

NEW DIRECTIONS IN IRISH AND IRISH AMERICAN LITERATURE



# IRISH EXPATRIATISM, LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

The Problem of English

Michael O'Sullivan



New Directions in Irish and Irish  
American Literature

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Language and  
Literature

The Problem of English

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## CHAPTER 1

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# Introduction

Europe is, we are told, experiencing a “migration crisis” (36) the likes of which it has never seen before and which is testing the resolve of its union. In a December 2015 issue of *The Guardian*, one report argues that almost 40% of Europeans cite immigration as the issue of most concern facing the EU (in Bauman, 10). Sociologists and cultural theorists tell us we need cosmopolitan awareness (Bauman, 66), a rejuvenated sense of responsibility, and a fusion of horizons to rescue ourselves from this era of individualization, where there are “over 200 million persons currently (globally) displaced” (89). At the same time, reports of global mobility in the business world tell us expatriatism is a “rising trend”, with more businesses “decentralizing global mobility operations and adopting more regional approaches”.<sup>1</sup> The other side of this business transformation sees the conditions of large sections of our young urban populations—“superfluous young people condemned to the anteroom of the modern world”—being compared to those at a migrant camp.<sup>2</sup> Rosi Braidotti describes this trend in terms of what she calls nomadic subjectivity and she argues that the global city and the refugee camp, in philosophical terms, are “two sides of the same coin”; as Vandana Shiva writes, “one group is mobile on a world scale, with no country, no home, but the whole world as its property, the other has lost even the mobility within rootedness, lives in refugee camps, resettlement colonies and reserves” (Shiva 1993: 98). It cannot be presumed that the promotion of the former is not implicated in

the exacerbation of the latter. And yet despite the desperate waves of migration, the systematic exclusion, and the business-speak, we still hold to the idea of free movement as a sign of a tolerant, multicultural, globalised world. However, as Braidotti also tells us, there is a “noticeable gap between how we live-in emancipated or postfeminist, multiethnic globalized societies [...] – and how we represent to ourselves this lived existence in theoretical terms” (4). Pankaj Mishra observes a similar lag or lack of fit between “the actually available degree of freedom” people experience and the “elaborate theories and promises of individual freedom and empowerment” we sell ourselves (332). This book sees something similar happening around the “official” Irish discourse on migration. Whether this discourse is built around diaspora or recent media initiatives with such names as *Better Off Abroad*,<sup>3</sup> it seems to foster a similar kind of “gap” between how Irish migrants live and how the migration experience is represented back to them and to fellow Irish people living in Ireland and elsewhere. The Irish migration discourse of emigration, exile, and expatriatism is a powerful one in migration studies and this book reevaluates it in light of such current realities that see the uncertainty of migration from Ireland, a first-world country, being sold in terms of being *Better Off Abroad*. Ireland knows all about migration; estimates put the number born in Ireland to have emigrated since the beginning of the eighteenth century at about 9 or 10 million, of which this author is one. Migration is part of the fabric of Irish life, and yet because it has traditionally been understood in one direction only, it has become a figure of loss. Perhaps this is one of the reasons for the State’s sluggishness in meeting immigration targets; three years on from its pledge in 2015 to take 4000 Syrian refugees, it has so far accepted only 1272.<sup>4</sup>

I use the word expatriatism deliberately, both to interrogate and deconstruct the recent commercialisation of the Irish migrant life in Irish media initiatives and to acknowledge how much the migrant experiences of our canonical writers—what have often been romanticised—share with today’s expat stories. Migration from Ireland is now more often than not described in economic terms as a lifestyle choice. However, this is only one side of the migrant experience. The Irish State’s monetising of the diaspora through such initiatives as “The Gathering”<sup>5</sup> and the Irish national media’s economisation of the emigrant life through such initiatives as *Better Off Abroad* are, in a sense, transforming and liquidating one of the essential narratives of Irishness. The Irish diaspora narrative, what Luke Gibbons and Mary Robinson have both suggested should inform Irish society’s

“ethics of analogy”<sup>6</sup> in terms of immigration policy, has always been a vital cultural resource that goes to the heart of Irish identity; it calls on a rich heritage of artistic creations and a shared social consciousness that, it seemed, always had to be about much more than money alone. This book then revisits the work of some of Ireland’s most respected migrant writers in order to both recall the very real economic and “expat” dimensions of their experiences “at home” and abroad and also to remind ourselves of some of the broader conditions of the migrant life such as career opportunities, loneliness, a constant state of (un)belonging, the desire to buy property “back home”, and the loss of a language. This book looks to Irish writers, men and women who emigrated and came to be regarded as expats in their new countries of residence, and it examines how their work can be read as responding to, and reappraising, some of the key issues for Irish migrants and expats today. Many of these writers did not find wealth abroad; in fact, Oliver Goldsmith “died in debt” and Joyce complained of an “inveterate impecuniosity”. However, they did advance their careers and gave to world literature bodies of work grounded in the realities of the migrant experience. Their stories transform our understanding of the connection between identity and place in giving us enriching experiences of migration in terms of broadened perspective, cosmopolitanism, and the acceptance of difference and the “other”. If we are to take any ethics of analogy from their work, it is an ethics that recognizes that the most travelled Irish stories have been those written by writers who have found “homes” elsewhere through a dedication to writing and have remained open to difference to such an extent that they give us new ways of imagining migration for “citizen[s] of the world”. These writers are then presented in a new light and their experiences as emigrants, immigrants, and expats are reimagined so as to explore the depths to which popular notions of Irishness are grounded on this collective experience of migration and leave-taking.

### EXPAT OR IMMIGRANT?

An important debate has emerged recently over the lexicon of human migration. Mawuna Remarque Koutonin argues in a piece from 2015 in *The Guardian* that the word expat is a “remnant” of colonial times and language; it is, Koutonin argues, one of the “hierarchical words, created with the purpose of putting white people above everyone else”. This book agrees with this view and it extends the observation to an examination of

the role English, and most particularly native English, plays in this hierarchical system of naming. White immigrants who are native English speakers are also more likely to be referred to as expats than immigrants. This is a particularly problematic situation for Irish migrants who are reminded by State documents, presidential speeches, and national newspapers that English is not their “national language,”<sup>7</sup> “native language,” or “our tongue” and that the “Irish language” as “[o]ur language” is the “foundation on which all of our historical, cultural and traditional output has been based. It’s our language.”<sup>8</sup> This is even though Irish writers foundational for Irish identity have often regarded English as “our language”. Irish expats have been happy to avail of the privileges that come with being the white, native English speaker abroad—not least of which is the fact of being labelled expat instead of immigrant or economic migrant—even as they accept patriotically the tenor of the presidential speeches and Irish cultural criticism that describes Irish as their “tongue”. The book will explore the repercussions of this problematic relationship between the English language and notions of Irishness in the context of migration. This book focuses on writers who typically regarded their migrations as periods of non-permanent residence abroad for economic reasons in professions their societies often aligned with cultural capital. For this reason, their migratory personas have most often been described as emigrants and expats. One might even go so far as to say that it was modernist writers in particular, writers such as Hemingway, Stein, and Joyce, who helped popularise the notion of the expat.

However, this book also argues that in the age of the econocracy,<sup>9</sup> of neo-liberalism, and of the social network, the meaning of the word expat has shifted somewhat. The expat identity has become popularised in the Irish media and in State-backed economic networking campaigns as a gateway to adventure abroad for both young professionals and non-professionals who cannot find work at home or who seek greater career opportunities abroad. The recent referendum on Repealing the Eighth Amendment to the Constitution also presented today’s Irish standing army of migrants as jet-setting expats eager to return home at will to help shape the Constitution for those living in Ireland full-time. This is despite the fact that Ireland is the only EU region along with Malta to deny its emigrants voting rights of any kind. In other words, much of the reality of the migrant experience—the sense of opportunity but also the breaking up of families; the repetitive leave-taking in the era of budget airlines; the virtual “visits” home through the Internet; the sense of disappointment and of being let down by one’s country—is

airbrushed out by the consistent presentation of the migrant life *as* expat life of economic gain. This book, therefore, seeks to challenge such popular descriptions of migrant life as expat life by laying bare the realities of migration through the work of these writers, Irish emigrants who are overlooked commentators and life-writers on the effects of migration from, and back into, Ireland.

The recent appearance in national newspapers and on national broadcasters of webpages and discussions devoted to the Irish “abroad” also prioritises the word expat over immigrant when speaking of the Irish experience. I return to this social network expatriatism in Chap. 10. As emigration is now seen in these pieces more as a lifestyle choice than a painful migration arising out of economic necessity, the label expat is seen as more appropriate than emigrant; migration for Irish citizens is now rebranded as a means to being “better off abroad”. In other words, the hierarchical order that expat connotes, one that milks fluency in global English and whiteness for all they are worth in the global marketplace, is to be assumed with confidence regardless of the provenance of this expat privilege. Irish expatriatism as privilege is interrogated in this book by laying bare the role the English language played in how the migrant or nomadic identity was experienced and expressed in key texts that have come to define Irishness and an Irish sense of (un)belonging. Implicit in many of the stories on recent websites is a desire to move abroad for a better living; this is precisely what Irish writers have always done in order to earn a living abroad from writing either because publication in Ireland was economically impossible or because they feared censorship. I return to these somewhat monumentalised and canonical emigrant writers in the following chapters and dress them up momentarily in the colours and concerns of contemporary talk on the expat. In such a context, they are no longer emigrants only but professional writers and travellers who were often uncertain about how long they would stay in a place precisely because they were uncertain about the very meaning of “home” and “nation” and were in the process of redefining these concepts for future generations. In redressing and reframing their work, I aim to bring out not only the economic necessity of their migration, often grounded as it was on a form of penury or inveterate impecuniosity that would today see them labelled as migrants if they had arrived as non-white, non-fluent English speakers. By doing so, I hope the book also problematises the current selling and rebranding of expatriatism. The work of these writers helps us break down the certainty through which we assign categories in today’s lexicon of migration and allows for

these writers to put forward the very notion of world citizenry that Oliver Goldsmith had already given us in the 1760s.

In recent years, Irish culture and society has also been coming to terms with the effects of the economic downturn or Crash. However, Ireland is placed second from top in a recent table on GDP Growth in OECD countries between 2007 and 2017<sup>10</sup>; it has clearly then, in terms of national GDP—a figure that can seem to overlook such recent social crises as the homelessness crisis—survived the recession and weathered austerity. The Crash and post-Crash eras also produced a minor artistic and cultural renaissance with new voices emerging in fiction and poetry and old ones being revisited through commemorative glasses. Continuities with older periods of Irish cultural resurgence and emergence were evident in the treatment of migration in such writers as John Boyne, Anne Enright, and Donal Ryan. The idea of “emergence” can itself capture this incipient wave in all its complexity. Emergence describes a process whereby qualitatively new configurations arise from more basic constituent parts. Irish cultural production of the last decade offers one intriguing case study for such a phenomenon, drawing its significance from a shared experience of boom and bust which has prompted multiple forms of aesthetic departure in unforeseen directions.

One thing that remains constant throughout these periods of Crash, regeneration, and emergence, harbouring within its universal reach elemental fibres of Irishness, is emigration. And yet emigration has become such a constant in discussions and imaginings of Irish life that it is passed over, taken for granted, and rarely explored at its constituent level. Each story of leave-taking possesses an emotional complexity and personal struggle that is often difficult to share and harder to offer consolation for. Emigration is natural; it simply must be endured as it furthers the “national interest”. At a national level, the collective pain is impossible to comprehend and it is easier then to simply track it as a percentage like GDP rise. At a time when Ireland tops, by a big margin, another OECD table on “% of native-born population living abroad”,<sup>11</sup> this book revisits some key Irish writers and reads their works that were enriched by the experience of migration in terms of some important current issues for Irish migrants today. This both draws our attention back to the economic realities of some of our more celebrated migrant lives and reveals that Irishness has become a quality that Irish people come at from a distance due to their duplicitous relationship with English. The loss we assign to language is described as traumatic and thus often ignored; leave-taking and Irishness

as leaving then becomes an allegory for this traumatic, distanced relationship Irish people are told they have with language.

This is a book then that might presume a degree of knowledge and awareness of what is sold as a common experience of Irishness. The introduction begins with an examination of the language of expatriatism and explores the differences in the Irish context in the use of the terms expat, emigrant, and exile. The place of Ireland will help ground what the EU is to become post-Brexit; Ireland is already having to make submissions and claims on behalf of the English language as a continued working language of the EU. However, in the post-Crash environment, Ireland's selling of Irishness had to deal with how to economise the emigration experience. The State has then refocused attention on the branding and economisation of expat experience through the recent national media initiatives "Generation Emigration",<sup>12</sup> "Better Off Abroad",<sup>13</sup> "Emigrant Voices",<sup>14</sup> and "Abroad" (*Irish Times*). These public service broadcasting programmes and national media initiatives, some funded by a licence fee paid by Irish citizens resident in Ireland, clearly demonstrate that Irishness is an identity grounded in emigration. However, ironically, labels such as "Better Off Abroad" sell Irishness as what one gains through becoming a second-class Irish citizen, one who has relinquished voting rights<sup>15</sup> and social welfare privileges, stopped paying taxes to the Irish State, and has physically left the country. The obvious emphasis here in these broadcasts, specifically in the programme from Hong Kong, would appear to be that one becomes "better off" in terms of salary.<sup>16</sup> The Irishness we are sold is therefore now chiefly understood in economic terms. A terrible beauty is born again, one might say, in this decade of commemoration. Romantic Ireland's truly dead and gone; it's with Michael O'Leary in the Algarve.

### DEFINING EXPATRIATISM

In a 2009 article "Expatriation, Expatriates, and Expats: The American Transformation of a Concept,"<sup>17</sup> Nancy L. Green gives a broad historical overview of the terms expatriation and expatriate in the American context. The term expatriation, a term that is less used today in our global age, was of central importance, Green argues, in the early nineteenth century for early American notions of naturalisation, citizenship, and sovereignty. The question about the "peopling of America" (314) made expatriation more about "ingress than egress". So, for example, the American Expatriation Act of 1868 reassured European newcomers, millions of whom were of

course Irish, that “expatriation to the United States and acquisition of American citizenship were secure against demands by their native states” (315). It was also only in 1870 that Great Britain revised its Nationality Law to allow expatriation. Ireland, of course, never had the sovereignty or indeed the necessity to legally allow for expatriation before starvation, famine, and general destitution under colonialism ensured that millions departed. However, Green observes that by the turn of the century, when “peopling” was no longer such a concern for America, “the concept of expatriation had changed radically, from a perspective of ingress to one of egress” with quota laws being introduced in 1921 and 1924 (315). Green traces the earliest American use of the term “expatriate” to Lilian Bell’s novel *The Expatriates*, published in 1900, a novel which generally uses the term as a “derogatory epithet” with some of the interwar American colony in Paris writing in to the *Paris Herald* to say as much.<sup>18</sup> Harold Stearns also published “Apologia of an Expatriate” in 1929 in which he wrote: “No one knows better than I the bitterness of being an expatriate or hates it more than I do” (in Green, 321). The term expatriate also brought another shift in meaning to the notion of expatriation; it had very little to do with legal notions of “loss of citizenship” and was simply about being a “citizen abroad” (320), perhaps in a sense related to Goldsmith’s notion of the “citizen of the world”. Green traces the earliest use of the shortened term “expat” to the British colonial context and the poem “Expat” by D. J. Enright.<sup>19</sup> For Green, it refers to a “new class of citizens abroad” and is not only restricted to “business circles” (323). Green asks the important question about “how a concept [expatriation] implying the severing of ties with one’s place of origin has become a notion [expatriate and expat] linking one to home” (326)? Green argues that the malleability of the concept is down to the fact that the “language of expatriation”, with notable exceptions, has been “replete with notions of freedom and even happiness” (326). Appealing to “the reason and justice of civilized nations as against feudal ones, the right of expatriation has been considered indispensable to ‘the rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness’” (326).

The Irish understanding and mediation of expatriation as emigration has always been far removed from such notions of “freedom” and “happiness”. Expatriation as emigration in the Irish context has nearly always been about destitution, famine, and loss. When Ireland experienced its most dramatic periods of emigration in the nineteenth century it was also largely still feudal and would not have been, in many ways, a “civilized nation” like America and Great Britain, the two regions that were largely

defining the English notions of expatriation and expatriate. However, this also meant that the Irish notion of the emigrant, the expatriate, and the expat was more fluid as it did not have the same legal frameworks and descriptions attached; Irish society most often looked to its writers to define the meanings of these terms. Expatriatism was very much about securing greater human “rights”, greater “liberty”, and the “pursuit of happiness” as artists. For the majority of these Irish expatriate writers, however, the writer’s own exploration of expatriatism often became obscured by the State’s later depiction of mass emigration on a national scale in terms of loss and suffering. This book, therefore, returns to the works of these Irish migrant and expatriate writers, both to explore how their experiences of migration were grounded on the rights and liberties Green associates generally with expatriation, and to argue that recent Irish Government and Irish media initiatives on expatriatism are also, in a sense, finally catching up with, and commercialising, the more positive view that Green associates with the long history of expatriation in the American context.

Expatriatism is a concept that is becoming more important for studies of modernism in particular. In *Travel and Modernist Literature*, Alexandra Peat describes the life and works of such writers as Hemingway, Claude Mackay, and Jean Rhys as a kind of “mobile expatriatism”. Such “mobile expatriatism” helps these writers reappraise how they conceive of nationality, individual identity, and community. Peat connects this migration with what she calls “imaginary pilgrimages,” in such writers as Woolf where the concept of “home” is transformed in the context of empire in “the post-colonial moment” (132). Emily Ridge also describes a new kind of mobile, expatriate identity in *Portable Modernisms* which examines the ways in which an “evolving culture of portability also comes to inform English literary developments in the early twentieth century, on thematic, conceptual and formal levels”.<sup>20</sup> Matthew Hart has a good essay on “expatriate fiction,” but chiefly American modernist expatriate fiction. For Hart, “[a]t its simplest, the term ‘expatriate fiction’ identifies narratives written by Americans who happen to live overseas; more narrowly, it refers to fiction in which the fact of an author’s residence abroad is matched by a concern with how modern life is shaped by the crossing of national borders and the interaction of diverse cultures” (555).<sup>21</sup> Hart admits that it is “difficult to maintain a hard distinction between wholly and merely circumstantial expatriate fiction” (555). Hart also points to the ambivalence of the term and its different forms. He writes that “[a]mbivalence about the social

meanings of expatriatism seems to inhere, however, in the very meanings of the word. As an adjective or noun, 'expatriate' denotes the condition of choosing to live in a foreign country; its verb form, however, refers to the act of forcing a person or group to leave their native land. In this sense, the word implies an uneasy mix of freedom and coercion" (557). However, as I also try to argue in this book, "expatriate" has very different connotations from other words in the "lexicon of migration". Whereas the exile, émigré, or refugee—and emphasis has always been placed on the first two of these in Irish Studies—is "generally presumed to have escaped from physical or spiritual oppression, the expatriate is more typically pulled to a foreign country than compelled to leave home". Hart also argues that "unlike the immigrant who tries to assimilate to a new country, the expatriate is defined by remaining out of place [...] There is first of all the freedom to travel or to live in a manner one could not afford at home. But expatriate fictions also celebrate the imaginative freedom of occupying more than one place at one time: a romantic dualism between home and abroad that enables the ability to conceive oneself as beyond nationality or, alternatively, as at home in all nations (Caesar 1995, 110)" (in Hart, 557).

In the *OED*, the first meaning of expatriate refers to a person who "lives in a foreign country". Expatriate does however have the rarely used reflexive meaning "to withdraw from one's native country" and it can describe the act of renouncing one's citizenship or allegiance. Emigrant, on the other hand, in the *OED*, does still have a first meaning that makes reference to a state of permanence: "One who removes from his own land to settle (permanently) in another". Perhaps it is this sense of permanence that feeds the sense of loss about those Irish migrants who emigrate. Nowadays, of course, air travel affords emigrants the opportunity of returning far more frequently than in previous decades.

Another reason for this reluctance to embrace the language of expatriatism is that Irish writers and politicians have always enjoyed using symbols in speaking of political realities. Symbols make the harsh realities of political life more palatable but also more easily assimilable into a collective conscience that is unwilling to tease out the full social repercussions of political events. We have symbols for Ireland itself as Dark Rosaleen, Mary Horan, or Mother Ireland. These have enabled generations of Irish people to make sense of ideas such as nationalism, emigration, and even family values when the political realities, contexts, and struggles underlying these ideas are difficult to accept. Politicians also consistently draw on symbols

from the Irish language in explaining Irish identity and Irish emigration. For example, in her famous first address to the Irish people upon her inauguration as President, Mary Robinson was already describing herself as a “symbol” to Irish people at home and abroad. Not only this; she also gave a philosophy of symbolism, arguing that “[s]ymbols give us our identity, our self-image, our way of explaining ourselves to ourselves and to others” (John Bowman, 352). This might sound odd coming from someone who had worked all her life in the legal profession, a profession in which legal argument rarely can rely on symbols or symbolism for making a case. However, Mary Robinson goes back to Irish in using the old Irish term for province, *coicead*, what also means a “fifth”, to give a new meaning of belonging and of what she calls a “new Ireland”. She asks, since there are “only four geographical provinces on this island”, “where is the fifth?” (351). She then argues that the “Fifth Province is not anywhere here or there, north or south, east or west. It is a place within each of us – that place that is open to the other, that swinging door which allows us to venture out and others to venture in. [...] If I am a symbol of anything I would like to be a symbol of this reconciling and healing Fifth Province”. All at once the process of passage from Ireland, and into Ireland, and its access to the “70 million people living on this globe who claim Irish descent” (351–2) is connected through this symbol of the “Fifth Province” to each Irish person’s capacity to be a “swinging door”, or to embody “within each of us” this openness to the other that is also an openness to letting people out. It is a complex and unwieldy symbol that confuses openness to others with the difficulties of passage outside Ireland. In moving so quickly from the geographical and political four provinces of Ireland to this “Fifth Province” of the mind or of the soul, there is also a demographic and temporal leap from Irish citizens living in Ireland to those communities living abroad of “Irish descent”, in other words, those communities who have been settled abroad for generations. Just as Robinson’s own identity as a living, breathing person is somewhat veiled by her wanting to be taken so quickly as a “symbol”, the symbol of the swinging door and the Fifth Province is also used to gloss over the reality of people’s lives in the act of passage from one to another, from the four green fields to the generations-old life abroad, usually in English-speaking communities like the US and the UK. What is overlooked in such symbols is that a community does not become of “Irish descent” overnight; it does not move from the reality of living in Ireland to the reality of being of Irish descent without great emotional and personal effort and struggle.

Recent years have therefore brought a change in how emigration and the diaspora are reported; symbolism has given way to syndicalism and synergy. Irish migrants as expatriates are more and more regarded as a mobile army of—not metaphors—but monetary nodes for living networks of Irish at home and abroad. We are addressed no longer as lost and gone forever, but as integral components of the new transnational Irish citizenry that can stake a real claim worldwide for Ireland as the best small country in the world for doing business. We might not be open to the repatriation of our lost millions but we *are* open for business. We are global citizens of a diaspora that no longer needs the light shining in the window of *Áras an Uachtaráin* to remind us that we are not forgotten, for now we have the light of the computer interface to remind us of our connection. This new hyper-mediated citizenry is very much a result of the Information Age and its IT entities and Inforgs; a nation is no longer the “same people living in the same place”, as Leopold Bloom reminded us, but a vast web of global communities with connections back to that “same place”. Cosmopolitanism and transnationalism have long reminded us of the nature of the global citizen and it seems it is time to run with it and economise.

If expatriate writing is simply writing by writers who live overseas or is writing by authors whose residence abroad displays a concern with how modern life is shaped by the crossing of national borders and the interaction of diverse cultures, then of course, it need not be confined to modernist writers such as Joyce, Yeats, and Bowen. National identity and the crossing of “national borders” of the mind long predated the appearance of independence. For this reason, and so as to focus both on the economic dimension of Irish migration and on gain above loss, this book also casts an expatriate, revisionist eye back on such writers as Swift and Goldsmith. The English language was enabling of this expatriate migration in allowing Irish writers to peddle their trade in a new metropolis where they saw themselves to a certain extent as “human capital”. For these writers, the writing, the book, the work, assume such all-encompassing proportions in their impecunious contexts, where the writers are reduced to forerunners of today’s precariat. Oliver Goldsmith writes to his brother the Revd. Henry Goldsmith in February 1759: “You scarce can conceive how much eight years of disappointment anguish and study have worn me down. Imagine to yourself a pale melancholy visage with two great wrinkles between the eye-brows, with an eye disgustingly severe and a big wig, and you may have a perfect picture of my present appearance.”<sup>22</sup> Goldsmith would also go on to “die in debt” as an Irish migrant or expat. This is the

reason the authors see the works as embodiments of their very persons—with Joyce writing how the “words came like drops of blood”—that must be sold for their survival. The economic element was therefore at the root of their migration and their subsequent expat life. It is only in these foreign cities that such human capital as Irish Flesh Made English Word can be embodied and exchanged for sustaining life, adding another dimension to Joyce’s artist as “priest of the eternal imagination”.

Even contemporary management-speak on entrepreneurialism describes a new understanding of expatriatism and the expatriate. Brian L. Connelly, writing in the *International Entrepreneurial Management Journal*, argues that “recent years have seen a marked change in the makeup of the broad category of individuals we consider to be ‘expatriates’”.<sup>23</sup> Connelly argues that scholarship—obviously in the management field—has “focused mainly on expatriatism as a result of bluechip expansion, but other forms of expatriatism may yield different life and work experiences [...]; as the two fields of entrepreneurship and expatriatism begin to overlap, it is changing the nature of what we understand an expatriate to be and how we address the phenomenon of expatriatism” (40). Obviously, our literary writers were always already redefining the nature of the experience of expatriatism and the entrepreneur. While it may seem somewhat distasteful to apply such terms to the works and labours of Yeats, Boland, and Joyce, if literature is to survive the new entrepreneurial shift in academic management speak, then it must work to explore and teach how writers were always instrumental in moulding the meaning of these words for our times. Connelly admits that expatriates do not have to be connected any more to “firms”: “expatriates could also include individuals working on their own in a foreign country without any particular host firm, or ‘sending’ organization” (40–1). However, of most interest is the fact that Connelly and others have devised a new type of expatriate term and category especially for those, like these entrepreneurial writers, who do not belong to any particular category but are defined by their world-changing role. These kinds of expats are therefore suitably described as “Worldchanging Entrepreneurs”, “individuals that participate in a non-profit cause but do not enjoy the resources of a large sending organization”. This group is “labelled Worldchanging Entrepreneurs, borrowing a term from the Harvard Business School’s Social Enterprise Initiative to emphasize the grand, philanthropic nature of these expatriate assignments”. Connelly then suggests that “the vast worldwide network of teachers of English as a foreign language falls into this category”, what Joyce, and the present author, both began their expat careers as.

EXPATRIATISM, WORLD LITERATURE,  
AND TRANSNATIONALISM

It is important to note recent debates on transnationalism and world literature as this is a book examining both transnational and world literature texts. This book also explores how travel outside Ireland very often to non-native English-speaking regions influences the work of different writers. Criticism in the fields of world literature and transnationalism often focuses on how works travel beyond their regions of origin and on issues of translation. The writers examined in this book write predominantly, if only, in English and this book focuses not so much on how their works travel but on how the writers themselves conceive of, and work with, the English language as a medium of expression in their new expat environments. Justin Quinn has noted recently that world literature often privileges the geographical, political, or worldly nature of the works at the expense of their aesthetic qualities; for Quinn, the position of critics such as Emily Apter “too quickly and too finally collapses into national literatures and their views of the world”, while the position of critics such as “Casanova universalizes too readily out of Parisian pride” (32). This book tries to flee the nets of the exclusively national framework and the often less than helpful abstractions of world literature’s universalising. The Irish writers in this book had no option but to travel and work professionally as writers by publishing their work “beyond” what might be regarded as their works’ point of origin, namely the region of their birth; they were worldly *before* they were institutionalised as national in many cases. The work of the writers examined here was always already worldly not only because they wrote in English but because the majority, if not all, had to leave Ireland to get published. It was very often only after this worldly appearance that their work was later fed into narratives promoting the national interest.

The transnational paradigm is often regarded as an alternative to the world literature paradigm; Peter Hitchcock argues that “[w]orld literature hypostatizes the novel and nationness in one fell swoop”, whereas “a transnational chronotope defamiliarizes this conjunction by politicizing and not just aestheticizing the time/space of form” (*The Long Space*, 30). However, Quinn sees the centre-periphery dynamic persisting in the “First World-Third World framework” of Hitchcock’s readings (4). In the end, Quinn looks to the work of the Chinese theorist Shi-mei Shih, whose ideas I also employ to read Irish literature against the grain in terms of diaspora,

to suggest that transnational readings can be “less scripted and more scattered” than world literature readings (Lionnet & Shih, 5). This book follows Shih and Quinn in their descriptions of the kind of framework transnational readings offer, but it also recognises that the experience of Irish writers writing in English in regions where English is not a first or even a second language—as in Hong Kong and China—has been under-examined in Irish postcolonial criticism. Quinn reads East and West in terms of The Cold War States with East referring predominantly to Eastern Bloc countries. In this book, any East-West cultural exploration—and it is a false dichotomy on so many levels—takes place between Asia and the “West”. For example, there are chapters on the work of the Singaporean writer Goh Poh Seng who travelled and worked in Ireland and also a chapter on Robert Hart and John Pope Hennessy’s experiences in China and Hong Kong. The cultural contexts these writers work within very often undermine the neat distinctions and political frameworks Anglophone world literature and transnational criticism assign to the work of writers in English working abroad. This book also does not examine these writers from a purely postcolonial perspective; it does not read only through a glass darkly, so to speak, assigning a haunting sense of loss to any Irish writing in English no matter where it was done. English was described as “our language” by Swift as far back as the seventeenth century; he celebrated the enhancement of English through an observation and recollection of life in Ireland as Irish writers after him have done in diverse ways. Many of the Irish writers here travelled to, and worked in, non-native English-speaking communities and writing in Irish was never a serious consideration for them. The focus of the book is not then on the sense of loss Irish critics have too often associated with the experience of writing in English as an Irish postcolonial writer but rather on the sense of enrichment and possibility expat life afforded the Irish writer working in English.

Expatriatism often describes transnational travel and life abroad in terms of professional life. Irish expats living abroad in regions where English is not the first language of the majority but is recognised as a privileged *lingua franca* must hit the ground running; they must make the most of any local languages they know but also of English as the *lingua franca* that it is. To bemoan the use of English in such circumstances would be disingenuous since these expats are very often only employed in

the new city or country because of their native English. The recent State promotion of the expat life in national media initiatives acknowledges the extent of continued generational migration today and tries to put a positive spin on it. However, it often presents the Irish life abroad in terms of how much of the life “back home”—in the shape of the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) or drink culture—has been exported to the new cities. The transnational realities of travel and life abroad are then slighted; the potential of the rich cultural affordances is diminished. This may be because this new version of the Irish emigration narrative as expatriatism is also grounded on economic gain rather than cultural gain. In returning to canonical Irish writers in this book and reading them in light of concerns these contemporary expat narratives privilege such as a desire to buy property “back home”, I seek to demonstrate how such concerns were shared by some of our most revered cultural figures such as W. B. Yeats. The book then seeks to both challenge the claim that contemporary expat life in being framed at such a high economic pitch needs to be divorced from the rich cultural exchanges transnational travel affords while also demonstrating that our most revered cultural figures were also caught up in the same financial and emotional conflicts expats struggle with today in making their Emirates or Cathay Pacific flights to Dubai or Hong Kong. The intention then is to hollow out the economic narrative of expatriatism while also redeploing the material concerns this narrative raises today in readings of canonical writers. The aim is then to explore how today’s travel narratives that are presented in a manner that privileges the economic perspective can be seen to exhibit more profound cultural and emotional traits when read alongside canonical Irish expat narratives.

### AGAINST DIASPORA?

This book examines how this sense of Irishness that is grounded on economic migration and emigration out of economic necessity is, of course, not a new phenomenon but one whose economic element was often hidden over the past number of decades by a discourse of diaspora. This discourse of diaspora was influenced by presidential speeches that dressed up the economic realities of emigration and expatriatism in romanticised notions of kinship, belonging, and a range of forms of cultural memory that extended from an ethics of memory to an ethics of analogy. Mary Robinson, in her famous inauguration speech of 1990, for example, makes no mention whatsoever of Asia in saying she is proud to represent the “vast community