grievances which motivated the Irish in 1798: the idea of an "Irish nation" indifferent to religious and religious rivalries rooted in history but enlightened by the French Revolution found its only clear expression where it arose in the late 18th century - in Protestant Belfast (1966:264). As already shown, Cronin says it was not ideology that O'Connell tried to give to his people, but rather it was their support he tried to elicit so that he could achieve for them their political freedom. The Fenians did not stress social aims, but believed an independent Ireland would solve the country's problems (Cronin, 1980:86). I mentioned above also, the fact that the movement led by Isaac Butt for a form of federal Ireland where the Irish themselves would make laws regarding agriculture, land tenure, industrial development, social welfare etc. could not attract followers on this basis but had to put people's more immediate and personal and particular issues on the platform first (Beckett, 1966:379). Parnell was well aware that ideologically speaking, peasant Ireland cared little who governed it, as long as it was well governed, and that republicanism had little appeal (Cronin, 1980:93). In chapter four I cited O'Faolain, who had himself been an anti-treatyte rebel, saying that there was little ideology among the IRA of that time (p.164). As one T.D. said "the civil war would have been no more than a riot only for Dev's political cloak over it" (Dev's - de Valera's) (Cronin, 1980:154).

Cronin says the IRA which has had a fluid membership over the years, has been more a tradition than a movement as such (1980:202): it has never really developed any ideology in its history. The IRA was reactivated in the 1950s in Northern Ireland, but it was not realistic and failed to develop as a political and social philosophy. But in the mid 1960s the Official IRA decided to win the confidence of the people on economic issues. Yet by 1967-8 their movement had become so insignificant that many people thought it had disbanded. When the troubles began and the people sought protection from them, a breakaway movement with more traditional aims
was formed called the Provisional IRA who wanted no truck with the communists or socialists of the Officials (Cronin, 1980:138). Their reactionary statement of rejection was mentioned earlier: the Provisionals accused the Officials of seeking to establish "'extreme socialism leading to dictatorship', endangering 'Irish and Christian values'" (Cronin, 1980:204) - a profoundly ironical statement given the dictatorship of the Provisionals and their endangering lives, property and democracy that will be argued later they have been engaging in. Sinn Fein, the political wing of the Provisionals, has found it necessary to take up social and economic issues to attract voters, but it is extraordinary to find a scholar of Cronin's capacity stating that the tone of the weekly An Phoblacht is "defiantly leftist" (1980:211). (An Phoblacht or Republiacan News is Sinn Fein's weekly newspaper.)

A quick glance of several copies of the paper during the past two years reveals plenty of defiance, but little "leftism" as I understand it. There is, however, a lot of particularism and provincialism. It reveals a heavy emphasis on the prisoner issue, a little on workers' activities, strikes etc., and personalistic stories such as tributes to dead IRA men, Bobby Sands' stories, or articles featuring stories such as the following: "a forty-two-year-old mother-of-seven" was "brutally assaulted by a member of the RUC... when she tried to prevent a teenager from being arrested outside her home" (19 September 1981). (Quite a number of teenagers as young as fifteen are engaged in para-military activities, and the only evidence of the innocence of this one was that this mother knew him personally). The Starry Plough, the Irish Republican Socialist Party's paper compared the self-imposed blanket-men's ordeals with those of Auschwitz, thereby making a mockery of the hideous and inescapable sufferings of the Jews in the second World War.

To-day the names of Dachau and Auswitz [sic] are monumental reminders of man's evil to man, but in 1945 those names were simply disquietening rumours which people banished from their minds. So it is with the H-block to-day.

The blanketmen are the children of 1969 and

With the innocence of children they saw the need for freedom. With endless courage they have defended their right to be free. Only victory for their cause now can reward them for their suffering. H-block is four years old, as old as Auswitz was, the concentration camp horror must be stopped.[sic] SMASH H-block! - Political Status Now! 6
Coogan had a quotation from an ex-prisoner of the H-blocks say at the very beginning of his book:

'There is a lot of religion in the Blocks. No Marxism. No way. They never miss the Rosary every night in Gaelic!

(Coogan, 1980:4)

There is indeed expressed a concern for people, but this is more in line with Catholic social thought of the kind that Ireland has always shown since the formation of the Free State: but the adherents of this in the Free State have always expressed a horror of communism and often, even of socialism. The superficiality of this so-called leftist move - begun in 1977 with a massive reorganisation of the republican movement and change in leadership and promotion of the political wing, Sinn Fein, all of which coincided with strong disaffection with the IRA as shown in the Peace People's movement of that time - is revealed in an article in Magill:

If the IRA is to stay around to fight the war...then Sinn Fein must have something other than the slogan of 'Brits Out!' 7 & 8

Irish political tactics have not achieved reforms

The consequence of the general apathy of the Irish Catholics, punctuated by sporadic rebellions which lacked popular support has been that they have rarely achieved reforms by themselves. Reforms have generally been achieved by persons sympathetic to their cause who acted without the people's support, and when the people were led by their own strong leaders. And it is the shame of this from which people such as Pearse and others have felt the Irish needed to be purged, and with which the people themselves agreed, given the high status they accorded to such "martyrs". But it is not the reason the people themselves have given for treating such men as martyrs. For despite this sense of shame, the Catholics have always claimed that any reforms that came their way were achieved by themselves, usually by rebellion, wrung from a grudging, if not punitive, British government. While there is no doubt that agrarian crime and rebellion acted to keep the British government and Irish Protestants aware that something was wrong in Ireland, in themselves, with the exceptions of the Land League's activities and the Anglo-Irish war of 1919-21, these rebellions achieved very little practical as far as I can discern, beyond giving the people a sense of being purged of their shame. Reprisals for evictions in the countryside were largely successful in stalling such evictions from the land, both before and after the Great Famine. However, in chapter eight I shall suggest that by clinging to small subsistence or below-subsistence plots of land
rather than accepting the alternative of emigration to the New World as peasants did elsewhere in European countries which were over-populated, the Irish may have exacerbated the enormity of the Great Famine. Generally speaking, rebellions themselves, as distinct from local agrarian crime, set back reform rather than engendered it.

In support of this claim I would begin with Henry Grattan, an Irish Protestant, who devoted much of his political career to achieving reforms for Ireland from 1775 to 1820. He and his Patriot Party achieved for Ireland a relatively autonomous parliament in 1782 to 1800 during which time, despite all its shortcomings, it was associated in the memory of Irishmen with freedom, prosperity and national dignity (Beckett, 1966:227). Despite the belief that "the Irish Protestant could never be free till the Irish Catholic had ceased to be a slave" (Beckett, 1966:214), and his attempts to achieve this freedom for them, when Emancipation was granted, the share of victory given to Grattan and his Patriot Party was completely overshadowed by that given to O'Connell. For to the Irish Catholics it seemed they had wrested their rights from an unwilling Britain entirely by their own efforts (Beckett, 1966:303). This is despite the difficulty that I have shown O'Connell had in arousing political motivation in the peasants. Grattan had worked tirelessly on this cause from 1806-20 but found it difficult at the time to persuade the British parliament where opinion was divided on the issue. It required the pressure of a popular movement to break down the barrier, and until the 1820s and O'Connell's charismatic leadership of the people, such a movement was lacking. Indeed, for two decades after the Union the struggle was carried on by Protestant champions who received feeble and divided support from Irish Catholics (Beckett, 1966:295).

When a small country is occupied by a larger powerful neighbour, it behoves those seeking independence to consider carefully what means are available for this task. Unless the entire nation is behind a physical force movement which can be sustained over time with guerrilla-type tactics, it is not only likely to fail before the military power of the occupiers, but it may only reinforce the occupier's intention to govern even more firmly. The United Irishmen's revolt which generally lacked popular support as shown above, was instrumental in Britain ending the moderate autonomy achieved by the Patriot Party, and Ireland was drawn into the Union with Britain in 1800 whereby her representatives went to Westminster. The tragic-comic rebellion of Emmett in 1803 only made Britain more resolved to govern Ireland from Westminster. In Johnston's play The Old Lady Says, No! he shows Grattan
to be a broken old man whose lifework has been crushed by inept patriotism:

Full fifty years I worked and waited, only to see my country's new-
found glory melt away at the bidding of the omniscient young Mess-
iahs with neither the ability to work nor the courage to wait.
(Johnston, 1977:32)

Beckett says that during the Great Famine there was a lot of sympathy for
the Irish people from the British: but the abortive insurrection of 1848
made the public feel the Irish were irresponsible, ungrateful (for quite a
lot of material aid was sent, inadequate though it may have been in the
event of the catastrophic failure of the potato: see conclusion), treacher-
ous, and unfit to govern themselves or even enjoy the same constitutional
rights as the United Kingdom (1966:350). Yet if violence were to have been
used during these terrible times - and I believe it certainly would have been
justified - it would have been best and most usefully directed towards those
engaged in the loading and shipment of Irish grain for export to Britain:
but it was not.

Both O'Connell and Parnell were pragmatic constitutionalists who
believed that reforms could only come by political, not military activity,
as indeed I shall argue all the reforms that have ever come to Ireland have
come this way. But for all that Parnell's party was committed to national
interests, it was threatened by extremist agitators who defied the govern-
ment and waged direct war on landlords, which might have destroyed hopes of
achieving home rule. After one violent deed Parnell asked Davitt who had
founded the Land League:

'What is the use of men striving as we have done...if we are to
be struck at in this way by unknown men who can commit atrocious
deeds of this kind?'

(Beckett, 1966:393)

The achievements of the Parliamentary Party depended upon their powers
of persuasion in the House of Commons at Westminster and more particularly,
on the alignments and power balance of the parties there. At first, this
party could not make much impression on the conservative government in
power because they were in a minority opposition. But later they held the
balance of power, and home rule enactment became only a matter of time. The
struggle was fought out in the Liberal Party in 1886 but the dissident
Liberals won the day and in a dissolution of parliament that followed,
Gladstone lost the election and the Conservatives ruled for the next ten years.

Strangely - or perhaps not so strangely as we shall see later from my
analysis – the Irish have never been at all appreciative of Gladstone’s contribution to legislative reform or to home rule in Ireland. Beckett says his importance in the history of Anglo-Irish relations lies less in the measures he actually carried, far-reaching though they were, than in the immense influence that his concern for Ireland had on the British public opinion. It was he, more than anyone else, who made the state of Ireland an issue in British politics (1966:412). Gladstone believed revolutionary activities were fostered by the established Protestant Church, the land system, and direct English rule. So in 1869 he disestablished the Church of Ireland, in 1870 he sponsored an Irish land bill, and in 1886 introduced the first Home Rule for Ireland Bill (Cronin, 1980:90). And I would point out that it was following the defeat of the Home Rule Bill that he resigned, and no doubt this was one reason for his defeat in the following election and the fact that his party remained out of office for the ten years following 1895. There is no doubt that suspicions of Catholicism and his desire for a secular state and undenominational education in Ireland did not endear him to Irish Catholics, but even so, these cannot be the only reasons for his name never crossing the lips of the vast majority of Irish nationalists.

In fact the entire efforts of the Parliamentary Party were forgotten after the 1916 rebellion. Home Rule had been granted Ireland in a bill passed finally (the third time presented to parliament) in 1914, but suspended from operation because of the war when the British thought a united front should be shown. But in the two years that inevitably had to lapse between the introduction of a Home Rule Bill and its enactment there would be time for criticism of its shortcomings to gather weight, for the sense of triumph to fade away, and in such a period of reaction, all the forces that had been slowly undermining the prestige of the Parliamentary Party during the previous two decades were likely to grow strong, Beckett says. Redmond who was its leader knew this. In a long, drawn out struggle over the bill – Redmond not wanting to give away Ulster and the Northern Irish Protestants wanting the Union to remain – Sinn Fein propaganda had time to take effect and the people began more and more to realise that the home rule for which they were told to wait patiently did not in fact amount to very much (1966:424). By December 1918, 73 of the 105 seats were Sinn Fein’s, sweeping out the old Parliamentary Party and dismissing its representatives for being ineffectual guardians of national interest (they would have permitted conscription for an English war) (Cronin, 1980:123). And as Ussher says, Redmond, who after all had achieved some tangible gains
for Ireland, lost every shred of favour: he died not long after "a rather pathetic Moses in sight of his Canaan, with his Home Rule tablets left as rubble in the political wilderness" (1950:33-4).

But I believe only a people who had not participated in the struggle for home rule, only a people who left the entire effort of achieving their freedom to a few dedicated leaders, could believe that home rule did not amount to very much. And ashamed of this lack of participation, with a Messianic vision, Pearse and a few other dedicated revolutionaries set out to prove it was the Irish people themselves who had achieved home rule. By the symbolic gesture of his death, Pearse sufficiently aroused his people to take up his cause and after some time home rule was actually granted on terms which offered substantially more freedom to the Irish to manage their own affairs than had been offered by the Home Rule Bill of 1914 (see Lyons 1971:4 and Part iv B Chapter One for the difference between the terms of the Home Rule Bill and the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921). For the first time in their history, the Irish people were acting resolutely and persistently for their aims, and they achieved them.

However, Cronin - and all other nationalists who make similar claims - is quite mistaken when he says that the IRA achieved in thirty months what the Parliamentary Party had failed to do in fifty years: it forced a settlement of the Irish question (1980:132). The "Irish question" still remains unresolved. As for his claim that the IRA had fought the British Empire to a standstill by 1921 (1980:131), this sound like a characteristic Don Quixote-type IRA man himself boasting. (It is Ussher who suggests that the 1916 revolutionaries were "utterly unworldly don Quixotes - in a country where don Quixotes can still inspire warm devotion" (1950:35).) Among others, Shaw deflates nationalists who believed at the time that they were "striking a decisive blow at England" when England could have wiped them off the face of the earth (1962:145). Sinn Fein, he says, sees nothing extravagant in the notion that less than a million adult males without artillery, ships or planes could bring the British Empire to its knees in a conflict (this is assuming, however, that all Irishmen would have involved themselves in a war against Britain). The megalomaniacal delusions of its practical aspirations resulted in Sinn Fein perceiving the world as consisting of Ireland and a few subordinate continents (1962:147).

Ussher has shown that the British treated the Irish revolutionaries with kid gloves, so to speak. He points out that a modern totalitarian state
would have shot not fifteen, but 1500 rebels in 1916 and not bothered even to inform the relatives (1950:36), and he remarked later that the Free State executed seventy seven anti-Treaty rebels. In the Anglo-Irish war "there were no mass executions of prisoners or hostages, no huge concentration camps, no systematic and piecemeal 'pacification'". The British did not "treat Ireland as a province in revolt and...crush her by fire and steel" (1950:50).

...it was scarcely reasonable to expect that Britain should capitulate immediately to a revolutionary organisation which had sprung up in three years, and which had been carried to power by a wind of popular favour. The Sinn Feiners were, for long, not open to the smallest argument; for them it was 'the Republic, the whole Republic, and nothing but the Republic'. If, per absurdum, the British had evacuated the country without firing a shot, there would at once have been civil war between the IRA and the volunteers of the North - a civil war in which many Englishmen would have gone to the help of the descendants of the Settlers, and many Irish-Americans would have come over to assist their own co-religionists.

(Ussher, 1950:51)

This personal opinion is not in any way contradicted by the information provided by Lyons on events at the period, and in fact, Lyons makes an hypothesis (1971:451) which would support Ussher. Ussher's view is also shared in a different form by the Irish statesman, Conor Cruise O'Brien (1980:67).

Ussher continues:

In spite of my personal sympathy with many of the Republicans, some of whom were most brutally maltreated in jails, I think the only course open to statesmanship was the one - in the main - which Llyod George's movement actually pursued; namely to exercise just sufficient force to wear down the Sinn Feiners, until they should be in a mood to consider a workable compromise.... Ireland by her brave endurance over two years, showed she was indeed in earnest; England, by not hitting too hard, and by giving way at the right moment, did the most that a Great Power can be expected to do. It is the only way in which the game of politics can be played or in which such fateful bargains can be struck.

(Ussher, 1950:52)

There was, he says, a certain atmosphere of playing in the period from 1916 to 1922, with plenty of ugly incidents on both sides, but very few of the usual horrors of revolution, for which both sides can be thankful. But

...when a revolution can be made without horrors it means, I think, that the need for any revolution at all has disappeared.

(Ussher, 1950:33)
This view of the Anglo-Irish war is shared by others, such as Shaw, O'Faolain and O'Casey. O'Faolain believes the Irish Troubles have been over-dramatised and that the Irish got off lightly compared with later anti-imperialists like the Cypriots, Algerians and Africans.

...for most of the people the Troubled Times...bore no comparison to the experiences endured so long and so tenaciously by later revolutionaries elsewhere.

(O'Faolain, 1963:176)

Some statistical support for this is given by Lyons. In the 1916 Rising, 450 persons altogether were killed and 2,614 wounded (some as they were looting shops) (1971:374). Between 1 January and the truce in July 1921, 752 Irish persons - IRA and civilians - were killed and 866 wounded. Irish losses were greater than the British. In the year 1920, 176 police and 54 soldiers were killed and 251 police and 118 soldiers wounded (Lyons, 1971: 415).

In his statement Ussher may be implicitly suggesting that the concessions granted to the Irish were not so difficult to achieve given the liberal opinion prevailing about colonies seeking independence at that time. This would be supported by the fact that in 1930 the British government gave to its dominions the freedom of repealing any legislation they had made binding a dominion (Lyons, 1971:504). So de Valera repudiated those parts of the Treaty diminishing Ireland's sovereignty, over one of which - that of the Oath of Allegiance - he and his party had refused for five years to enter the Dail and take their seats as the opposition party. He removed this Oath from the Constitution, suspended land annuity payments to the United Kingdom exchequer and demanded the British Government evacuate naval bases in the Free State guaranteed by the Treaty (which they did), and declared the Free State to be a Republic (Lyons, 1971:517) - all without a drop of blood being spilled, before 1938. It would not be unreasonable if historians were to wonder whether so much was in fact achieved by the revolution between 1916-21, the first in which the bulk of the Irish participated in their history.

To recapitulate the argument so far before proceeding to the contemporary Northern Irish scene where similar patterns of behaviour can be seen to be recurring: I have argued that nationalism in its rebellious forms is a form of religion for the Irish, at the opposite pole of Laing's continuum of behaviour displayed by persons exhibiting a lack of personal autonomy - dependence (Catholicism), despair (apathy), independence (nationalism). But rebellions fail because they are enacted only by a minority without the
support of the apathetic majority, and the participants themselves are politically divided. This is due to the fact that their intention is to prove the individual's ability to stand alone, to deny that he suffers from dependent behaviour. In rebellions individuals are connected to each other not by ideology, but rather by the vague concept of "freedom": when the participants do not stand alone in this quest, they tend to form small personalistic, fragmented hierarchies where dependence reveals itself even in this very attempt to deny it. Rarely do the Irish produce such a strong leader that he can get the rebels or nationalists both to sink their differences or to arouse them from their apathy to lead them in a national cause. When on a few occasions this has occurred they have achieved tangible gains. Rebellions being non-viable, have never succeeded in ameliorating the condition of the Irish, with one notable exception - that in 1919-21, and even this must be considered only a qualified success. Just the same, the Irish rarely acknowledge that it was anyone other than themselves who achieved reforms, and rebels are accorded high status as symbols of their achievements and the independent of the Irish nation.

It is in fact, by means of the powerful emotion-laden symbol of martyrdom that the contemporary Provisional IRA have tried to seduce the Northern Irish Catholics from satisfaction with the less melodramatic and spectacular reforms by constitutional means, and to which to some extent the people have responded. It is to this that I now turn.

Northern Ireland

Whyte points out that a massive amount of material has been written on Northern Ireland especially since 1968, and he appraised the various approaches that have been taken. These include the Marxist contributions, most of which he finds provide inadequate explanations for a societal division which occurs not along class, but religious lines, and various non-Marxist interpretations which include traditional nationalist and traditional unionist, and many others, including the social psychological approach of which there are very few (1978). My interpretation differs very substantially from all of these, including the social psychological into which category it would be placed. I shall begin with a very brief outline of the events which began in the 1968 Civil Rights demonstrations.

In 1968-9 the Catholic population became a united militant non-violent political force, a trend unprecedented in Northern Ireland since the formation of the state, owing to the extreme divisiveness of Irish Catholic
politics. These are organised less on the ideology of nationalism than on personal followings of particular M.P.s, not a few of whom are independents. The movement arose as a response to grievances against the Stormont regime many of which were found by the independent Cameron Commission instituted by Westminster following the marches, to be well-founded. The Catholics' position is best briefly described by Cruise O'Brien a Dublin T.D. and mediator between groups during the troubles, and something of a scholar.

Cruise O'Brien says the Catholics of Northern Ireland have been the principal victims of the Home Rule and Anti-Home Rule struggles on the entire island.

The system of devolved democratic government in Northern Ireland left the Catholics in a permanent minority, governed by representatives of a majority which felt itself to be besieged by Catholics. In these conditions, Catholics were discriminated against in housing and jobs and in the local franchise. They were also humiliated, by certain ritual commemorative ceremonies and in other ways. Directly, the Catholics were the victims of local forms of Protestant intolerance. Against Britain itself - that is, against successive British governments - three main charges can justly be made. Not the charge of creating partition; that was inevitable. The real charges are: drawing the boundary line in such a way as to include in Northern Ireland more Catholics than was equitable or necessary; setting up devolved government, in conditions in which this could only mean rule by one community over the other; and thirdly the systematic ignoring by Westminster of the workings of Northern Ireland devolution up to the time when the Civil Rights movement among Catholics, and Protestant reactions to that movement, forced the situation upon the attention of the British public. (Cruise O'Brien, 1980:72-3)

But just how great was discrimination? Rose's survey done in 1966-7 before reforms found that there was no great aggregate discrimination against Catholics in either the provision of public housing, or public employment, whatever may have been true of particular areas. Table ix 5 shows how his 1,291 informants drawn from all areas and classes were housed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Protestant</th>
<th>Catholic</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home Owner</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private landlord</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local authority</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N. I. Housing Trust</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not classified: lodgers</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Rose, 1971:292)

However, Rose acknowledges that this is not to say individual blatant cases of discrimination do not occur (1971:295). In private employment, however, there does exist discrimination which can favour Catholics or Protestants, depending on the religion of the employer. But as proportionately more and bigger employers are Protestants, Catholics in aggregate do
suffer greater discrimination than Protestants in private industry. Unemployment of Catholics is 11%, Protestants 4% (1971:298). Gerrymandering in local councils has been shown not to be universal, but quite substantial in some areas. The discrimination against Catholics by police, especially by the now-disbanded B-specials, was only too clearly revealed in the Civil Rights movement.

While Whyte says that Rose's findings must be revised in light of further research (1978), his study does take cognizance of the findings of the Cameron Commission and I do not think they can be negated. Political turmoil acts to exaggerate people's opinions of a regime and colour informants' responses. Nor must we ignore some factors which might be of the Catholics' own making in their generally inferior economic and social position in Northern Ireland. Whyte refers to at least one study which suggests this, that by Millar (1978): it reveals that as more Catholics come from large families this may make it harder for them to defer earning and saving money while they acquire qualifications. In addition, Catholic values put less stress on worldly values (Whyte, 1978).

Referring to another study on the subject, Harris points out that generally Catholics are less well-educated owing to the fact that schools and teachers are not as suited to the Northern Irish school and examination system. A lot of Catholic teachers are trained in the Republic and are demonstrably weaker in science teaching. Because the Catholics seek to have these kinds of schools it becomes less easy to state clearly that Catholic lack of success in seeking employment must be due to discrimination (1972: 214). I would reiterate my argument in chapter four in support of this and add that any attempt to understand (though not justify) discrimination against Catholics must take cognizance of the Protestant siege mentality whose basis is explained in chapter three, to which should be added the findings in this chapter on their predilection for rebellion rather than constitutional methods to solve their problems. As Rose says:

Politically, the basic disagreement between Protestants and Catholics about discrimination in Northern Ireland suggests that the dispute may be less about the 'facts' of the situation than it is about the definition of what constitutes fair treatment. Protestant defenders of the regime believe that citizenship involves obligations as well as privileges. Because Catholics have not accepted the obligation of supporting the regime, then they have not been thought to deserve the privileges that the regime can confer: equality in voting, public jobs, housing and other benefits.

(Rose, 1971:273)
It is important also to consider that while some of the Catholics' claims of being a discriminated minority are justified, the intensity and venom with which such claims are made may be less objectively based. Harris points out that Ballybeg Catholic farmers were very ready to ascribe to discrimination any failure on their part to obtain subsidies, or any other advantages, even when other explanations seemed objectively likely. She points to the work of another set of scholars, Barritt and Carter (1962) who deal more extensively with subjective perceptions of discrimination that may not have objective validity (1972:215). She asserts:

Indeed in general if there is strong competition between a majority and a minority group in a society, then any failure by the minority in any arena is likely to be ascribed to adverse discrimination, no matter what are the actual reasons for the minority competing in that field on unfavourable terms. (Harris, 1972:219)

Having given a general picture of the objective extent of Catholic discrimination, considered the subjective components of the discriminated people's experiences, and taken cognizance of the Protestant point of view, I shall continue with the history of the Civil Rights movement. As a result of this movement which was predominantly Catholic, with membership covering a broad spectrum of the community, the Cameron Commission in 1969 found most of the claims made by the movement to have some foundation. In that year the British government became heavily committed to the reform of Northern Ireland for its own interest, since it was reckoned that only this would make it possible to withdraw or reduce the use of British troops (Rose, 1971:122). All this had been achieved by non-violent political pressure from a unified Catholic front, generally believed to have been instigated and led by a new middle-class Catholic who, owing to increased aid from Britain for education after the war, challenged with confidence, for the first time Unionist hegemony in articulate, persuasive ways. As Rose says, the Civil Rights movement reversed the tactics of Sinn Fein: instead of trying to change the regime by refusing recognition of British sovereignty, they sought to change it by claiming full rights as British citizens (1971:156).

In 1968-9 the IRA-Sinn Fein movement was sincerely committed to an anti-sectarian policy (though it had only a tiny following). They saw the Civil Rights movement as a revolution of the working classes and actually tried to prevent Catholics retaliating against Protestant provocation which was a response to the Catholics seeking and receiving new rights. They were ill-prepared to defend the Catholics against Protestant paramilitaries and the RUC in August 1969 and, symbolic of their political
commitment had very few guns available. But at this time the Catholics needed protection and looked to them with disappointment: they wrote on walls "IRA - I Ran Away". Out of this débâcle and discrediting of Sinn Fein-IRA leadership grew the Provisional IRA who acquired the guns and wasted little effort on intellectual ideas. But their ideas grew beyond defence to complete the work of 1916-21 (Cruise O'Brien, 1974:193-4).

There are some scholars such as Cronin who say "the IRA did not just infiltrate and take over the civil rights movement in Northern Ireland: it began it" (1980:185) - though he provides no evidence of this and even acknowledges that it was a broad-based movement with few IRA members when it began in 1967 (1980:187-8): and there are those scholars who believe the contrary. Cruise O'Brien and Gerry Pitt (leader of the Catholic nationalists in the Social Democratic and Labour Party in Northern Ireland from 1970 to 1979) believe that the Provisional IRA took advantage of the Catholics' need for their protection, exploiting the division between the two communities with the object not just or mainly of protection or liberation of Catholics, but of the unification of Ireland, first by elimination of the British who are seen as responsible for partition, and then the coercion of the Protestants, the vast majority of whom wish to remain in Great Britain. Gerry Pitt, described by Cruise O'Brien as "one of the most astute, courageous and unbloody minded personalities in Northern politics" (1974:211, footnote), admits to having been a passionate supporter of the Civil Rights movement since its inception and is proud of the achievements it attained through its rigid policy of non-violent, dignified protest. But he is bitterly critical of the Provisional IRA which he blames for bringing the movement crashing around the heads of those who had been prepared to take the full brunt of a reactionary government's determination to baton charge it off the streets.

'The Provisional IRA killed the Civil Rights movement stone dead. The man who pulled the trigger against the first British soldier blasted the movement to smithereens. If the movement had been allowed to continue it would have been totally unnecessary for anyone to have been killed or any bombs to go off. I have always regarded the break up of the Civil Rights movement with heartbreak and that is one of the reasons why I am so bitterly opposed to the IRA and the men of violence - because they wrecked the Civil Rights movement in Northern Ireland... 12

Furthermore, Cruise O'Brien believes that the IRA set itself the task of breaking

...the fraternization which then existed between the Catholic
people and the British troops and which was unacceptable in terms of I.R.A. doctrine. So the I.R.A. encouraged provocations against the troops, and then 'defended' the Catholics from the troops who had been provoked.

(Cruise O'Brien, 1974:314)

(British troops were initially sent in to protect Catholics against the Protestant para-military groups and a biased constabulary).

Thus, it would appear that little has ever been achieved by the IRA in Northern Ireland. Cruise O'Brien says it was the Civil Rights movement and Stormont's own clumsy and brutal reaction to it that brought Stormont down in the sense of depriving it of its most essential power, control of law-enforcement, in August 1969, when IRA armed activity was insignificant. He continues, it is deceptive of the IRA to claim they brought Stormont down (1974:269). But they may have been more influential in bringing it down than Cruise O'Brien is prepared to admit. He says that following internment without trial which affected mainly Catholics, there was a complete breakdown of all overt relations between the elected representatives of the two communities. The leaders of the SDLP declared they would not return to Stormont (1974:257), thus precipitating direct British rule from Westminster which surveys show, has developed a high degree of acceptability in both communities and a much higher degree of such acceptability than any other proffered solution (1980:73). Unwilling though Cruise O'Brien may be to admit it, the Provisional IRA para-military activities were, ironically, instrumental in causing the elected representatives of the Catholic community to refuse to acknowledge Stormont's legitimacy (ironically because the solution of direct rule is at least as far from the IRA's aims as that of devolved Stormont government). Just the same, the parliamentary representatives of the Catholics could have refused to appear in Stormont without provocation by the Provisionals, so Cruise O'Brien is quite correct when he says their claims of achievement in the way of reforms is deceptive.

Both Gerry Fitt and Cruise O'Brien belong to the parliamentary tradition of Irish politics which has become an increasingly popular form of representation for Irish Catholics since the Republic's foundation, and more recently in Northern Ireland. As the elected representatives of the people of this tradition it could be thought that their criticisms of the IRA who represent the physical force tradition in Ireland are extreme, for the latter represents everything the constitutionalists are opposed to. But their severe criticism is warranted from the evidence available to us.
If we accept majority rule politics which have as their corollary the rights of the minority, the IRA's attempts to unite Ireland by force has little support - virtually none from the majority (Protestants) and little from Catholics either side of the border. Before the recent "troubles" and reforms in legislation in Northern Ireland, Rose found 13% of Catholics interviewed approved of "any measure" to end partition, and 83% disapproved of "any measure". Of the latter persons, 81% disliked the use of force for this purpose (1971:193). Only 14% of Catholics wanted the border abolished and a united Ireland, though 42% wanted it abolished with a vague alternative. As might be expected, only 4% of Protestants wanted a united, independent Ireland (Rose, 1971:213). Following reforms, Cruise O'Brien says that a BBC Gallup Poll in 1978 showed only 2% of people in the Republic approved of the Provisional IRA campaign of violence, and 51% condemned it absolutely (1980:60). A more detailed survey of attitudes by the Economic and Social Research Institute taken in the Republic in 1979 showed that 12.3% were slightly supportive of the IRA, 5.3% moderately, and 2.8% strongly supportive of the IRA (1980:79), the latter figure corresponding to the survey taken the year before. The 1978 Gallup Poll revealed that 76% of the people interviewed in the Republic agreed Northern Irish people should be free to determine their own future. It also revealed that people in the Republic are far from anxious to accept any burden for the sake of the North (Cruise O'Brien, 1980:42). In Northern Ireland the survey of attitudes taken by the Institute in 1979 revealed only 16% of the total population wanted a united Ireland, with 72% wanting to remain in the U.K.: only 39% of Catholics and 6% of Protestants interviewed wanted any kind of united Ireland (1980:81), and as Cronin says, the small minority of Ulster Protestants who support a federal Ireland are afraid of being dominated by the Catholic Church (1980:183), so their support for a united Ireland could be said to be ambivalent. (Some of these Protestants support an Ireland united with Britain.)

Since the advent of the Provisional IRA it would not have been possible to discover how much Catholics in Ulster support them by statistical means, since many people would be afraid of expressing an opinion on the matter. Cruise O'Brien asserts that by May 1972 "The Ireland of the living was at this point heartily sick of ...'the most dedicated sons' of Cathleen ni Houlihan" (1974:275). But the most powerful statement of opposition to the IRA has come from the Peace People's movement of 1967-7. Initiated in response to the deaths of three Catholic children from a runaway IRA car whose driver had been shot, it managed to attract at marches up to 10,000 supporters from both sides of the community, though predominantly from
the Catholic side. Ostensibly it was against all violence in Northern Ireland, Protestant and Catholic para-military and that of the British army alike, but a eulogy by Dalry O'Donnel which expresses the ordinary participants' feelings about the movement *The Peace People of Northern Ireland* (1977), and an analysis of its break-up in *Magill* reveal that these marches were directed principally against the IRA who were seen to be maintaining the violence. Suffice it is to say that the IRA were opposed to these marches and in Catholic areas they met with fierce opposition from Provisional supporters for their concentration on the IRA and the neglect of the Protestant para-militaries (*ibid*).

The attempt to jeopardise the Peace People's marches is not the only instance of the Provisionals' suppression of freedom among the Catholics. As Cruise O'Brien says, no government responsive to the feelings of the Protestant community would end internment willingly so long as the Provisionals continue bombings, shootings and destruction of property. Simply by this means they can prevent the elected representatives of the Catholics from playing any constitutional or mediatory role and could confine them to roles seen by the Provisionals as ancillary to their own organisation - the organisation and promotion of civil disobedience and anti-internment protest. The Provisionals thus acquire a veto of all meaningful political initiative and dialogue in Northern Ireland (1974:258). A similar view is held by Bew et al. (1979:163). In his powerful debate with the president of the Official Sinn Fein, as a member of the Republic's Labour Party, Cruise O'Brien asserted that the IRA were in fact aristocrats, a military elite: they do not give people the chance to register their feelings at the polling booth about them. He points out that they have shown sovereign contempt for democratic concepts, defying majority rule since the Treaty (1974: appendix). Even the sympathetic Gerry Foley of *Magill* has said when talking of the attempts of other groups to solve the problems of the Catholic para-military prisoners with them, that they would not cooperate.

The prevailing militarism and authoritarianism of the Republicans do not predispose them to collaborating on the basis of equality with those who are not under their discipline, much less those who do not share their views.

Although his editorial of December 1981 following the deaths of hunger strikers shows a very different attitude, Vincent Browne's editorial of February 1981 in *Magill* states that the activities of this month show the Provisionals have reverted to their former elitist military stance, contemptuous of popular feeling.
Although it is claimed by the Provisional IRA that the H-block protest began in response to the withdrawal of political status with its special privileges in 1976, it is noteworthy that this protest began in September of that year, exactly two months after the formation of the Peace People's movement. Browne says it occurred at a time when alienation from the IRA was at its greatest following a series of atrocities such as the La Mon disaster. Indeed he acknowledges: "Yet it was during the Peace People's most notable triumphs in the streets of the Falls and Shankill that the H-block issue started to germinate".  

In chapter five I suggested that individual participants of the "dirty protest" were concerned to prove that their personhood could not be imposed upon by their gaolers and this behaviour was the continuation of anti-authoritarianism or rebellion inside the prison by one of the few means available to them. However, this is not inconsistent with the possibility that it was engineered by the Provisional IRA, especially as it would have remained virtually unknown to the world without the civilian H-block protest marchers. But the Provisionals and their sympathisers are quick to deny IRA influence in the prison protests, and two articles in Magill in 1981 were concerned to do so, including one by V. Browne. G. Foley says that many Provisional leaders and activists still talk about the H-block issue as an incomprehensible nuisance that is distracting attention from "the war". In fact they had to call off the war virtually during the first hunger strike in 1980, feedback from local areas forcing the physical force men into the background.  

Browne says the Taoiseach of the Dublin government of 1981, Garret FitzGerald claimed that the protests inside the goals were intended by the Provisionals to intensify their campaign outside. But Browne denies this, saying the Provisional leadership had tried to prevent hunger strikes as they seriously detracted from their cause. Deny it though he may do, the following evidence will give solid support to the statement (itself provided by Browne):

That men should so predeterminedly give up their lives for seemingly trivial commitments on prison conditions has perplexed most observers and led to the oft repeated charge that they have been driven to this extremity by a callous and scheming Provisional IRA leadership for purely propagandist purposes.

The hypothetical question

'Is there anyone here who objects to taking power in Ireland with a ballot paper in the one hand and an armalite in the other?'

asked by Danny Morrison, editor of Republican News, revealed that the
Provisional IRA now intended to use Provisional Sinn Fein to achieve their aims. By this means they intended to combine physical force republicanism with constitutional politics. And it would be through the H-block issue that they would achieve it. But those involved in Provisional Sinn Fein politics were not much more democratic than their military counterpart, as indeed Cruise O'Brien argued they could not be in his debate with the Official Sinn Fein in 1974 (1974: appendix). Let us look at some "constitutional" behaviour in securing the seat of Fermanagh/Tyrone, a constituency which has a slight Catholic majority, in April 1981 for Bobby Sands from Noel Maguire.

Maguire intended to contest the seat in the by-election following his father's death which left the seat for Westminster vacant. Gerry Foley of Magill said that Noel Maguire announced he had made an irrevocable decision to contest the election and had two strong assets: his family's position in Fermanagh and the county's local patriotism. And the SDLP were anxious to see Maguire stand and were opposed to the Sands' candidacy. In light of this information it seems highly improbable that Maguire's withdrawal from pre-selection did not involve intimidation. Personal informants in Dublin told me at the time that everyone knew it had occurred, and Foley does say that privately, the SDLP claimed Maguire had been threatened. Perhaps they also called for a boycott of the elections for the same reasons. However, it would appear from Foley's article that the SDLP capacity for interference was limited without alienating the Catholic community altogether. For instance, the SDLP wanted to field a candidate against Sands, but felt they could not afford the political price it would cost them. Although Foley acknowledged an election in the North cannot be won without a strong election machine (because of the importance of building up social contacts, and patronage), one was built up in a week for Sands by Sinn Fein.

Yet intimidation and coercion was not the picture received internationally in this by-election, nor one subscribed to by Ireland's best political journal, though it provided much evidence that would lead to this interpretation being made. Foley dismisses the idea of intimidation, saying the real pressure on Maguire had come from the Sands family to stand down "and help save Bobby's life". (It will be shown later when discussing the place of women in nationalism that the two Sands women had a powerful role to play in Bobby's election.) And Foley observed that in pre-election speeches Maguire, who was on the platform, appeared visibly moved by Sand's sister's
speech (op.cit.). Yet it is strange that a competitor who had announced his irrevocable decision to stand should not have had his nose so put out of joint that he would deign to give support to an opponent! And when that opponent was elected, he showed no desire to save his own life, but continued unswervingly with his hunger strike to the death.

But Sinn Fein, representing the IRA, knew what they were doing: as Foley himself avers, the death of Maguire offered the H-block organisers a great opportunity to revive flagging public interest in the prisoner issue (op.cit.). Having chosen a man whose courage could be relied upon to complete the demanding requirements of martyrdom which so profoundly moves the Catholic electors, they replaced the dead Sands who could never have taken his seat in the House of Commons had he lived, with a live member of Sinn Fein party. Once the Irish people's sentiments were so aroused they not only readily voted for one who was not a "martyr" to replace Sands – Owen Carron – but as the hunger strikes continued, they voted two H-block prisoners to the Dail in border counties in the Republic's June 1981 elections. And spurred by constitutional victory, Sinn Fein became more ambitious. As Foley rightly observed, the Sands victory widened the gulf between the more Republican-inclined and the SDLP, the primary representative of the nationalist community and opposed to the H-block issue (op.cit.). Browne says the Provisionals had realised that with their party contesting elections it might be possible for them to defeat their major political adversary, the SDLP which had been the single most serious threat to the IRA's campaign. Unlike the British government or Loyalist parties, the SDLP could whittle away at the core of support for the IRA in the nationalist community.

Through the hunger strikes, the hitherto unpopular and illegal IRA managed both to popularise itself, and demonstrate that popularity through the legitimate channel of elections. It could now claim to be the legitimate competitor of other Northern Irish political parties, both Catholic and Protestant, and present itself as such internationally in those countries which have taken an interest in Northern Irish politics. Thus, one could scarcely be considered cynical for believing that the H-block protestors' banners displayed after the hunger strikers' deaths were due to the effect "Irish prisoners murdered by Britain", should not have had the last word replaced by "fellow countrymen". It is a view that would appear to be believed by the Fine Gael party elected to power in the June 1981 elections in the Republic. Following a number of deaths by hunger strikers, the spokesman of Fine Gael at the United Nations formally denounced the IRA,
their tactics, killings and hunger strikes on 2 October 1981. 23

I shall now attempt to explain why it is that the Northern Irish Catholics who had been showing what many would consider good judgement by supporting the SDLP - which, formed after the Civil Rights movement, had not lost any of the reforms obtained in this movement - should be so "irrationally" moved by forms of self-sacrifice or martyrdom. (It is Ussher who says: "But the Irish, almost alone among peoples, have never lost intuition of a different plane of reality - the plane of those non-rational feelings which ultimately motivate all action" (1950:62). He is, however, probably comparing the Irish only with Europeans and this is a somewhat rhetorical statement about their political behaviour.)

In order to understand why martyrs are so appreciated in Ireland, I shall have to divide Irish martyrdom into what I perceive to be its component parts. First, the Irish have not made popular heroes of those who have lost their lives for the cause of Catholicism, although there were some martyrs during the 16th and 17th centuries for the faith. Martyrs in Ireland have been created from political rebels, and rebellion has had more emotional appeal to the Catholics than constitutional politics, although the latter have been engaged in statistically more frequently and consistently than rebellion in the Free State's existence. But in a crisis, rebellion seems to be favoured. However, those rebellious movements in which the people themselves have participated have involved constitutionalism, such as that of 1918-21 wherein Sinn Fein took over where the Parliamentary Party had left off; and that of the Civil Rights movement in Northern Ireland in 1968-9. But the former movement is thought of more as a rebellious one and the constitutionally-based Parliamentary Party's great achievements were forgotten and overwhelmed by the rebellion whose gains have been somewhat inflated. The latter movement is generally thought to have been a constitutional one, and I have so considered it in this chapter, but it was rebellious in inspiration. But the IRA by its manipulations of the Catholics, managed to persuade those in the working class areas for at least some of the time - and some others, including journalists and scholars - that the Provisional IRA had themselves achieved the reforms and were the legitimate spokesmen for the nationalists, though in fact, I have argued the contrary is true. Furthermore, constitutional politics in the Republic have always involved an element of rebellion which is enshrined in the name of one of the two major parties which has most frequently been in office since the Free State's foundation, Fianna Fáil - Heroes of
Destiny (Ussher, 1950:79). By making martyrs of themselves in a nationalist cause, certain Irishmen are able to manipulate the people to lean towards rebellion rather than constitutionalism as we have seen in the case of Pearse in 1916, and in the Contemporary IRA in Northern Ireland (although it must be acknowledged that Pearse was far more honourable and noble in his intentions than the Provisional IRA are in theirs). 24

With three exceptions - O'Connell, Parnell and de Valera - the Irish Catholics have not made heroes of those who achieved reforms or independence by constitutional means. These were, as I have said, three powerful charismatic figures: less popular leaders who achieved substantial reforms tend to be eclipsed by physical force men who died for their cause. A recent public example substantiating this claim can be seen in the failure of the Republican government to celebrate the centenary of the foundation of the Land League by Davitt in 1879 with a postal stamp, although at the same time in 1979 one was issued to celebrate the centenary of Patrick Pearse's birth. One Protestant man commented on this to me, and the distinguished Irish journalist John Healy criticised this failure, suggesting its reason lay in the fact that no martyrs were created in 1979, though the League's achievements were in fact substantial. 25

Not all Irish persons are moved by heroic sacrifice, however. The love of inept patriotism which glamorously romanticises inglorious defeats and sacrifices is satirised by Denis Johnston in his play The Old Lady Says 'No!' written in the 1920s.

Ah, the love of death, creeping like a mist at the heels of my countrymen! Death is the only art in which we own no masters. Death is the only voice that can be heard in this distressful land where no man's word is taken, no man's message heeded, no man's prayer answered, except it be his epitaph. Out into every quarter of the globe we go, seeking for a service in which to die: saving the world by dying for a good cause just as readily as we will damn it utterly by dying for a bad one. It is all the same to us. It is the only thing we can understand.

(Johnston, 1977:33)

Brendan Behan, who spent quite a few years of his life in prison for IRA activities, similarly deflate the pseudo-heroic in his play The Hostage, said to be the most bitter denunciation of the IRA ever to reach the Irish stage. Sean O'Casey's three plays, Juno and the Paycock, The Shadow of a Gunman, and The Plough and the Stars, (1966), are all satires or criticisms of traditional Irish nationalism or nationalist activities. It has already been seen that Ussher is critical, as is G.B. Shaw. And Cruise O'Brien says it does not seem to have occurred to the earlier audiences of Yeats'
play *Cathleen ni Houlihan*, which had great impact on its audiences in the pre-revolutionary period, that there might be something unhealthy about a mother who shuffles around promising her sons that "they shall be remembered for ever,'provided they get themselves killed for mother's [i.e. Ireland's] sake" (1974:275, footnote).

Such criticism does not go down well in Ireland as might be expected, but the fact that some Irish people dare to make such criticism in no way detracts from their own loyalty to their country. As Denis Johnston who loved Dublin said, a lot of people felt his play to be anti-Irish: but "It is no small part of Ireland's tragedy that any way to love her but unquestioning acceptance of her self-glorification is 'anti-Irish'."(Ferrar, 1973:40). And Cruise O'Brien, cautioning the Irish Catholics in the North against supporting the IRA, says he fears that the community to which he belongs and identifies may destroy itself through its infatuation with its own mythology (1974:293).

All these Irish critics have been educated in Western thinking, which is that developed from the Protestant Reformation. Their aim is to change their fellow countrymen to the ethos of achievement by constitutional means which implies bargaining, negotiating and compromise, often over a long period, in frequently painstaking sessions, without dramatic or melodramatic gestures. Bargaining and negotiating is a complex process: after each person puts forward his proposals there follow a series of concessions, each person matching the others until an agreement is reached. But these means of seeking to achieve one's aims mean that one's integrity, one's original plans, are often compromised: as chapter five reveals, in a situation whereby participants are fundamentally concerned to prove their integrity or their autonomy, not only will there be difficulty making such compromises (although where the Irish do engage in constitutional politics clearly this is done), but they will not be admired. Only the person who holds onto his principles unbudgingly will be admired. We have seen this for instance, in the case of the rebel/constitutionalist, de Valera, who, despite he and his party's abstention from the Dail for its first five years of operation rather than compromise their republican principles by swearing an Oath of Allegiance to the Crown, and their utter loss to their constituents during this time, that party nevertheless came to power in 1932 and has dominated the political scene ever since.

A very popular figure, de Valera was admired for his air of aloof
dignity which was such that Cruise O'Brien says one felt that whatever he did, he did without exterior prompting. The main reason he succeeded in conveying an impression of independence was that this impression was correct. When his opinion differed from another, that other was wrong. His cold certitude on this point was at least the equal of that possessed by an Irish Archbishop, and grudgingly admired by the Hierarchy (1974:115). Another instance of withdrawal and refusal to negotiate occurred immediately after the formation of the Northern Irish State when, in protest at the division of Ireland, the Catholic bishops would not sit on an educational reform committee, thereby surrendering their last shred of influence at the very time when the basic character of Ulster's educational development was being determined (Akenson, 1973:52). So too has Sinn Fein long had a policy of abstention from parliament when its candidates were elected - both in Northern Ireland and the Republic - because it believes its policy to be correct, and it cannot be compromised.

What is most admired in Catholic Ireland is "achievement" or attempted "achievement" by rebellious means which also involve an element of asceticism. It is not the rebel who goes out to shoot others with a fair chance of survival and dies in the battle who most moves people, but the one who goes out knowing the odds are hopelessly stacked against him, such as Pearse and his fellow rebels: or the man who starves himself, slowly, unremittingly, to death in order to persuade others of the seriousness of his cause. Let us turn to a brief look at hunger striking as a form of asceticism/rebellion.

In chapter two I said that incipient forms of "hunger striking" can be found very early in the Irish child's life: it is a form of oblique, passive resistance to the mother, forcing her not only to relinquish some of her power over the child, but to indulge his particular whim. I suggested it took this form rather than that of overt disobedience which was often severely punished. It is this passive protest - an alternative to the outright and active protest of un-gaolled para-militaries - in circumstances where the protestor is in a similar position to the child, that has occurred in Northern Ireland in 1980-1. Hunger striking is by no means a recent phenomenon or even one developed following the conquest of Ireland by England. Irish adults have a long history of embarking on hunger strikes or of fasting when their claims for certain perceived rights have not been met by persons in a position either of authority, or of ascendance. Several of these have occurred this century, some of which have resulted in deaths, and not a few of which were against the Free State.
The Ancient Laws refer to a procedure for getting what was rightfully ones by law when the culprit would not pay his fine or return stolen property, or whatever: it involved the plaintiff "fasting on" the defendant. This was always necessary before distress, Joyce says, when the defendant was of chieftain grade and the plaintiff of an inferior grade. The plaintiff having served due notice, went to the house of the defendant, and sitting before the door, remained there without food. It may be inferred that the debtor generally yielded before the fast was ended, Joyce says. Fasting as a mode of enforcing a right is mentioned in the "Tripartite" and other Lives of Saint Patrick. And St. Patrick himself fasted against several persons to compel them to do what he believed justice. There are also other particular cases mentioned in the historical and religious literature. Fasting was also used to bring evil on a person; as a sort of compulsion to obtain a request from another. The fasting process was regarded by the Irish in superstitious awe and it was considered outrageously disgraceful for the defendant not to submit to it. So great was its power that even God yielded before it in one legend. Here it was said that a certain man, thinking himself hardly used by Providence, grumbled and fasted against God for relief: and the tale says that God was angry, but nevertheless dealt mercifully with the faster (Joyce, 1920:204-7).

But fasting to the death has only ever been engaged in against the British who lack a sympathy towards this kind of behaviour for reasons which will be seen shortly. As a form of suicide it would have to rank as the most difficult of all to enact, because of the slow, very painful death involved. If an individual were attempting to prove his courage, autonomy or manhood, there could be no more powerful way of doing so in the estimation of Irish persons.

As argued in chapters three and five, "achievement through general forms of asceticism has a long history in Ireland with Irish ascetics and pilgrims being the most obsessive and severe in Christendom. While asceticism is essentially meant to assert one's independence, the penitentials which characterise this tradition are meant to ingratiate the penitent to authority figures towards whom he may sometimes be expressing independence. For this reason, asceticism and the penitential behaviour should be distinguished. The ethos of the penitential tradition as distinguished from the Protestant work ethic has been analysed in chapter three as follows: in an authoritarian political and spiritual world, men do not seek to compete with others as equals, so much as they accept their place in a structured
hierarchy. Challenges to the spiritual authority, better known as
disobedience or pride, are followed by repentance from which ensues forgive-
ess by the authority. By contrast, the Protestant Reformation was
cconcerned to do away with this cycle and replaced it with competition among
exclusive groups of men. Thus, Catholic cultures in which authoritarianism
is extreme might be expected to have a strong penitential tradition as a
corollary, and to admire those who suffer more than those who achieve by
competition. Hence, in our modern western world, the men who are held up
as the greatest heroes are such people as astronauts, great scholars,
millionaires (as long as they are thought to have achieved fairly and not
through exploitation, the opposite of competition) and great constitutional
politicians, for instance: in Catholic Ireland, the heart goes out to the
man who has suffered most in the quest of proving the nation's independence
and self-reliance. In engaging in suffering in order to achieve their
rebellion, the nationalist rebels - be they those who are executed or those
who die on hunger strike - are engaging in a form of penance, and penance
is a form of supplication to an authority figure. It may be said then,
that paradoxically, the nationalist rebels who are considered martyrs,
manifest a strong tendency to supplicate themselves to authorities.

Furthermore, the rebels and martyrs have always claimed the righteous-
ness of their cause from their ancestors (see chapter four p.204).
Afraid to stand alone to any extent and justify their action entirely on the
basis of extant circumstances, they have, like the scholars, sought justifi-
cation for their actions in the past. Perhaps too, the sanctification that
is given to great Irish people of the past, be they scholars or rebels, has
contributed to the sanctification of extant rebellions: to the conferring of
the status of religion on rebellion.

Paradoxically, martyrdom combines both submission to authority
and rebellion in Ireland, two features of behaviour which prevail in Irish
political behaviour generally. The martyr in a national cause is the
quintessence of all that is Irish - he reveals a deep commitment to the
ethos of authoritarianism and supplication to authority, as well as to the
proving of his independence of that authority. And just as a few powerful
leaders have achieved success in constitutional politics with relatively
passive supporters, so, paradoxically, can a single figure who totally
submits himself rebelliously to a perceived authority figure (that of the
British government in Northern Ireland) be considered to be a redeemer of
the mass of people who are sympathetic. We have now finally arrived at an
explanation of how Pearse was able to make himself worshipped by engaging
in a hopeless rebellion in which he was executed by the British, and why
the concept of martyrdom is such an emotive force that it can push aside
people's rational judgements, as we have seen recently during the hunger
strikes in Northern Ireland. 27

But the Irish Catholics go further than worshipping martyrs: they
"worship" their image as a nation in terms of a long-suffering, penitential
people. This concept, I believe, has been transmuted from the personal
onto the national political level. It is captured in the phrase by Carey:
"the persecution-beset history of our penitential isle" (1939:14). There
is an admiration of and inverted pleasure derived from the idea of suffering.
Loftus states that too frequently Irish verse and prose are described as
"literature of lamentation", and one scholar says defeatism is an essential
element in the aesthetic of modern Irish verse (1964:25). It is found
also in popular songs which are drenched in sorrow with the wild and melan-
choly poetry of misery of either persons or country. Far from dying out in
modern, relatively affluent Ireland of the EEC and the multi-national
investments, they are known and sung by most Irish people with much feeling
over the age of about twenty five years, and many younger ones also. But
even traditional Irish music is thought to be melancholy by many writers,
even when the song content is not. As these melodies are equally agreed to
be beautiful, the setting of tragic lyrics to them constitutes a celebration
of the condition of sorrow, of things lost, and of failure.

This celebration of sorrow on either the personal or national level is
essentially a form of crying the poor mouth. But while some of it is
directed internationally, most of it is directed only towards fellow Irish-
men, such as in traditional songs which are rarely heard outside Ireland.
Where it concerns national issues, its function is to elicit the sympathy
of Irish persons so that they will direct their energies towards the
conditions which have caused the sorrow. Hence, the titles of Robert Kees'
Irish history The Green Flag, in a series of three volumes are entitled The
Most Distressful Country, The Bold Fenian Men, and Ourselves Alone. Kees'
nationalist views are unconsciously epitomised in his titles, the first of
which conveys the idea of Ireland as a nation of pain and sorrow, the second
that its people are responding to its cry for help, and are fighting for its
sovereignty, and the third that sovereignty and self-sufficiency have been
achieved. As Loftus points out, one scholar says that out of the defeatism
and melancholy that he has perceived in Irish verse, the ultimate victory is
expected (1964:25). But perhaps nowhere more poetically expressed is the
notion of perennial and ubiquitous sorrow to be found than in the personification of Ireland as a tragic and sorrowing woman.

The symbolic functions of women in nationalism

The personification of a nation by a woman, either a virgin or a mother, or both, is widespread in the world. Ireland has a long history of being symbolised by a woman whose form was more varied than simply that of virgin or mother. It is a tradition wherein a woman embodies sovereignty of the land and involves the coupling of the king with the country as a woman. MacNicolaill says that in the rites of kingship in Gaelic Ireland there existed the concept of the king as spouse of the tuath: the king as the basic political person was masculine to the femininity of the tuath to which he was bound (1972:44-5). In some forms of this tradition there is the idea of the goddess changing her form or raiment when she is without her proper spouse and king. Very common in Irish literature, it enshrines the ancient belief that a land gained or lost fruitfulness and prosperity accordingly as it gained or lost its true or rightful king (Dunn, 1977). Thus O'Rahilly notes that the figure of the woman varies according with the vicissitudes of history, ranging from spouse to widow, even harlot in dalliance with foreigners (Bessai, 1975), a total range of which can be found in the single poem by Geoffrey Keating written in 1644, "My Pity How Ireland Standeth", translated by Patrick Pearse (1924a:43-9). Here are some of the stanzas:

My pity how Ireland standeth,
Her battle-triumph transformed;
She hath exchanged happiness for ruin,
Despised by these savages.  (Stanza 1)

A woeful thing hath befallen her:
She hath no friend, no mate,
No lover in her bed, -
A woman with no strong man's protection! (S.4)

She hath turned her hope from help,
Her loving children have forsaken
The fair, tall, white-palmed woman, -
For the sons of Mileadh are banished.  (S.6)

The gentle widow shall not find
A lover or a friendly mate
Until the true Gaels come again, -
With freemen's shouts inspiring dread.  (S.8)

'Tis the wrong-doing of the Irish themselves
That have overthrown them with one stroke,
Quarrelling about some fleeting transient right, -
And not the strength of the enemy's arms.  (S.10)
No wonder that the isle of strengths,  
Once beloved, should now repine  
For the Gaelic race of noble deeds,  
Who once cherished her full well.  

The nurse of the fostering though she be,  
Widowed of every husband,  
O Mary, how pitiful her fate,  
Bereft of all her ancestral beauty!  

Without protection against the island's evil,  
Alas, the deformity of her condition,  
Those who possessed her thus, -  
The ancient mother of the sons of Mileadh.  

A harlot without respect or honour  
Is this land of Partholon's stronghold, -  
Her reason hath withered without reward,  
And her seed is subject to savages!  

The personification of Ireland as a woman has continued to the present day. Cathleen ni Houlihan is an old name for Ireland which Yeats took to entitle his play, a glorification of Maude Gonne's romantic idea of nationalism (Yeats was for many years in love with this ebullient woman, but his feelings were unrequited). Set in 1798, the time of the United Irishmen and Wolfe Tone and what is usually thought of as Ireland's first attempt to create a republic, this traditional personification of Ireland appears in the guise of an old woman to summon to the rebellion a young man who is about to be married. She insists on the need to sacrifice all for Ireland, and that those who die in her cause shall be remembered for ever. When the young man responds to her call for help (instead of marrying), she is transformed into her own likeness, that of a radiant young woman (Yeats, 1974).  

This play in which Maude Gonne herself acted had enormous impact in the early part of the century. Constance Markievicz, sentenced to death for her part in the 1916 Rising, recalled for her part that Cathleen ni Houlihan had been a "sort of gospel" (Cruise O'Brien, 1974:69). Without detracting from Yeats' ability as a playwright, his play was acting upon some very deep feelings about Ireland, and womanhood, in his Irish audiences. This may be seen in the following anecdote: one observer, an artist, had painted  

...an allegorical picture of a seated, hooded figure of Cathleen ni Houlihan, with a child on her knee, presumably Young Ireland stretching out his arm to the future, and behind her a ghostly crowd of martyrs, patriots, saints and scholars.  
(Edward, 1979:117)
She presented it to Pearse's school, St. Enda's, where it was displayed, and one boy told her later that this picture inspired him to die for Ireland (Ibid).

Not all are quite so moved, however. In Inishfallen, Fare Thee Well, O'Casey speaks of the feelings of hatred for Cathleen ni Houlihan. After the riots about his plays which were critical of traditional Irish nationalism

He saw now that the one who had the walk of a queen could be a bitch at times. She galled the hearts of her children who dared be above the ordinary, and she often slew her best ones.

...What a snarly old gob she could be at times; an ignorant one too.

(O'Casey, 1980b:150)

And Denis Johnston satirises Cathleen ni Houlihan as she stands in the mid 1920s, showing her to be a "harridan" (The Old Lady Says, 'No!', 1977). Then there is James Joyce's famous characterisation of Ireland as "the old sow that eats her farrow" (1977:327).

Bringing us into again more recent times, we find a biographer of Bernadette Devlin often concerned to make her into a virgin saint, or goddess, with strong topographical associations. He says:

There is an almost Roman Catholic Litany of her Names and Titles
The Maid of Derry...
Saint Joan of the Bogside...
Bernadette of the Barricades...

(Target, 1975:19)

As he continues through her life cycle to adulthood, he constantly tries to parallel her life with that of St. Bernadette. There are echoes in her life of another daughter in a slum elsewhere, he says.

Yes, echoes of hagiography, another sort of girl altogether, another Bernadette singing a different song... Marie-Bernarde Soubirous of Lourdes...

(Target, 1975:49)

A Trotskyite, nominal Catholic critical of the Church, and later, an unmarried mother, she was far from saintly, however.

Leading the Peace People's movement, a highly emotion-laden response to the violence in 1976, were two women (and one man who kept in the background), one of whom their (emotional) panegyrist acknowledges people relate to at the level of virgin martyr: the other is "readily identified as the mother figure - calm, patient, all wise, all knowing, all encompassing" (O'Donnell, 1977:73). So too it is said that Marcella Sands and her mother played no small part in arousing interest in Bobby Sands' hunger strike
and election campaign. Described by a journalist from Magill, they appeared together as the classic embodiments of the Irish nation - virgin and mother.

Mrs Sands was the picture of a mother sorrowing for her son, as she sat silently on the platforms. It was always announced that she did not feel up to speaking. Marcella, a young woman of solemn beauty, appealed to the audiences to use the peaceful means of protest available to them at the ballot box to save the lives of her brother and his comrades and to prevent bloodshed.29

It is of course, a virgin/mother goddess who is queen of Ireland today, Mary, the Mother of Jesus, who is often addressed as "Queen of Ireland". Just as Ireland has long been known by rose symbolism, so a priest in a Catholic Church in Blackrock, County Dublin in August 1980 described Mary as "the mystical rose" to whom her devotees offer roses, which did indeed adorn the altar at her feet. It was mentioned at the beginning of the chapter that MacDonagh's poem "Barbara" synthesises the ideals of religion and nationalism through the use of rose symbolism. It is Mary's shrine at Knock, County Mayo, the scene of a supposed miracle in 1979 (the year of the foundation of the Land League) that since independence, has become the country's numerically dominant pilgrimage site with 700,000 visiting it annually (Turner, 1978:132). Brooke and Rolleston say that

As the Lady of Ireland was created by the poets, so was the Lady of the Church. She sits on the shore of Irish Romance, hand in hand with her who personifies Ireland as a nation....They are clothed with the beauty of their land, and the martyrdom of their people is their crown of light. A thousand poems are hidden as yet in this conception.

(Brooke and Rolleston, 1900:xxii)

Writing on the early Irish period, Lehane says that the identification of Mary with the cause of Ireland appears in all the literature, but it is seldom explicit, for this would have been a heresy (1968:105).

It is usually said that Ireland personified as a sorrowing woman began with the conquest of Ireland by England, but this is not so. The "Nun of Beare" indicates this quality was a feature in her personification in the Old Irish period. The earliest known in a series of allegories, the Nun of Beare is still known in many place-names in modern Ireland. The forlorn and censorious old narrator sings of regret of her loss of youth and bygone pleasure, and the gravity of the nun's veil she now wears. It is sometimes interpreted as an historical allegory, i.e., that this was written by a Christian bemoaning the loss of the good old pagan days
(see Hull, 1913:xviii). But considered in light of later poems of the same genre, and of the fact that paganism and Christianity quite happily coexisted well beyond the Old Irish period, it would be better seen as a lamentation by Ireland herself about the loss of her youth, i.e., the vigour of Ireland and its people. It reveals perhaps, fears by the poet of Irishmen's ability to defend her, fears which preceded the Anglo-Norman attempts at colonisation. This interpretation of the poem is given weight particularly by Pearse's poem "I am Ireland".

I am Ireland:
I am older than the Old Woman of Beare.

Great my glory:
I that bore Cuchullainn the valiant.

Great my shame:
My own children that sold their mother.

I am Ireland:
I am lonelier than the Old Woman of Beare. (O Buachalla, 1979:35) 30

As Brooke and Rolleston reveal in the quotation that begins this chapter, there is a love and admiration of Ireland imaged as a sorrowful woman: "a Lady of Sorrow, whose tragic fate has deepened for her the passionate love of her people" (1900:xxvii). Bessai says that generations of Irish people responded to the figure of the Dark Rosaleen as the embodiment of the sorrow of Eire and the selfless devotion of her loyal adherents (1977). Both the original Rotisin Dubh and the Dark Rosaleen which was modelled on the Gaelic poem, are equally beautiful and moving love poems ("dark" is a metaphor conveying a concrete image of the mood of sorrow). Suitors offer their love in the form of protection to this vulnerable, injured and sorrowful beauty whom they pledge to save from death in a most heroic manner. The poems have continued to inspire men, including Pearse, who translated the original, and rose imagery has lasted for many centuries. Edwards says:

Ireland was ever becoming a more and more real presence to Pearse, and in his emotions she represented a victim who must be avenged by the present generation, before it became old and fearful. (Edwards, 1979:162)

Though Pearse was known never to have courted a woman or to have known one sexually, and possibly never to have loved one, he understood very well the power of a woman to move men to perform in life: "Next to love of God and love of country, love of woman is the noblest feeling that can stir men's souls" (Pearse, 1924b:211).
In a country where, for a number of reasons men are little motivated to perform, the image of a sorrowful woman needing to be protected and rescued offers a powerful enticement to men to keep their country sovereign. This was surely the intention of the Free State whose first pound notes bore the image of a sorrowful, but hopeful, young woman who personified Ireland. This image remains on the contemporary pound notes in a different form.

But Ireland is not yet a sovereign woman, her children, unlike those in Yeats' play, have not fully answered her call for protection. The Dark Rosaleen has not been married to her rightful mate for he has not yet fulfilled the promise to protect her vulnerability. She is still, as Geoffrey Keating has complained in his poem, "a woman with no strong man's protection!". She is the old widow not yet transformed into the radiant bride as in Yeats' play, and Irishmen might be said to be less her husbands than they are her children. Indeed, all Irish people might be said to be the Children of the Dark Rosaleen.
NOTES - CHAPTER SEVEN

1. The sources upon which I principally depend for writing this chapter (some of which have already been referred to earlier in the thesis) are as follows: J.C. Beckett's *The Making of Modern Ireland 1603-1823* (1966) is widely acknowledged to be one of the most authoritative and impartial accounts of history for that period. P.S. Lyons is another respected historian whose *Ireland Since the Famine* (1971) I also rely upon. Less partial, but very scholarly, is Sean Cronin's *Irish Nationalism* (1980). While less nationalistic and equally scholarly, Boyce's *Nationalism in Ireland* (1982) is not often referred to, partly because of its very recent publication (I received it after completing all but a final draft of the thesis) and for my purposes, it generally adds little to information provided by Cronin; and partly because it deals little with recent Northern Ireland issues. On Northern Ireland, Rose's *Governing Without Consensus* (1971) is generally acknowledged to be both authoritative and impartial. Another important source of material on Northern Ireland is Conor Cruise O'Brien's *States of Ireland* (1974), a personal account of his dealings in that area, and of his views on the matter; and *Neighbours* (1980), a set of four lectures on the subject. Coogan has written the very nationalistic *On the Blanket* (1980), which I have found useful. *Magill* magazine keeps me up to date on events in the north, and generally suffers from moderate to substantial nationalist bias, depending upon the particular journalist, and the emotional tone of the era which is being dealt with. In using material from this source a scholar runs some risk of factual error, but then it will be shown that nationalist biases by scholars in the domains of either history or political science can equally lead to factual error. However, it should be pointed out that many difficulties confront any scholar trying to put together an argument on extant secret armies such as the IRA.


3. By this time the vote had been extended to a larger number of Irish Catholics.

4. There is some evidence that some Irish people may have been aware of the problem at the time. Following the translation of a 1650 *atailing* (vision) poem, "The Roman Vision", the editor in a footnote points out that the vision of Ireland (in the form of a woman) dwells longingly on victorious Irish fighters of the past and promises victory if the Irish will only hold together (Pearse, 1924a:70-1). Keating's poem of 1644 presented on pp.377-8 of this chapter, entitled "My Pity How Ireland Standeth" blames the Irish (stanza 10) for their loss of country, owing to their "Quarrelling about some fleeting transient right" among themselves.

5. N. McCafferty op.cit.


8. My view would receive some support from V. Browne of *Magill* who says that the significance of the leftward drift of Sinn Fein during the
1960s in terms of Marxism has been much exaggerated:

...it reflected much more the very non-marxist radicalism of the 1960s, more popularist, more issue-orientated in terms of fish-ins, housing agitation, etc. than a strict marxist strategy would allow....It was also very republican, in the traditional sense of that word. The national question remained central to its ideology and the struggle against 'British imperialism' was seen as the focus of the party's main line of activity both in economic and nationalistic terms.

(V. Browne "SFWP. In the shadow of a gunman" Part I Magill, April 1982:9)

9. Ussher is referring to the fact that the Irish Catholics had never sought anything less than the establishment of a home rule parliament for the entire country, and while Redmond fought for this, he realised that with two thirds of Ulster bitterly opposed to it, the liberals could not give it to them and the compromise of the twenty six counties would have to be accepted. The 1916 rebellion and subsequent Anglo-Irish war were attempts both to get more concessions towards independence than offered in 1914, and to prevent the partition. They failed to achieve anything for the latter cause.

10. Although New et al. disagree that there was any substantial expansion in the Catholic middle class at that time (1979:166-7), they are, I think, making the mistake of conflating occupation/status with education. Those Catholics not reaching middle-class status have nevertheless been better educated in modern democratic notions about the self and the individual's rights, as I suggested in regards to recent changes in the Catholic education system in the Republic over the past fifteen years. In chapter three I have referred to the findings by Raven and Whelan (1976) that the degree of education and a sense of political competence are positively correlated (p.116).

11. The explanation of who instigated the movement does not fully explain why it should have begun at that specific time rather than another, nor how Catholics managed to be aroused from their general state of apathy.


13. N. McCafferty op. cit.

14. Beckett offers support for this claim by a moderate statement about the anti-treaty members of the Dail (who later supported the IRA in the civil war) who claimed to represent the legitimate authority of the Republic, though they did not have majority support (1966:455). He reveals that the Fenians also had not tried to win mass support but hoped it was on their side, attempting to break up every other movement trying to win self-government by constitutional means (Ibid:359)


23. Personal observation of international news.

24. I have not attempted to explain why certain persons should take up the task of martyrdom rather than others. This will have to await another time and place for analysis.


26. One example in an historical study concerned that of a man who complained to the archbishop in 1530 that certain ecclesiastics were fasting against him - an act of spiritual blackmail, Watt says (1972:206).

27. Of course, there is always the more practical, mercenary aim of hunger striking which many commentators readily point out - the eliciting of Irish-American dollars for the IRA.

28. This personification is more widespread than I suspect is recognised. For instance, western people of the Protestant persuasion may think they have outgrown the need for the personification of their nation by a virgin whom they worship. But the massive and intense interest shown in the virgin (now virgin/mother), the Princess of Wales, future Queen of Britain, whose behaviour symbolises much that is virgin-like - youthfulness, prettiness, shyness, loyalty to and dependence on her mate, circumspection in her demeanour - has about it an "irrational" and emotional content that bespeaks at least nascent informal virgin worship, where that virgin represents in some way the nation.


30. Further evidence for my claim lies in information provided by Lydon who says that during the 14th century Gaelic Revival, the poets were conscious that a Gaelic Ireland was being restored, and as such "Ireland is a woman who has risen from the horrors of reproach' and she now belongs to Irishmen again" (1973:61). The *aisting* or vision poem which has a long tradition in Ireland concerns a mystic female representing Ireland and constitutes another variation on this theme of the personification of Ireland by a woman, although in this case she is usually hopeful, pointing the way to future success. In one instance of this poetic tradition from the late 13th century, we see her appear to an Irish warrior to upbraid him for winning only a local battle against the Anglo-Normans and failing to take all of Ireland (de Blacam, 1973:184).
The argument of the thesis has been that the Irish Catholic personality and culture have been created and maintained by the Irish people themselves. Having identified personality "stereotypes" I have argued that they have their cultural counterparts in fields such as the religious, political, economic, educational and scholastic. The ways in which these and other aspects of Irish culture manifest themselves have been shown to have been developed from the needs of the Irish personality. Anxious attachment, and to a lesser extent, over-indulgence and protection in childhood result in a poorly developed sense of personality autonomy in the Irish child and adult. This leads to self-realisation through various forms of authoritarianism and dependence on the one hand, and anti-authoritarianism or denial of that dependence on the other. The most logical point to begin my explanation of the interrelationships between personality and culture is with the child, but I have stressed that the marital relationship is an equally significant factor in the maintenance and recreation in the following generation of the personality and culture.

It must be acknowledged that many of the personality traits and components of culture identified in Ireland are to be found in people elsewhere in the world. But it is the constellation of factors, and sometimes their intensity, that makes the Irish personality Irish. Take for instance, authoritarianism, a quality to be found both in the personality and in cultural institutions in Ireland. This is not peculiar to Ireland, but in various forms and degrees can be found widely represented throughout the world. However, in both the personality, and in several separate institutions, I have found it to be more extreme in Ireland than elsewhere in the western world. For example, authoritarianism in the traditional Sarakatsani (Greek) family was shown to be very pronounced in chapter two, but yet the children had more rights than those in the Irish family. Authoritarianism in cultural institutions differs very considerably in kind from that found
in Japan, for instance. De Vos shows that long "apprenticeships" are a characteristic of Japanese life, but in the position of subordination an incumbent is taught the skills of his superordinate, and

Earlier loyalty toward superiors by subordinates is eventually rewarded by assistance - financial as well as social - by one's former patron when the subordinate seeks to initiate his own entrepreneurial activities.

(De Vos, 1973:183)

In Ireland, by contrast, a subordinate is used as a contrast model to the superordinate's sense of self, resulting in an unwillingness by the latter to allow the former to compete with him. Because a subordinate is given few, if any constructive or creative means for self-realisation in his position, he resorts to various forms of anti-authoritarianism, to means of preventing others equaling or surpassing him in his own achievements (e.g. through malice, ridicule etc.), and to defence mechanisms that protect him from the destructive authoritarianism of others. Thus, while the Sarakatsanis and the Japanese may be noted for their respective forms of authoritarianism, neither culture is noted for anti-authoritarianism to any extent: in Ireland, however, anti-authoritarianism is extreme.

I have not intended to create the impression that all identified personality characteristics can be found equally in any one Irish individual. Nor are all individuals subjected to the same intensity, or repertory of identified child-rearing practices. A small minority of individuals may have largely escaped the conditions of anxious attachment and over-mothering which result in the formation of an inadequate sense of personhood. While such people can assimilate into culture in the New World to which they may emigrate and lead what might be considered "constructive" lives by other members of that society, this potential will be thwarted to varying degrees in Ireland by institutions beyond the family, thereby forcing the individual to adopt some of the predominant behavioural characteristics generated in the majority of fellow countrymen by anxious attachment and over-mothering. However, this does not mean that institutions such as the Irish State or Catholic Church have created the Irish personality. Despite the fact that they do have some autonomy independently of their creators and do act to mould them in certain ways, my argument is teleological: Irish people create their institutions much more than those institutions act to influence them.

The notion that there has been a dynamic relationship between the British colonisation of Ireland and the Irish personality and culture has
been consistently rejected. The British presence has influenced the course of Irish history, certainly, and it has acted either to exacerbate or dampen some Irish tendencies which have existed independently of their presence.

The most persuasive example of British presence exacerbating indigenous Irish behaviour can be found in contemporary Northern Ireland where there developed in the early 1970s an extremely military-minded Catholic paramilitary group, the Provisional IRA in immediate response to the British troops who initially came into Catholic areas to defend them against the Protestant para-militaries. A predilection for warfare was shown to be strong in the years preceding British colonisation, and a tendency to resolve problems by physical force rather than by negotiation remains evident among contemporary Irish people. But this tendency has been exacerbated by the British troops for reasons which can be explained in terms of the Irish personality. I would suggest that a set of foreign "protectors" acts to make Irish men, who suffer from feelings of inadequacy as persons independently of any British presence, feel inadequate as defenders and protectors of their own women and children. Thus, many will either support, or actively develop, their own para-military force in opposition to the foreign "protectors", and in time, these protectors will come to be seen by the entire Catholic group as "the enemy", treated as such, and eventually they will become an opposing force, far more serious than the original one (i.e. the Protestant para-militaries) against whom the British forces initially came to protect the Catholics. In view of this, it may be speculated that when these alien "protectors" are removed from the scene, many of the present hostilities by the Irish Catholics will come to an end, although the nationalist ambition to unite Ireland by force will remain.

Virtually nothing is known about child-rearing practices in Ireland before this century, and almost as little about relations between the sexes. I cannot claim, therefore, that the personality and culture of contemporary Ireland, of which there is some evidence throughout Irish history, had the same origins in the past as I have argued they have now. However, by a process of elimination, I have argued that they have not been caused by political, economic or social changes, or by British colonisation: by implication then, it is suggested that the Irish Catholic personality and culture might have borne the same dynamic interrelationship in the past as they bear now. However, there do remain two specific challenges to my argument which demand a response. One concerns certain aspects of the British presence which is claimed to have been responsible for certain historical events, and the other that the Catholic Church has been
responsible for the creation of some aspects of the personality such as
dependence and authoritarianism. I shall answer the latter challenge first,
a challenge which is gaining a little popularity in modern Ireland.

The argument offered by some scholars is that the Catholic Church,
restructured from Rome after the Great Famine, become such a powerful
force that people in their vulnerable state were obliged to submit to it.
By one Irish scholar I was referred to the work of the historian Larkin
(1972) in support of this argument. But I found Larkin too neglects entirely
evidence for the behaviour described existing long before the Great Famine.
His argument that a restructured Church could change a people’s personality
so dramatically is implausible, but even so, it is necessary to look briefly
at what Larkin has to say in order to answer this challenge.

Larkin shows that a devotional revolution was spearheaded in Ireland
by Cardinal Paul Cullen who was sent from Rome in 1850 following the Great
Famine. Figures on church attendance in pre-famine Ireland were only
about 33%, but were 90% by the end of the century. However, Larkin does
acknowledge that in 1840 there was only one priest to 3000 people, but by
1970, one to 1250 people. And he shows that before the Great Famine, pop-
ulation had grown in excess of the supply of priests who were only beginning
to pick up in numbers after the penal years. After the Great Famine, there
was not only a dramatic drop in the population of Ireland, but also a change
in land tenure whereby only one son inherited. This meant there was at the
same time an increase in the number of priests relative to the population.
While Larkin understands that the ratio of priests/people before the Great
Famine and the shortage of churches might have explained why the percentage
of Mass-goers and sacrament-takers was smaller, nevertheless he argues that
people were guilt-ridden after the Great Famine, afraid, and felt they were
losing their culture. The now-empowered Catholic Church provided them
with a national identity, and so the people’s increased religious behaviour
and supplication to the clergy is thus explained (1972).

But there is no evidence of this "guilt" from historical sources; in
fact the contrary if one considers how the British were blamed for the
Irish calamities. It is true that the Church mobilised the peasants for
national causes, but the ability to do this preceded the Great Famine, as
can be seen in their mobilisation for Catholic Emancipation in the 1820s.
The only reason the Church was able to do this was because it already had
the people’s dedication, as I have shown in chapters three and seven,
a dedication which the Church was then able to engage in a political cause.
A more plausible argument for the so-called "devotional revolution" is that following the Great Famine - a watershed for all aspects of Irish life, political, economic, family and religious alike - the Catholic Church with help from Rome, and because of the people's devotion to religion which preceded the Great Famine, was able to restructure itself and become a powerful institution. This occurred at the same time as other institutions were gaining strength and order, such as various branches of government bureaucracies, and the education system. The Irish have always been deeply religious, but their religiosity has had a distinct Irish character to it, particularly in the early Irish period (see Nicholls, 1972:91). Even as late as the 17th century, marriage in Ireland was still a predominantly secular affair, largely uninfluenced by Christian rules. Indeed, the very "incest" and irregular marriages complained of by the bishops "regularising" Irish marriages referred to by Larkin are the result of the Irish marrying within the proscribed limits of consanguinity set by the Church, and of people having their marriages contracted in the absence of the priest (see chapter six pp. 365-6).

Larkin's is only one case which puts the Catholic Church in the role of "villain" in Ireland's history. Stephen Daedelus' father's belief that being a "priest-ridden race" (Joyce, 1977:200) was the cause of much that was wrong in Ireland is an idea that is becoming more popular among laymen and scholars. Blanshard (1953) and Sheehy(1968) take astringent views of the Irish Catholic Church, considering them to be a blight thrust upon the unfortunate population. Leon Urus's Trinity (1977), an epic spanning the last 100 years of Irish history, depicts the priest as one who has taken advantage of the Catholic people's illiteracy and political vulnerability, exploiting his flock emotionally no less than the Protestant landlords and employers exploited them economically. The most recent scholarly book taking the position that the Church has sold out its members on nationalist causes for its own ends is that of Cronin (1980), although he does not explicitly develop the idea. However, I have answered Cronin's charge in chapter seven.

Without claiming that the Irish Catholic Church is innocent of these charges, rather I have suggested that the Church is the creation of the Irish Catholic people themselves. Certain consequences follow in the culture and social structure as a result of the inherited poorly developed sense of autonomy among Irish Catholics. In order that their lives be manageable in a psychological sense, the individual relies heavily upon others for benevolence, protection and guidance, and it is in the inequality of
relationships that follow that there are likely to be abuses. Chapter five dealt with how Irish people behave when those from whom they have sought help overstep what are perceived to be their limits. But whether they object to such authority figures or not, the Irish still need them. To reiterate a statement from Laing cited at several points in the thesis, the person who lacks a sense of personal autonomy will oscillate between dependence on the authority and isolation from that authority, neither position being feasible for self-realisation. For this reason, I believe, the more feasible option of seeking to place others under one's authority develops, while simultaneously one continues to look for guidance from above. And this generates a culture and social structure that act to maintain the condition of dependency initially created in the familial domain. Although the Irish Catholic Church is the creation of its members, as an institution in its own right it does develop an autonomy which acts to maintain the personality characteristic of dependence, especially through the education system. But this personality has not been changed by the greater control of the clergy in Irish lives, although the autonomy of the Church acquired after the Great Famine certainly helped to cement certain tendencies. However, I have provided evidence that the Irish State has behaved in ways similar to the Church, so we might suppose that even in the absence of the Church, another institution serving a similar function and acting in similar ways would have been created by the Irish people.

Throughout the thesis it has been demonstrated that the Irish have maintained some native traditions for as long as their history has been available to us, and at all times we get a feeling that the Irish culture and society was fundamentally different from that of the English who tried from the 12th century to colonise it, without much success until the 17th century. Even so, as owners of only 14% of the land at the lowest ebb of their history (Johnston, 1974:13), and the vast majority of the people peasants, we are given glimpses of a rich native culture, particularly by careful and insightful observers such as William Carleton and the Edgeworths in the 19th century.

The colonisers never destroyed that culture as colonisers did to a large extent in other countries where they took away indigenes' land, such as in Australia and North America. Perhaps this was because that culture was comparable in some respects to that of the colonisers, as for instance in its ability to organise its own representation through the Church; or perhaps it was because there was no real attempt to destroy those institutions
which helped maintain the culture - the British colonisers only replaced one set of oppressive landlords and rulers with another; and perhaps, most importantly, it was because there was no interference in the familial domain from which the culture took its roots. Beckett says that there was not religious persecution under the penal laws of the 18th century as existed in contemporary France. Although bishops and regular clergy were banished, secular clergy were not, and unregistered clergy remained also, disguised as lay persons. And there was no prohibition of religious worship. Penal laws were not meant to destroy Catholicism, but to keep its adherents in a position of social, economic and political inferiority (1966:158-9).

Another historian who also has a sense of comparative history points out that religious toleration in Europe was not a widely known or accepted concept in the 17th century (Johnston, 1974:21). She asserts that it should not be supposed that the harshness of the penal laws in their written and legal forms were congruent with their implementation in Ireland.

...although the penal legislation existed, its application had proved difficult, and the unsettled state of the country during the seventeenth century had made its enforcement spasmodic and largely ineffective.

(Johnston, 1974:27)

.....the harshness of the law was a reflection of the lack of physical means for controlling public disorder and individual crime...

(Ibid:36)

Boyce deals well with the penal laws which he says were more severe in intention than in practice. Before a further act of parliament in 1704 "to prevent the further growth of popery" relating to property, the penal code relating to property had been more draconian in England than in Ireland. The main purpose of the penal legislation was political, and it was not meant to extinguish Catholicism from Ireland. An Act for registering the popish clergy was passed, Catholic worship was not prohibited, and "mass houses" were common. Political power had to be monopolised by the Protestants if they were never again to run the risks that they had run in James's reign (1982:96-7).

The penal laws therefore require neither historical justification nor condemnation, but historical explanation. They were the kind of legislation that was enacted in many European countries, in France, in the Empire, and in England itself, to curb political/religious minorities. The important difference was that in Ireland the people against whom the code was enacted were not a minority but a majority. Thus the danger to the state was all the more acute.

(Boyce, 1982:97)
There were virtually no proselytizing schemes enacted, though the Church of Ireland often toyed with them. Catholics were allowed "to go to hell their own way", provided they presented no political threat (Ibid).

Without saying that the British colonisers have been justified either in the act of colonisation or the unjust and repressive laws which followed, I would like to suggest that Ireland's cultural uniqueness which derives from its people's interest in persons rather than material creations, has been the principal cause of her economic woes. It was not the colonisers who destroyed a tradition of native skills: as Lyons says, there was virtually no tradition of entrepreneurial enterprise in Ireland (1971:59). Despite the interferences of England in her economy, placing tarrifs on her raw and manufactured goods (the latter coming mainly from industries started by the Anglo-Irish) when they looked as if they might compete favourably with hers, predominantly Protestant Ulster managed to make itself the most prosperous province in Ireland by the 18th century, Belfast becoming a leading industrial city in the United Kingdom in the 19th century. Despite the problems of the lack of coal and metals, and of transport difficulties, the development of shipbuilding in Belfast represented a triumph of human ingenuity over these obstacles Ireland presented to the growth of heavy industry (Lyons, 1971:52).

The Catholic Irish never developed manufacturing or industrial skills until this century because, I believe, of the lack of interest in this area, and even for the first thirty five years of the Free State, not much interest was shown in industrial development. Thus, relying largely on agriculture to support its eight million people by the 1840s, and particularly on the potato, disaster was imminent. There is no doubt that rack-renting landlords exacerbated the enormity of the Great Famine in 1946-9 as did Britain's laissez-faire economics (see below), but to some extent, the famines were inevitable. In fact, the Irish peasants might have fared even worse if landlords had not allowed their estates to be divided into tiny parcels. In 1845, 24% of all holdings were between one and five acres, 40% between five and fifteen acres, and Lyons believes it is unlikely that the number of farms exceeding thirty acres was large. In addition, 135,314 tenants had less than one acre of land (Lyons, 1971:29). 1 Without saying that there were not profound inequalities in the system of land tenure and ownership in Ireland, or that the nationalist claim of the Irish Catholic peasants to own their land was not justified, I do think that the traditional argument blaming landlords for the impoverished state of the Irish tenantry and the losses of lives during the Great Famine is, as Christianson says,
too over-simplified to be accepted without qualifications (1974). While not taking a stand such as mine, nevertheless Lyons does not believe landlords were to blame for all of Ireland's problems (1971:45-52).

O Tuathaigh deals well with the ways in which the landlords and the British government may have contributed to the conditions of the Great Famine. Firstly, the educated classes of Britain shared a solid body of opinion on what constituted the optimum conditions for economic activity and the proper role of the State in this sphere. By 1846 private enterprise, the inviolability of property rights, free trade and the laws of supply and demand had become economic orthodoxies among the governing classes: laissez-faire policy had few dissenters (1972:219). The payment of rents separated people from the food in the first place and a suspension of rents was an unthinkable infraction of rights (Ibid:220). Geography was a complicating factor, both on the level communicating the degree of disaster, and in getting the food supplies to the needy areas at the right time. Thus, the avoidance or containment of famine conditions demanded a highly synchronised state intervention in such areas as price control, retail distribution and provision of purchase power for the destitute. Even today this would be difficult to achieve. The sight of ships leaving port with grain exports abroad while at home people died of starvation and disease could not have done other than provoke deep anger.

And yet apart from a crucial period in the winter of 1846-7 when imports of Indian meal were slow in arriving, there was no absolute shortage of food in Ireland at any time during the famine. Indeed, during the period 1 September 1846 to 1 July 1947 Ireland imported five times as much grain as she exported. Clearly the problem was not one of food shortage, but of ensuring that those in need had access to existing supplies, or as Lord Lansdowne's agent put it, 'bringing the food and people together'.

(0 Tuathaigh, 1972:220, my emphasis)

There can be no denying the stupidity and bureaucratic insensitivity which caused many aspects of the famine policy to fail. But ultimately, the task of coping with the emergency created by the total failure of the potato crop in the Ireland of 1846 called for resources, as much intellectual as physical, which the Victorian State had simply not yet developed. The real tragedy was, in a sense, more a failure of comprehension than a lack of compassion.

(Ibid:221)

It must be noted that local monopolists and money lenders (gombeen men often of Catholic stock) were able to hoard what supplies there were during the famine and charge extortionate prices, making much of the relief programme unproductive, O Tuathaigh says (1972:218). Furthermore, following the famine when the old landlords who were debt-ridden had their lands sold
by the government which hoped they would go to improving landlords
(3000 estates were sold in ten years), they went instead mainly to native
gombeen men, who "adopted the old vices, and made them worse"

Between 1816-42 the potato crop is estimated to have failed partially
or substantially fourteen times (Lyons, 1971:26). The obvious question one
must ask is, why did the Irish wait for the inevitably disastrous potato
famines in which a million died of starvation and disease, before they
embarked on large-scale emigration as a way of dealing with over-population?
As O Tuathaigh says, after 1945-9 there was a volte face in the general
attitude to emigration. Reluctant parting from home was transformed into a
mass exodus (1972:225). Although they had been emigrating in comparatively
small numbers before this, the Irish were faced with the same problem as
many other European peoples at the time. That problem was the existence of
a larger population than could live comfortably in the country of their birth,
notwithstanding any generation of industry which may have absorbed some of
the excesses. The solution to this was emigration to the New World. Indeed
Ulster Protestants had been engaged in such emigration during the late
17th and all through the 18th centuries, despite their creation of industry
in that province. Blanshard says that in 1790 there were only 25,000 Irish
Catholics in the U.S.A., less than 5% of the total Irish-American population.
The remaining half million Irish-Americans were Protestants, chiefly of
Presbyterian persuasion (1953:246).

Of course, one reason for the failure of many Irish Catholics to emigrate
may have lain in their inability to finance their fares, but I do not
believe this would have obtained in all cases. Beckett says that those
Protestants emigrating from Ulster in the 18th century who could not afford
to pay their way could get a passage as an indentured servant (1966:181),
a harsh system Johnston says, but one which paved a way to a better life
(1974:31). Furthermore, in the post-famine times, many peasants received
their fares from landlords desiring to clear their estates of small tenants.
Such clearings had been attempted earlier in the century, especially follow-
ing the end of the Napoleonic wars, but they were largely unsuccessful. It
is difficult to believe that some landlords would not have offered the
inducement of the fare to America then, when they were prepared to do so
following the Great Famine. My belief is that the same lack of industry
and planning that one finds in Irish economic behaviour is the reason for
their failure to take the adventurous step of emigrating to seek a new life until disaster forced them to do so. A fatalistic resignation to fate or God's will, which can be seen among the Irish as early as the 6th century, is a prevailing and even admired feature of contemporary Irish life, whose manifestations have been mentioned in several chapters of the thesis: it is I believe, a manifestation at the cultural level, of despair generated as I have argued in anxious attachment. Indeed, in one of the most traditional provinces of Ireland where Irish characteristics tend to be strongly represented, an area which was also one of the hardest hit by the Great Famine - that of Connacht - had the lowest emigration from the famines until 1870 (Lee, 1973:8). This interpretation would find some support from the fact that once in America, the Irish Catholics settled in the ghettos and displayed little of the adventurous, independent and industrious spirit of other emigrees. But once set in motion, the process of emigration was self-perpetuating: those who had done well in the colonies urged their friends and relatives to follow (Beckett, 1966:180), and often helped with fares.

My argument is that the experience of being governed by England was not a happy one for Ireland. But this does not quite make it the horrific one so many Irish nationalists would have the world believe. G.B. Shaw, and Ussher at least, are in agreement with this point. Without suggesting that the Irish were not within their rights to demand their cultural integrity by seeking political integrity, i.e., independence from Britain, Shaw, who thought a great deal about his native land with much compassion asserted:

... it is surely expedient to point out to that most distressful country that she has borne no more than her share of the growing pains of human society, and that the mass of the English people are not only guiltless of her wrongs, but have themselves borne a heavier yoke.

(Shaw, 1962:17)

Shaw points out that the English proletariat have been at least as exploited as Irish farmers. Ussher also complains that the Irish have never had a sense of perspective about their national troubles:

The Irish had never pictured or tried to picture - shall we say? - the Warsaw Rising, when more than a hundred thousand of the citizens were taken and butchered, after a blow for freedom more desperate and heroic than Easter Week. They had never pictured or tried to picture the extermination-camps of Poland, and the horrible sealed wagons crawling eastward from every European city. They had never pictured or tried to picture the nights of terror in which millions of families were waiting, year in year out, for the torture-boys
of the S.S., their hearts leaping at every noise in the street. They had never seen — and perhaps only he who has seen can picture — the utterly unparalleled bestiality that was Nazism.
(Ussher, 1950:91)

I believe Shaw and Ussher are responding with disaffection to the success with which the Irish "cry the poor mouth" internationally, both at the popular and academic level.

Far from there being greater cultural freedom following independence there was an intensification of Gaelic traditions, understandably enough. But these traditions were often quite oppressive, especially in an era of relative democracy and individual freedom in most of the rest of the western world. To cite Shaw complaining (in hyperbolic style) of the newly-imposed Censorship of Publications Act of 1929, and also of new prison regulations:

Under the feeble and apologetic tyranny of Dublin Castle [i.e. British rule] we Irish were forced to endure a considerable degree of compulsory freedom. The moment we got rid of the tyranny we rushed to enslave ourselves....We declared that as prison would not deter Irishmen from evil-doing they must be savagely flogged; and when the evil-doers were flogged they were imprisoned for long periods lest the flogging should provoke them to commit fresh crimes.

(Shaw, 1962:274)

Remonstrating against the various kinds of censorship instituted in the Free State, Shaw remarks that:

We shall never be easy until every Irish person is permanently manacled and fettered, gagged and curfewed, lest he should punch our heads or let out the truth about something.

(ibid:274)

In regard to the laws which attempted to keep Irish Catholics in an inferior position, Rose says political history cannot be understood until one appreciates the extent to which the Pope, his Church and secular allies were seen as a military and political threat to the regime throughout the British isles. Until the rise of Imperial Germany at the beginning of the 20th century, England's major enemies — those of Spain and France — were Catholic powers. Although a firm adherent of religious toleration in Ireland, as elsewhere, Gladstone held traditional views about Catholicism as a political enemy.

'No one can become [a convert to Catholicism] without renouncing his moral and mental freedom, and placing his civil loyalty and duty at the mercy of another.'

(Rose, 1971:59-60)
However, it was shown how much Gladstone and his Liberal Party did in the way of reforms for the Irish Catholics, with stiff opposition from the Conservatives, in chapter seven.

That the most obvious bearer of these old Gaelic traditions is the Catholic Church which is seen as a powerful political force in Ireland, is clearly recognised and feared by Protestants, as may be seen in the following statement made a century ago:

'Popery is something more than a religious system; it is a political system also. It is a religio-political system for the enslavement of the body and soul of man and it cannot be met by any mere religious system or by any mere political system. It must be opposed by such a combination as the Orange Society based upon religion and carrying over religion into the politics of the day'.

(Weiner, 1978:18)

And with a siege mentality that is still very strong in contemporary Protestants in Northern Ireland, they forwent some of their democratic traditions, paradoxically, in order that they might maintain their own tradition of democracy; in order that they might not become submerged in a culture they felt to be so alien. The 1968-9 Civil Rights movement by Catholics was concerned to correct such abuses as gerrymandering, job discrimination, and discrimination in the allocation of public housing. By these means the Protestants had tried to prevent many Catholics from receiving what was rightfully theirs so that they would have to emigrate.

But the Irish Catholics have taken much from the British tradition and put it to good use without forgoing their cultural uniqueness. The observation that

...the principles of democracy on the one hand and of Catholic social teaching on the other are both clearly visible in a curious, but not unsuccessful juxtaposition.

(Chubb, 1970:62)

reveals that there has been a fairly successful blending of the two traditions for the majority of Irish people. The coexistence of these two traditions (not recognised in the form that I have described), has provided a subject of some interest to scholars, as may be seen in the title of Schmitt's book *The Irony of Irish Democracy* (1975), for instance. Although it is their religion which is, and has been singled out as, the point of difference between Catholics and Protestants in Ireland, the differences run much deeper than this, as each side knows. Religion is but one manifestation of the culture whose roots lie in the personality. Political culture is another, and as we have seen, there are many congruences between it, religious culture, economic behaviour, and the intellectual and
scholastic tradition. In his study of the relations between the Church and State in the Republic, Whyte reveals an implicit understanding of this at such times when he says that:

The years 1923-7 reveal, so far as religious values are concerned, a remarkable consensus in Irish society. There was overwhelming agreement that traditional Catholic values should be maintained, if necessary by legislation. There is no evidence that pressure from the hierarchy was needed to bring this about: it appears to have been spontaneous. The two major parties, bitterly though they differed on constitutional or economic issues were at one on this. (Whyte, 1971:60)

They were all agreed on the matters of divorce, censorship, regulation of dance halls, and banning the sale or import of contraceptives (Ibid).

The tension in the interaction between the two traditions inherited by Ireland - a Gaelic and a British democratic tradition - may sometimes produce not a compromise, but an opting for one over the other, as a politician, Brendan Corish, later leader of the Labour Party in the Dail, revealed when he explained on which side he stood in the dispute between the Church and State over the Mother-child scheme in the early 1950s.

'I am an Irishman second; I am a Catholic first...If the Hierarchy gives me any direction with regard to Catholic social teaching or Catholic moral teaching, I accept without qualification, in all respects the teaching of the Hierarchy and the Church to which I belong.'

(Chubb, 1970:103)

However, it is thirty years since that statement was made and there have been many compromises between the two traditions, the one a Catholic authoritarian, the other a Protestant democratic, as the Irish attempt to compete on many levels with other European countries. The fierce public debates and private soul-searching on matters which have hitherto been dictated by traditions enshrined in teachings of the Church, such as divorce, contraception and abortion, reveal that few modern Irish Catholics would make such an unequivocal statement about their allegiances. And the essentially Protestant-inspired changes entering from Europe are modifying not only traditional cultural beliefs and values, but also the education system, and will eventually act to modify the personality.
NOTES - CHAPTER EIGHT

1. The disparate sizes of holdings among tenants leading inevitably to social stratification, has persisted since that land has come into the ownership of the descendants of those tenants. In 1926, 23% of holdings were under 30 acres of the total acreage of agricultural land in the Free State; 17% were between 30 and 50 acres; 24% between 50 and 100 acres; 19% between 100 and 200 acres; and 16% were over 200 acres (Arensberg and Kimball, 1968:5).

2. O Tuathaigh and others possibly over-estimate the degree to which rents could be got from many tenants in circumstances such as this, especially in the more remote districts. See chapter five for a discussion of the non-payment of rents by peasants in Ireland. While evictions did take place, largely owing to the desire of landlords to clear their estates of small, uneconomic holdings nevertheless these were not successful in their aim of consolidating estates until the Great Famine was over.

3. The figures on Irish emigration before the Great Famine vary somewhat because, I suspect, there was no adequate documentation of numbers leaving the country. So I am relying on the more reputable historians for my figures. Lyons says that about 1,750,000 people left between 1780 and 1845 to both England and America, a figure which includes both Catholics and Protestants from all provinces (1971:26). Blanshard's figures are supported by a general statement from Johnston that emigration to America during the 18th century was almost entirely from Ulster (1974:31), and also by Beckett (1966:181). Lebow says that before 1798 emigration to Britain was negligible (1976:31-2), and emigration of large numbers of Irish persons to Britain preceded those to the colonies.

4. Lehan says that it was commented upon by contemporaries that a curious fatalism and surrender to the elements seemed to underlie the approach of the monks who made voyages in frail boats from Ireland to Scotland (1968:111).

5. Lee believes they were either too "backward" or too poor to contemplate alternatives to traditional existence.
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