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家的空間政治：論愛爾蘭劇作家布萊恩・傅利爾《在羅納莎起舞》與《凱絲・麥克吉爾的愛情故事》中的性別、國族建構和女性跨國離散

The Spatial Politics of Home: Gender, Nation-Building and Female Diaspora in Irish Playwright Brian Friel's *Dancing at Lughnasa* and *The Loves of Cass McGuire*

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Abstract

This thesis seeks to explore the spatial politics of home in Irish playwright Brian Friel's plays: *Dancing at Lughnasa* (1990) and *The Loves of Cass McGuire* (1966). I would like to draw upon the theory of social construction of scale, feminist geography on home and other relevant theorizations on home, such as the unhomely, or uncanny, in order to explore the contested relationships between home and Irish women after the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922. Set in Ballybeg, Friel's favorite but fictitious setting in County Donegal of the north-western Ireland, *Dancing at Lughnasa* portrays the political, economic and socio-cultural predicaments of five sisters, further uncovering and destabilizing the normative imaginary of Irish women, home and nation-building in the 1930s. *The Loves of Cass McGuire* delineates the return of an Irish diasporic woman, Cass, from New York, and her incompatibility with the Irish middle-class home, represented by her brother Harry and his household in the 1960s.

Many of Friel's plays are primarily set within the domestic places of home, including kitchen, living room, breakfast room, study, garden, and so forth in plays such as *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* (1964), *The Loves of Cass McGuire* (1966), *Living Quarters* (1977), *Aristocrats* (1979), *Translations* (1980), *Dancing at Lughnasa* (1990), *Give Me Your Answer, Do!* (1997) and *The Home Place* (2005). However, the home delineated by Friel is far from a private, intimate place for rest and recuperation; rather, it is always a problematic and contested place for the characters, who, either live in it or only come to visit, have to struggle with the normative social roles and ideologies embodied in the home of the past or the present. In other words, home depicted by Friel in his plays is never merely a setting or background in which the actions of the plays take place; instead, Friel's plays implicitly reveal that home is not only a material *house* but also a social sphere constituted by multifarious, and even contradictory, social processes and relations within specifically historical and geographical contexts. More often than not, the homes in Friel's plays are either broken or on the verge of breakdown, for they are always already permeated by the political, economic, and socio-cultural transformations beyond the scale of home, despite the desperate endeavors by some characters to create or maintain a bounded, stable home.

In this thesis I will argue that *The Loves of Cass McGuire* and *Dancing at Lughnasa* represent the gendered politics of home in the newly established Ireland after political de-colonization. Moreover, they both stage the contested struggles with the normative gendered mechanism imposed on Irish women's mobility, identity, gender and sexuality within the scale of home. The social imaginary of an Irish

homely home, with its material embodiments respectively in the 1930s and 1960s, is mutually constituted with the gendered identities and relations of the household. Home in both plays means differently for different characters either within the scale of home or in the process of diaspora. Home is a site of feminized domesticity, national order, Catholic virtue and Gaelic traditions, but it is also a conflicting site of power struggles and identity contestation, especially for certain defiant women characters. On the other hand, for those eagerly to sustain a homely home in the normative vision, they also suffer the *unhomely*, or uncanny, sentiment, as they are compelled to recognize the recurrence of the once familiar but concealed existences and facts, embodied by certain household members, in their daily life. Furthermore, they are also pressed to confront the reality that their supposedly private home is always an open, public place perpetually reconfigured by myriad social processes and relations beyond the scale of home. In the process of representing the domestic sphere of home in both plays, Friel not only delineates the various aspects of home constituted by diverse structural forces in different contexts, but also addresses to the conflictory and fluid meanings and feelings of home for varied subjects in their individual struggles to create a place that can be called home for themselves; namely, a sense of belongingness to a certain place. Accordingly, the home depicted in Friel's plays is always an open, intersecting sphere constituted by perpetual processes of flux of socio-spatial dynamics at multiple scales.

Keywords: Brian Friel, home, gender, nation-building, female diaspora, scale, place, unhomely/uncanny

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Introduction

Dancing at Lughnasa (1990) and *The Loves of Cass McGuire* (1966) showcase Irish playwright Brian Friel's attempts at re-membering and re-writing the contested relationships between Irish women, home and nation in the newly independent Ireland. In the early years of his writing career Friel has already sought to explore the gendered politics of home in *The Loves of Cass McGuire*, delineating not only the socio-spatial confinement of women in the domestic sphere of home but also the ways in which Irish migrant women construct and maintain relationships with the home of origin and settlement concurrently, and how their home(land) in Ireland is unable to accommodate them after their homecoming migration. More than twenty years later Friel once again addresses to this similar issue in *Dancing at Lughnasa*. A play dedicated to his mother and aunts, this play is also Friel's continual endeavor at excavating the unspoken and submerged history in Irish nationalist historiography. Unlike *The Loves of Cass McGuire*, which probes the tensions between Irish female migrants and their experiences of home both inside and outside Ireland, *Dancing at Lughnasa* pivots on the construction of and contestation over the idealized national womanhood in Ireland and the normative materiality and imaginary of home in the highly nationalized Western Ireland. Though set in the 1930s and 1960s respectively, both plays represent the conflicts between discrepant womanhoods and the relevant struggles over the boundary of home as well the mobility of women beyond the scale of home in post-independence Ireland. Consequently home is not just a material place or site, but possesses a set of ideas, implications and sentiments for different women in diverse contexts.

Friel in *Dancing at Lughnasa* and *The Loves of Cass McGuire* is particularly

concerned with the relationships between home and Irish women in post-independence Ireland. A politically-committed writer throughout his career, Friel is not hesitant to represent and explore controversial or neglected issues in Irish history from the colonial past to the contemporary era. Brought up as a member of the Catholic minority in Northern Ireland, governed by Protestant governments, Friel is especially keen to and sympathetic with the feelings and conditions of the dispossessed and displaced people. It has been contended that Friel's artistic concerns have moved from more personal and psychic descriptions of the characters in the plays of the 1960s to "broader social, cultural, and historical registers with the individual characters becoming more illustrative or representative of these larger concerns" (McGrath 64-5) in plays such as *The Mundy Scheme* (1969) and *The Gentle Ireland* (1971). Moreover, Friel's later plays in the 1970s are bluntly involved with the "more public and political issues" (65) of Irish culture and history, participating in the debates about and reassessment of the colonial heritages of British imperial rule.

The establishment of the Field Day Theatre Company in 1980 with the actor Stephen Rea marked his resolute determination to intervene in the political and cultural impasse of Northern Ireland generated by the antagonistic confrontations between the Catholic and the Protestant communities, with their continual reverberations and impacts on southern Ireland. By undertaking the task of re-examining Irish history in the colonial era in *Translations* and *Making History* (1988), Friel in the Field Day period started to construct his own literary historiography of Ireland, and more importantly, exposing the ways in which "grand" history is made and interpreted. Writing about both the contemporary epoch and the historical past of Ireland, Friel strives to illuminate the "Northern Troubles" as well as political and cultural problems and difficulties in the Republic of Ireland without obscuring the relevance between the two.

Nevertheless, Friel is not content with interrogating and scrutinizing the issues conventionally regarded as "Grand History;" on the other hand, he always pays close attention to the diurnal life of the ordinary people, excluded or marginalized from the official and popular historiography. After the active involvement in the political and cultural enterprises of Field Day in the 1980s, Brian Friel grew alienated from Field Day, and his first play in the 1990s, *Dancing at Lughnasa* (1990) and his decision to move away from Field Day, for many critics, signify his departure from the overtly political concern in the previous decade. In the context of the heated debates of and controversies over the cultural and political positions of Field Day in the 1980s, Friel's transformation seems to suggest his weariness of being constantly labeled *only* as an Irish nationalist writer by those who were suspicious of his underlying intentions of rewriting the colonial past. When Friel gradually participated less in the activities of Field Day, he also addressed issues seemingly less political in his 1990s plays.

The Loves of Cass McGuire, a play long before the Field Day period, and those after Field Day period like *Dancing at Lughnasa* and *Molly Sweeney* indicate Friel's constant concern with the continual subalternity of Irish women in multiple social conditions after the institution of the Irish Free State. The choice of domesticity and the seemingly private world of female household as the subject matter *de facto* does not imply that Friel deliberately avoids the "grand" history of Ireland, nor does he place it in a secondary place. Rather, through this ostensibly "trivial" subject matter of everyday life in post-independence Ireland, I argue, Friel has always taken heed of the unspoken and unspeakable aspects of Irish history, which have long been ignored by the nationalist historians. Therefore, Friel has always been challenging and destabilizing what constitutes history and how history is produced, like what he ventures conspicuously to do in *Making History* of the Field Day period.

Centering on Friel's *Dancing at Lughnasa* (1990) and *The Loves of Cass McGuire* (1966), this thesis attempts to address the following questions: What are the normative ideas and meanings of home in post-independence Ireland? How do various, intersecting discourses and practices create and make use of distinctive conceptualizations of Irish home? How is this contested social imaginary of Irish home realized in the material house, and how does the latter recursively affect the operation of the former? How does this social imaginary of home produce identity and relations of power in the sphere of the seemingly secluded, serene home in the plays? How do the female characters struggle or negotiate with the hegemonic imaginary of home from their relatively disempowered position? Why is the ambiguous "homely" home always already an "unhomely" one for some characters? How does transnational diaspora re-shape the relationships between Irish migrant women and their home of origin in Ireland? Why do they lapse into the afflictive circumstance of "homelessness" after coming home(land)? Generally speaking, in the process of nation building in Ireland after independence, what are the relationships between home, gender and nation? Eventually, in Friel's plays, what does home mean to the ordinary Irish women in the so-called "post-colonial" era of Ireland?

Most contextual discussions on Ireland in the 1930s of *Dancing at Lughnasa* rivet on how the "alliance between church and state" (Lojek 79) determines the run-of-the-mill life of most Irish women, and the 1937 Constitution is the culmination and embodiment of the gendered ideology of the newly found nation state. The church prelates and government administration together foster "Irish Catholic moral imperatives" (Lojek 84) on Irish women's gender and sexuality. Kate, the head of the Mundy household, is generally regarded by critics as "the bastion of orthodox Christian value" (Andrews 230), as she is the national school teacher, appointed by the local priest. In addition, her involvement in the War of Independence reveals her

commitment to the Irish nationalist cause. Therefore, though without a patriarch among the Mundy home, Kate unequivocally assumes the social position of the patriarch in her attitudes to and conversations with her siblings, relying "on the basis of her income" due to "her job as a teacher" (Lojek 80), and thus on her "complicity" with the coalition of Catholicism and Irish nation-state.

Heather Lynn Donahoe LaForge in her dissertation "Rupturing the Stage: Performing Women in Brian Friel's Theatre" further argues that the Mundy sisters are dominated by the "imposing patriarchal forces" (105), and as a result, they "still live the lives of the dually colonized despite the fact that they have been without a male head of home or a national colonizer for several years" (109). She continues to assert that their desire for the return of Jack to "take his place as a head of the home" suggests "the idea that the women still live within the boundaries of their trauma even though the external forces are not in place" (109). LaForge's argumentation is problematic in a number of aspects. She first employs "trauma" to delineate the traumatic experiences of being an Irish woman after independence, without nuanced distinctions between the sisters' different responses to the patriarchal milieu. The trauma LaForge refers to is the negative impacts imposed by the Irish patriarchal society on the psyche of the sisters. However, "trauma" is probably not an appropriate and adequate term to delineate the predicament of the sisters. Rather, the concept of "subalternity" may be a much better choice to portray and interpret the conditions of the sisters, as this concept not only seeks to understand the continual, and even exasperated, marginalization and exploitation of the minority people, but also their ironic, or inevitable, affiliation with the predominant political ideology and practice (Graham 104-6). Second, the implicit distinction between the "private" Mundy home and the "external" forces intimate the problematic dualistic presupposition of the private, feminine home and the public, male world outside home. Last but not least,

the absence of obvious patriarchal figure or institution does not mean the patriarchal oppression on women is diluted or even non-existent. Kate is exactly the embodiment or practitioner of Irish patriarchal ideology particularly oppressive to her sex. The tenacious adherence to the patriarchal values by the sisters, especially Kate, is only foregrounded by the absence or lack of any patriarchal figures or institutions within the sisters' living environment.

The most indelible moment of the play is certainly the communal dancing by the five sisters early in the play. Following his argument on the dramatic concerns of Friel from the Field Day period to the 1990s, Robert Garratt further affirms that "[t]he strain of language and of writing so pronounced in *Making History* is eased and finally relieved in *Lughnasa* through the non-verbal moments of dance" (83). The sisters' dancing for Garret is interpreted as "in clear opposition to the ordinary affairs of life in Ballybeg and in the lives of the Mundy sisters" (85). Moreover, dance is simultaneously a symbolic concept, "release, escape, connection, romance" (89), and an aesthetic spectacle on the stage (86). Helen Lojek likewise comments that the non-verbal expressions are also of significance in the play. The opening and closing tableaus are collocated with Michael's monologues. And the sisters' frenzy dancing is the "striking non-verbal moment" to release their "sexual frustration" (82).

Although Claudia Harris reckons that Friel as a man writer inevitably reproduces the patriarchal perspective on women, she on the other hand claims that in the scene of the dancing he "makes available an opportunity for its subversion" (45), through the collaborative performances of women actors, who can make use of the "gap in the text" (44) or "Friel's open-ended portrait" (45) to "rin[g] of an authenticity that everyone can recognize" (45). Nevertheless, she does not interpret the dancing entirely in a positive manner. Alluding to the comments by male reviewers on the dance, she concludes that they focus on the "grotesque nature of the dance" (48), and

the sisters in dancing are esteemed as "dangerous, inexplicable aberrations…monsters in an androcentric, male-centered world" (59). The dancing for Harris is simultaneously a subversion of the sisters and the exposure of men's conviction of women's unruly irrationality and lack of governance.

The communal dancing of the sisters is regarded by Elmer Andrews as "a contravention and violation" (233), a "break in the acknowledged order, and irruption of the inadmissible within the usual routine, a ritualised suspension of everyday law and order" (223). In contrast, Gerry's dancing is the "ballroom dancing, a respectable civilised form of dancing which demonstrates the triumph of order and control" (225), as opposed to the sister's spontaneous dancing, "a regression to unchoreographed instinct, the unleashing of primitive, even savage, feeling" (225). Moreover, the sisters' dancing is also related to the paganism of Lughnasa in the back hills, "a hidden, submerged culture which neither colonial influence nor Christian teaching has been able to extinguish" (226). And the accident of Young Sweeney for Kate represents "the dire consequences of yielding to 'pagan' and dissolute impulses" (226). Paganism is therefore referred to the undesired, negative characteristics and performances unacceptable to the regulatory norms of Irish Catholicism. But Andrews tends to reproduce the denigrating view on those considered as pagan, rather than interrogating the fluid construction of the so-called paganism and orthodoxy, and questioning the perspective which contributes to such ostensible opposition.

Anna McMullan in her article also shares similar view with Andrews, arguing that the tensions and contests between "authority" and "otherness" can be perceived in *Dancing at Lughnasa*. First, she maintains that the play "incorporates a tension between the voice and vision of an author-narrator and the alterity of performance" (90), and later elucidates that there is "a contrast…between the frugal lives of the sisters, ruled by strict Catholic dictates, and the wildness and spontaneity of their

‘pagan’ dance” (90), and moreover, Michael’s last monologue declares the “opposition between language and its corporeal ‘other’, dancing, which reverberates through the play” (90). Dancing is initially looked upon as the disruptive other to the ecclesiastical and nationalist authority on women and female body by Kate, but later it serves for her and her sisters as “a release from such relentless self-restraint and subjection to authority” (93). In short, McMullan upholds that the sisters’ dancing, the sisters themselves at dancing, the relevant Lughnasa and Ryangan festivals as well as their dancing rituals are the subversive otherness to the established order of Catholicism in the world of the Mundy sisters. But this bipartite interpretation between “authority” and “otherness” ignores the ambiguous relationship between “authority” and Kate, as well as Friel’s descriptions of their dancing as “consciously and crudely caricaturing themselves, indeed of near-hysteria being induced” (Friel 22).

One of the theatrical devices used in *The Loves of Cass McGuire* is the “rhapsody” in the end of each three act by three different characters. Employing rhapsody, the musical terminology, to delineate these three soliloquies, Friel puts emphasis on the illusory nature and spurious contents of each monologue. Elmer Andrews argues that Cass’s rhapsody near the denouement of the play indicates that she cannot help but “embrace the [gender and family] values which Harry asserts against her at the beginning” (103), and has “surrendered her own rebellious will and defiant individualism and assimilated Harry’s value” (103). McMullan in “Performativity, Unruly Bodies and Gender in Brian Friel’s Drama” likewise proposes that what Cass concocts in her rhapsodic illusion is exactly the regulatory gender performativity initially rejected by her (148-9). Most criticisms on Cass’s rhapsody regards her rhapsody as her ineluctable submission to cultural ideology of gender and nation; nevertheless, it is likely that in her desperate endeavor to construct a homely

home out of the unhomely asylum, Eden House, she actually acts a subversive performativity of gender and family norms of Irish middle class during the 1960s in her rhapsody. In other words, she does not just reiterate and reproduce, but more likely, also exposes, flouts and satirizes them, thus negotiating with the normative codes of gender and sexuality imposed on Irish (migrant) women. Her pronouncement of "home at last" in the end of the play is therefore ambiguous, and should not just be interpreted as her outright surrender to the normative social order.

Focusing on the issues of gender and sexuality in this play, McMullan in her article further comments that "Friel's drama certainly critiques post-independence Ireland as a society stifled by reified patriarchal authority and an economic, class and gender system" (143). She argues that *Cass McGuire* "exposes the pedagogic and performative mechanisms through which social norms and corporeal (including sexual) regimes are inscribed on individuals in order to reproduce disciplined or docile bodies, or to marginalize those who do not conform" (146). Cass is first marginalized to the Eden House by Harry's family, gradually loses her blatant recalcitrance, and ultimately, at least ostensibly, is domesticated and contained by the dominant gender norms, since the re-membered past in her rhapsody resembles the bourgeois value and respectability practiced by Harry and his family. Yet is Cass's final performance a regulatory gender performativity or subversive one, in order to survive in the Eden House after being rejected by Harry's apparently ideal family and home? The general critical tendency is inclined to reckoning Cass's rhapsody as her capitulation to the normative gender and sexual regime of the 1960s Ireland, but her putative concession is likely to be her "mimetic destabilization" (McMullan 144), which emulates the social order in order to parody its preposterous regulation on what a homely family and its social/gender relations are supposed to be, and to further expose that alternatives are simply esteemed as defiant transgression.

Related to the issue of gender and sexuality is the construction of home in the play. Andrews remarks that Cass is characterized by Friel as a "loud, bawdy, impulsive, drunken and foul-mouthed…disruptive force which frightens and shocks the established order" (96) represented by Harry and his wife Alice, the "traditional middle-class, Catholic living in the genteel setting of their home" (96). Likewise, McMullan alike observes that the home setting, Cass's mother and Alice altogether construct the gendered ideology of Irish urban bourgeois house in the 1960s (146-7). In spite of the social and cultural tug-of-war between Cass and Harry's family as well as the community, Andrews chooses to maintain that at length for Cass "home is in the private core of mind, hermetically sealed off from the external world" (104). What Andrews refers to is Cass's own re-imagination of her life in the rhapsody, which seems contradictory to the reality, but throughout the play Cass has *ipso facto* strained to negotiate with the dominant social imaginary of home in post-independence Ireland, in order to create a place that can be called home.

In order to approach the issue of home in Friel's plays more theoretically, I primarily draw upon contemporary formulations of the concept of scale by Sallie Marston, Neil Smith and Erik Swyngedouw. In addition, feminist geographical discussions of home, including those by Doreen Massey, Linda McDowell, Alison Blunt and Robyn Dowling, Peter Somerville and Rosemary Marangoly George are also called upon. Last but not least, other relevant explorations of home, such as the uncanny/unhomely explored by Sigmund Freud and Homi Bhabha, are also employed to interpret the peculiar psychological condition of certain characters in the sphere of home. Chapter One will introduce and elaborate more comprehensively the concept of spatial scale developed in the discipline of geography. However, instead of going directly to scale, I will first briefly recount how space is approached before and after the Geographical Turn of the 1970s in such disciplines as geography, sociology and

literary and cultural studies. The conceptualization of absolute space has been gradually replaced by the relational concept of space, as the social production of space becomes the norm in the academic studies of space. Then I will elucidate how the notion of scale develops among the myriad concepts and terminologies of space as one of the means to explore home—the concept of scale not only rivets on the specificity of each scale but also the embedded interrelations between scales.

Employing the concept of scale to interpret the home in Friel's plays helps illuminate both how the home is produced and what aspects of home is constituted in particular contexts. The latter part of this chapter thereby will attempt to offer a reading of Friel's two plays mostly through the notion of scale, elucidating what dimensions of home are constructed by what social processes in the context of Irish nation formation in the 1930s and 1960s respectively. The last part of the chapter then will amplify the ways in which Irish nationalism, British colonialism, Irish Catholicism and post-Famine economic developments altogether shape an ideal of Irish womanhood and simultaneously an Irish homely home as a rightful, or exclusive, place of women in the newly independent Ireland.

Beginning with a comparative study between Teresa Deevy's *The King of Spain's Daughter*, Chapter Two is going to explore the spatial politics of home in post-independent Ireland by arguing that Friel's *Dancing at Lughnasa* represents and undermines the naturalized relationships between women, home and nation in the 1930s, contending how the idealized national womanhood practiced in the domestic sphere of home is always a socio-spatial disempowerment of women. Moreover, the homely, socially appropriate and ideal, home eagerly maintained by Kate as a private, bounded place is also in the perpetual process of being transfigured by the flux of other socio-spatial dynamics in addition to Irish nationalism and Catholicism beyond the scale of home. The Mundy sisters in their kitchen of the typical rural cottage of

Western Ireland constantly struggle with the regulatory gender mechanism embodied in the social imaginary of home of the newly independent Ireland, contesting the validity of categorizing women into simplified oppositions. In reality the Mundy home is always an unhomely home, for the sisters regularly defy the normative meanings and ideas of home through their transgressions of identity, gender, sexuality and place. Moreover, the Mundy home is also restructured by the return of Father Jack and the intrusion of the knitting factory in Ballybeg. The former disrupts the Irish ideal home as a Catholic and nationalist unit through Jack's association with the "pagan" culture and his collusiveness with the British imperial enterprise in Africa. The latter subverts the dualistic distinction between home and world and other relevant connotations, transforming the Mundy home to a site of social reproduction of capitalist production, and exploiting women as both an unpaid domestic labor and a lowly-paid work force. Constituted by diverse social processes in the context of nation formation, the imaginary, materiality and social identities of Mundy home are constantly negotiated by the household members, and the home is never private and enclosed but a unique public sphere, open and porous.

Chapter Three will be primarily concerned with Irish female migrants and their experiences of home in Friel's *The Loves of Cass McGuire*. In contrast to Alice, the embodiment of an ideal Irish womanhood in the domestic sphere of home, Cass's migratory experiences beyond the scale of home of origin in Ireland transgress the border of home and the restricted extent of the mobility of women. This chapter thereby argues that Cass' diasporic experience home is incongruous with that of Harry in his Irish bourgeois home; moreover, her sexuality, femininity and national identity are continually problematized in Ireland of the 1960s upon her homecoming as a result of her initial transgression of the boundary of home and attempt at access to places beyond home. Her ultimate condition of homelessness is hence the

consequence of her defying Irish idealized national womanhood and the socio-spatial containment within the home. After a concise survey of some characteristics of Irish female migration, I will contend that *The Loves of Cass McGuire* pays particular attention to the homecoming migration of women migrants and the negotiations with the place(s) called home. Harry's urban, middle-class home in the 1960s initially seems to conform to the mainstream ideal, though different from the rustic cottage of the 1930s in the material form. Nevertheless, the sarcastic portrayals of Gran as both the materialization of the feminized image of nation and the reflection of the constraint of the mobility of women in reality expose the socio-spatial disempowerment of an ideal Irish woman like Alice in the scale of home. On the other hand, though leaving the home of origin in Ireland, Cass has been striving to create her home both in Ireland and outside Ireland. However, a denationalized migrant woman, Cass is unable to be accommodated in the model home of Harry upon her return to Ireland, because her womanhood is incompatible with the gendered identity of the Irish homely home, and on the other, her experiences of home developed in her diasporic experiences conflict with Harry's bourgeois home as a enclosed, singular one. Ultimately Cass is rendered homelessness again, as her "homing desire" is twice thwarted, but she still manages to create a place of belongingness in the unhomely asylum Eden House, the "home" for the elderly.

Following the previous chapters, the conclusive chapter will aim to compare the respective discussions on *Dancing at Lughnasa* and *The Loves of Cass McGuire*, attempting at deriving a more general but nuanced observation and argument of Irish women, home and nation in Brian Friel's drama. I will first review how Irish nationalism and Catholicism lead Irish women to be produced as a gendered subject and the home place as a site of feminized domesticity, Gaelic culture, Catholic morality and reproduction of the nation in the process of nation-building. The

predominant cultural imaginary of an Irish home is also reflected in the material form, though with differences in the decades following Irish independence. However, the home for Irish women, both in the domestic sphere of house and beyond the scale of home in diaspora, is also a site of political contestation and identity formation, as they have to negotiate with the normative gendered order practiced in the home, and to create their place of home, a place of attachment and affection, in their quotidian life—either continually stuck in their original home or driven out from it. On the other hand, for those committed to molding their home in the dominant vision, the existences of certain "deviant" household members force them to recognize the once familiar yet concealed facts, and to suffer the *unhomely* sentiment explored by Freud. And they are also compelled to realize that their home is far from a private, domestic place, but always an intersecting sphere constituted both through the public and the private.

In this thesis I will therefore argue that *The Loves of Cass McGuire* and *Dancing at Lughnasa* represent the gendered politics of home in the newly formed Ireland after political de-colonization. Moreover, they both stage the contested struggles with the normative gendered mechanism imposed on Irish women's mobility, identity, gender and sexuality within the scale of home. The social imaginary of an Irish homely home, with its material embodiments respectively in the 1930s and 1960s, is mutually constituted with the gendered identities and relations of the household. Home in both plays means differently for different characters in their own subject positions. Home is a site of feminized domesticity, national order, Catholic virtue and Gaelic traditions, but it is also a conflicting site of power struggles and identity contestation, especially for certain defiant women characters. On the other hand, for those eagerly to sustain a homely home in the normative vision, they also suffer the peculiar *unhomely*, or uncanny, sentiment, as they are compelled to

recognize the recurrence of the once familiar but surmounted existences and facts in their daily life. Furthermore, they are also pressed to confront the reality that their supposedly private home is always an open, public place perpetually reconfigured by myriad social processes and relations beyond the scale of home. In the process of representing the domestic sphere of home in both plays, Friel not only delineates the various aspects of home in different contexts, but also addresses to the conflictory and fluid meanings and feelings of home for varied subjects in their individual struggles to create a place that can be called home for themselves, namely, a sense of belongingness to a certain place. Accordingly, the home depicted in Friel's plays is always an open, intersecting sphere constituted by perpetual processes of flux of socio-spatial dynamics at multiple scales.

The given interpretations of *Dancing at Lughnasa* and *The Loves of Cass McGuire* are primarily concerned with the issue of gender in the increasingly patriarchal society after independence. Though focusing on the predicaments of Irish women and their negotiations with the normative gendered mechanism in everyday life, the existing criticisms do not address to the issue of space in the social experiences of the women characters in Friel's plays. Home as the primary locus of the plays is only referred to as the background and setting instead of being explored critically as the significant constituent of the social life of the Mundy sisters, Alice, Gran and Cass. This thesis therefore seeks to explore the neglected issue of space, or more precisely home, in both *Dancing at Lughnasa* and *The Loves of Cass McGuire*, elucidate the processes and outcomes of the construction of home in each play, and hence understand the everyday experiences of ordinary Irish women more comprehensively and sophisticatedly. Moreover, by drawing attention to the issue of home or space in these two plays in this thesis, it is also possible to further interrogate the home places in other plays of Friel, especially those set in the domestic scenes of

Ballybeg.

Through studying both *Dancing at Lughnasa* and *The Loves of Cass McGuire*, this thesis as well offers a critical analysis of the spatial issue in Irish nationalism and the process of nation-building. In addition to the invented nature of nationalism, the gendering of national imaginary and the hegemonic nature of the new nation-state, Irish nation formation also simultaneously constitute the imaginary, materiality and social relations and identities of different places, especially the national, regional (Western Ireland) and home scale. This thesis therefore uncovers the ways in which the feminized imagination of Ireland is not only relevant to the construction of an ideal Irish womanhood but also an ideal homely home in the name of national stability and order after the long-term political upheavals of de-colonization. Furthermore, through *Dancing at Lughnasa*, the thesis is able to reveal the process of contestation over the meanings, contents and boundaries of home for rural Irish women in the 1930s. On the other, through *The Loves of Cass McGuire*, this thesis addresses to the ignored issue of Irish female migration in existing criticisms, further examining the intricate relationships between Irish migrant women and the home(s) of origin and settlement after the foundation of the new nation-state in the 1960s.

In spite of the limited scope and study, it is hoped that this thesis can contribute not only to the study of the drama of Brian Friel by offering fresh critical insights and interpretations, but also to the understanding of the much discussed Irish nationalism, the prerequisite context for approaching Irish drama in the twentieth-century, by drawing attention to the aspect of home and space in the process of nation constitution.

Chapter One

Social Construction of the Scale of Home in the Context of Irish Nation-Building and Brian Friel's Drama

Ⅰ. Space in Brian Friel's Plays

The settings of Friel's plays serve not just a backdrop in which events take place and characters interact with each other. More often than not, these settings are endowed with meanings by and for those within or without them, and are the material products of diverse, and even contradictory, social processes and relations embodied and represented by the characters. *The Freedom of the City* (1973), a play about the Bloody Sunday of 1972, takes place in the Guildhall of Derry City, the political icon of Protestant rule in the west of Northern Ireland. The iconic Guildhall as well as the sectarian communities and territories of Derry are the results of the long-term antagonism between different political persuasions, Irish nationalism and British Unionism and Ulster nationalism. Furthermore, these governmental buildings and territories recursively aggravate the political contests between Catholics and Protestants in their quotidian life. One of Friel's most renowned plays, *Translations* is primarily set in the hedge school and the village of Ballybeg which are undergoing tumultuous upheavals— the imperial cartographical project with the translations of local place names into English and the introduction of education in English. Going through manifold processes of "translation" practiced by the imperial administrators and armies and assisted by some Irish locals, the imaginary and material landscape of Ballybeg of north-western Ireland are significantly reconfigured by the British imperial project to domesticate and command the alien colony. But almost

simultaneously these imperial ventures are contested by the local Irish through various strategies of re-confirming the land and territory, which are trespassed and encroached both discursively and materially by the colonial force.

Ⅱ. Ballybeg and the Domestic Places

The community of Ballybeg, the fictitious place in County Donegal in north-western Ireland in a great number of Friel's plays, is usually employed by Friel to be the place where the characters conflict with each other, and restructure the ideas and meanings of the place. The natural landscape and cultural mores of western Ireland are generally perceived as the exact embodiment of authentic, unadulterated Irishness in Irish nationalist trope and ideology of the anti-colonial campaigns such as Gaelic League, for this place is considered to be least "contaminated" by the foreign, colonial influences. Landscapes such as the natural scenery, the pastoral idyll and the thatched cottage with the comely maidens are celebrated, in order to forge a sense of national belonging, and to differentiate the indigenous community in such natural landscape from the alien English intruders.

Nevertheless, in Friel's plays, Ballybeg is constructed more as a place of incarceration and parochialism than that of empowerment and solidarity. The domestic places in Ballybeg especially feature in Friel's Ballybeg plays: the kitchen and bedroom in *Philadelphia, Here I Come* (1964), the living room and garden in *Living Quarters* (1977), the study, lawn and gazebo of the "Catholic Big House" in *Aristocrats* (1979), the restored thatched cottage in *The Communication Cord* (1982), the shabby home in *Dancing at Lughnasa* (1990), the old manse in *Give Me Your Answer, Do!* (1997), and the Lodge of Anglo-Irish Ascendency in *The Home Place* (2005). Characters of varied identities and ideologies conflict and negotiate with each

other in the so-called private and intimate home in these different plays. It can be argued that Friel's attention to the domestic places and the everyday routines reveals not only his concern with the unspoken and unspeakable histories of the ordinary Irish, neglected in the nationalist and revisionist historiography, but also his explorations of the way in which even the most intimate recesses of domestic place are not the bounded and fixed platform upon which characters interact with each other. Both Ballybeg and the households within it therefore are the material outcomes of the various social-spatial dynamics and forces, but they also exert influences on characters within them in a dialectical way.

In order to offer a more sophisticated language and framework to discuss the formations and contestations of *home* in Friel's plays featuring women protagonists, I draw upon the theory of social constructionist approach to "scale", feminist geographical explorations of home and other relevant theorizations on home. This chapter proposes to elucidate the central tenets and formulations of the social construction of "scale" developed in contemporary theoretical and empirical studies. I will first point out generally how "space" is approached in early western social and humanistic studies and how it has later been reformulated after the "geographical turn" since 1970s. Then I will account briefly how the concept of "scale" emerges in the studies of space. The latter part of this chapter will thereupon be preoccupied with elucidating the contemporary conceptualizations of scale, further offering a reading of how the scale of home is made in the context of Irish nation-building and in Friel's plays as well as the consequences of these processes of constructing of the home scale.

Ⅲ. Conceptualizations of Space before and after Geographical Turn

What is space? Or, to put it another way, how is space conceptualized and critically approached? Space or geography, unlike time or history, is usually perceived as a background or setting in which objects exist and events take place, either in common understanding or early academic theorizations. Space has been regarded as a taken-for-granted entity, which is "self-evident, unproblematic, and unrequiring of theory" (Smith 61). Michel Foucault in "Questions on Geography" contends that "[s]pace was treated as the dead, the fixed, the undialectical, the immobile" (68), on the contrary, "time…was richness, fecundity, life, dialectic" (68). In humanistic and social disciplines researchers have generally paid attention to the various political, economic, socio-cultural events, transformations and crises in diverse historical and contemporary eras. Space comes into the discussions only as a "ground on which events 'takes place'" (Smith 63) or a "field within which history unfolds" (63). In other words, space is not considered as worthy an object of study as time is, but only as a given, ontological platform on which human agents negotiate and contend with each other. This strain of understanding of space is characterized as "absolute space" (Smith 64), for those who advocate this conception of space prefer to look upon space as a universal of human existence or a fixed container instead of interrogating the shifting process through which space is shaped and organized through the practical activities of human agents and groups in order to achieve certain aims or resolve specific problems.

Since the 1970s scholars from distinct disciplines such as geography, social theory, and literary and cultural studies have sought to reassert space "as a neglected world of potentially novel and unexplored concepts" in the trend of "geographical turn" (Smith 60). In the domain of literary and cultural studies the metaphorical uses of space has been prevalent and a wide range of spatial metaphors are frequently employed to delineate and interpret certain social and cultural phenomena and

conditions, including “subject positionality, locality, mapping, grounding, travel, (de/re)centering, theoretical space, ideological space, symbolic space, conceptual space, space of signification, territorialization” (Smith 62-3). The frequent employments of spatial metaphor “revea[l] the connection between social experience and place in the social structure” (Smith 63). In other words, spatial metaphors divulge the importance of space not as a merely fixed and pre-existing ground, but as a pivotal component that is produced and in turn produces the social activities and relations. Nonetheless, this group of spatial metaphors still relies on the problematic conceptualization of space as absolute space. Although these spatial metaphors do not genuinely talk about space *per se*, they are still predicated upon the way in which space is considered in the first hand, for the operation of metaphor works by the principle of substituting one item for another through their “similarity,” through which “an incompletely understood object, event, or situation” is substituted by an other, which is “assumed as the unproblematic Other, already known” (Smith 63). And the spatial metaphors in literary and cultural studies are inclined to reinforce space as an ontologically given category of absolute space instead of questioning and examining it, despite the academic tendency to retrieve space from the margin of academic discussions both as a critical vocabulary and perspective.

In the domains of social theory and geography, after the “geographical turn,” the notion of absolute space was renounced and a *relational* conception of space has been developed. A relational conception of space refers to the fact that the meanings, functions and contents of any space are produced by particular sets of intersecting social interactions and processes, which in turn are conditioned by the place within which the operate. And this place is also implicated with other places of different sizes, levels and relations (Howitt 56). The terminology “spatiality” or the “socio-spatiality of everyday life” (Swyngedouw 168) connotes the idea that social

life is related to and embodied in space, and simultaneously, space is socially produced by social life. Erik Swyngedouw in "Excluding the Other: The Production of Scale and Scaled Politics" contends the way in which space is constructed as *place*:

> All social life is necessarily "placed" or "situated", and engaging place is fundamental to maintaining the process of life itself. Engaging place(s) is inevitably a transformative process and often implies some sort of "creative destruction" or "destructive creation" of nature/place. This "engagement" is always an already social *process*: it is a metabolic transformation that *takes place* in association with others and extends over a certain geographical space. (168)

Any space prior to human interventions only becomes a meaningful place, after it has been shaped and transfigured through human practices and activities by various social agents or organizations with diverse, and even contradictory, aims and intentions. Furthermore, the process of conducting any social life does not just "take place" in certain place; rather, the process also offers specific meanings and feelings to this particular place both for those within and without it. Therefore, conducting social life also entails both discursive and material transformations—material architectures and institutions as well as abstract ideas, beliefs and ideologies of certain aspects of everyday life are thus constantly restructured and contested, as some will be replaced by new alternatives and some will become transfigured to be a hybrid outcome of intense negotiations. This transformative process is called a *social process* because transformations of any place are practiced through deliberate human interactions and contestations instead of naturally given. Moreover, this social-spatial process involves the operation of power relations, "the multiple relations of domination/subordination and participation/exclusion" (Swyngedouw 169), which struggle with the "control over and access to transformed nature/place" (169) by different agents and

organizations. Some will become disempowered, and even dis-placed, during this contested social process of power struggles, and some will become empowered to command over a greater range of space, and render others trapped in certain space.

Ⅳ. Social Constructionist Approaches to Scale

Neil Smith in his article "Contours of a Spatialized Politics" (1992) points out that the difficulty in contemporary reassertion of space "as a neglected world of potentially novel and unexplored concepts" (60) is "the lack of any articulated language of spatial difference and differentiation" (61). He attempts to develop conceptions of "scale" as a critical framework and vocabulary to analyze the "socio-spatiality of everyday life" (Swyngedouw 168). Scale is not a new concept in the discipline of geography and there are several different uses of scale:

> *Cartographic scale* is the relationship between the distance on a map to the corresponding distance "on the ground". *Geographical Scale* refers to the spatial extent of a phenomenon or a study. *Operational Scale* corresponds to the level at which relevant processes operate. Finally, scale also refers to measurement or the level of resolution, such that large-scale studies incorporate coarse resolution while small-scale studies are based upon fine resolution. (Marston, "Social Production" 220)

These various approaches to scale, however, do not address the question of how scale is socially produced. Since the early 1990s "human geographers with social theory interests" (Marston 219) have adopted "a constructionist framework" (220) to explore the concept of scale as a social construction, not as an ontologically given category. Smith purports that scale is "a primary means through which spatial differentiation 'takes place'" (62) and "an understanding of geographical scale might provide us with

a more plausible language of spatial difference" (62). In order to provide a more sophisticated language to discuss space and spatial differentiation, Smith is among the first theorists to develop scale as a critical framework and terminology to understand how space is shaped and transformed through social activity and process. The feminist geographer Linda McDowell also contends that scale is the "socio-spatial definition of difference between different *kinds* of places" (4). Scale is then further classified into a sequence of specific but nested scales: "body, home, community, urban, region, nation, [supranational], global" (Smith 66). This sequence of scale can be employed to interpret any place of varied size, content and boundary, illuminating the historical and geographical specificity of the place being addressed to, and further, its relationships to other places.

Since the 1990s *social constructionist* approach to scale has become the established theoretical foundation of academic discussions of scale. Sallie Marston in her comprehensive review of the empirical case studies and the theory-building of social production of scale offers a sophisticated overview of how scale is understood and approached in recent academic researches. She first points out that scale is "not an ontologically given category" ("A Long Way" 172), nor is it "a preordained hierarchical nomenclature for ordering the world" (172). This rejection of scale as a natural, given entity reflects the current renouncement of the concept of absolute space in addressing any spatial phenomena. Furthermore, although scale can be roughly categorized as body, home, community, city, region, nation, supranational, and global, this "typology of discretely different scales" (Smith 66) does not imply that they are "rigid separations of spatial spheres" (66); rather this typology or sequence reveals the "active social and political connectedness of apparently different scales" (66) produced by a set of intersecting social processes. Therefore, scale is regarded as "a contingent outcome of the tensions between structural forces and the

interventions of human agents" through distinct social processes within "the context of particular histories and geographies" (Marston, "A Long Way" 172). Furthermore, scale as the contingent and temporary outcome of the process of social practices and activities also recursively affect the operation of the latter in a dialectical way, as Smith asserts that "the construction of scale is not simply a spatial solidification or materialization of contested social forces and processes….Scale is an active progenitor of specific social processes" (66).

However, scale-making is not an abstract process, it also results in material outcome. The process of scale production is not only a discursive practice; it is also a tangible result out of the practices of everyday life (Marston, "A Long Way" 173), either in concrete buildings or institutions. And the contents, relations and boundaries of any scale are always fluid and perpetually transgressed, since the social processes, including economic, cultural, social, and political forces, implicated in the production of any scale are often "contradictory and contested" (Marston, "A Long Way" 173). To put it more specifically, these diverse, intersecting, and often conflicting, social processes and practices involve state intervention, capitalist production, political parties, political activists, oppositional movements, social production, consumption and so forth (Marston 174).

As the previous elaborations of the production of scale indicate, the perpetual processes of scale reconfigurations by various structural components and dynamics lead to a "gestalt of scale" (Smith 169)—"geographical configurations as a set of interacting and nested scales become produced as temporary stand-offs in a perpetual transformative, and on occasion transgressive, socio-spatial power struggle" (169). In the process of any scale configuration specific and various social identities are constituted with unequal power relations, and scale also inevitably becomes the "site of potentially intense political struggle" (Smith 62). As McDowell affirms, scale

making is “made through power relations which construct the rules which define boundaries” (4) and the boundaries are “both social and spatial—they define who belongs to a place and who may be excluded, as well as the location or site of the experience” (4). Swyngedouw also elucidates that some people are trapped in certain scale or place, while some command over larger scales (170). During the process of power struggles, “domineering organizations attempt to control the dominated by confining the latter and their organizations to a manageable scale” (Swyngedouw 169), but often “subordinated groups attempt to liberate themselves from these imposed scale constraints by harnessing power and instrumentalities at other scale” (169). Desiring to liberate themselves from the confinement to a certain scale, subordinated groups sometimes attempt to form collective resistance with other groups of interests, developing large-scale oppositional movements at urban, regional, national and even global scales. However, the power relations are not as bipartite as the previous assertions seem to imply. The subordinated groups do often perpetrate their own confinement to a certain scale and their disempowerment through passive subordination. In addition, some members of the subordinated groups choose to be politically affiliated to the hegemonic, exploitative system maintained by the domineering groups. Surveying the contested historical geography of capitalism, Swyngedouw observes that:

> The historical geography of capitalism exemplifies this process of territorial “scalar construction of space” and the contested production of scale. Engels long ago suggested how the power of the labour movement, for example, depends on the place where and the scale over which it operates, and labour organizers have always combined strategies of controlling place(s) with building territorial alliances that extend over a certain scale. Capitalists have usually also been very sensitive to and have

> skillfully strategized—often much better than labour or other movements—around issues associated with the geographical scale of their operations and paid careful attention to the importance of controlling greater spaces in their continuous power struggle with labour and with other capitalists. (170)

The power struggles of different groups, as those between capitalists and labour movements indicate, inevitably involve the struggle over scales at different historical times. Scale production is therefore never a neutral process, but already a contested politics between different agents and groups with distinct goals and interests. The process of its power struggles therefore "change the importance and role of certain geographical scales, reassert the importance of others, and sometimes create entirely new significant scales" (Swyngedouw 169). The content, relations, boundaries, functions, roles, and meanings of any scale are especially and conspicuously transformed "during periods of great social, economic, cultural, political and ecological turmoil and disorder" (170).

In sum, it can be argued that the theorization of social production of scale is developed and employed to elucidate how different agents and groups adopt sundry activities, practices and strategies, such as those of capitalist production, state regulation, oppositional movements and social reproduction, in order to achieve certain goals, whether they are political, economic, or socio-cultural, or to resolve certain problems encountered in everyday social life. These social processes and practices often conflict and contradict with each other, contending how a place should be considered and constructed. And these social processes operate at different but nested scales, simultaneously transfiguring their roles, functions, contents, and meanings. However, other agents and groups will react to the socio-spatial practices of the former agents and groups, undertaking, or attempting to undertake, similar

interventions to ultimately meet their own interests and purposes. These shifting processes of social interventions and scale constructions result in material and tangible architectures, institutions and landscapes. The social-spatiality of everyday life is therefore always a perpetually contested process of power struggles and negotiations between agents and organizations with different identities in distinctively historical and geographical contexts.

Ⅴ. Reading Home in Friel's Plays and the Context of Irish Nation-Building through Social Constructionist Approach to Scale

The concept of scale offers a critical framework to approach the issue of space among manifold spatial terminologies. Grounded in the notion of social construction, the concept of scale elucidates generally how a particular kind of place is produced and what specific outcomes are constituted in distinct social contexts. Therefore, it is helpful to figure out how the scale of home, and other scales such as the national and regional, in the context of Irish nation-building is constructed by what kinds of social processes and dynamics and what specific aspects of home is constituted by them. Through the concept of scale, the discussions on home in this thesis are thus highly grounded in the context of Irish nation formation, and the gendered relations and identities are also closely related to the home place, in and through which they are practiced and contested. And the complex and contradictory processes of social construction of home in reality are too illuminated in this thesis, instead of only riveting on the creation of the ideal home in the nationalist vision of post-independence Ireland.

Homes in Friel's plays are the product constructed by webs of diverse social practices and dynamics within distinct historical contexts. In *Dancing at Lughnasa* the

home of the five Mundy sisters seems to be a secluded, enclosed place isolated from the village of Ballybeg. Nevertheless, it is actually the very embodiment and outcome of numerous social processes and relations of post-partition Ireland. The scale of home in this play is the temporary result constituted by such structural forces as British colonialism, Irish nationalism, Irish Catholicism and inter-war economic development. These social forces together construct a highly feminized, and parochial, notion of home in the newly independent Ireland, in which the rural, traditional cottage of the pastoral western Ireland is the precise symbol and materialization of Gaelic Ireland. The boundary of the Mundy cottage, a Catholic home, as Kate characterizes, is assumed to be rigidly separated from the back hills, within which the "pagan," the licentious and *un*-Catholic, carnivals and rituals of the Lughnasa still exist. The Mundy sisters, and other Irish women, should not leave the boundary of their Catholic home and go into such wilderness of sexual temptation and release. Compared to Jack, Gerry and Michael, the sisters are literally confined to their home and the immediate surroundings, and are slightly alienated from the community of Ballybeg. The emigration of Agnes and Rose in the end is perceived especially by Kate as a lamentable, aberrant decision for women to make. The mobility and access to space of the sisters are therefore austerely circumscribed. On the other hand, the sisters are expected to perform the social responsibility and function of motherhood and housewifery, structuring their home as a site of biological production, social reproduction, economic production, consumption and patriarchal gender system. However, the Mundy home consists of an unmarried mother, four spinsters, an illegitimate child and later a deviant priest ironically subverts Kate's futile attempt to fulfill the ideal Irish home in post-independence Ireland.

The home of the Mundy sisters is not just influenced and constructed by Irish nationalism, British colonialism, Irish Catholicism and the economic condition of the

Irish Free State. It is also configured by other social forces and processes, represented by the irruption of Jack, radio and the knitting factory in the quotidian life of the sisters. Jack's return and presence illuminates the intrusion of another "pagan" culture, the Ryangan ceremony in Uganda and the fact of the imperial complicity of the Irish with the British Empire. They contradict the normative imaginary of Gaelic and Catholic Ireland and Irish home, upheld and maintained by Kate and other sisters. Both the presence and influence of Ryangan rituals and Lughnasa festivals challenges and shatters Kate's vision of her home as an authentic Catholic home and the ascetic conception of women and sexuality. Jack's involvement in the British imperial project destabilizes the nationalists' partial imagination of the Irish as the victim of the British imperial violence and exploitation. Jack's return ironically transforms the home of his sisters from the model of a nationalist, Catholic and patriarchal home in Ballybeg to a deviant, problematic one. Moreover, the intrusion of the knitting factory and radio in Ballybeg counteracts the imagination of a traditional, Gaelic Ireland, as the foreign capitals thrusts upon the territory of western Ireland, transforming the pastoral, idyllic landscape to the location of mechanical production of ready-made-wears, further exploiting the labor of Irish women, and reshaping the Mundy home from a site of manual economic production to that of social reproduction of labor force in capitalist economic production.

The Loves of Cass McGuire represents the Irish bourgeois home in the 1960s. The primary social processes and relations that structure Irish home during this period include Irish nationalism, Catholicism and the economic boom of the 1960s. The material design and decorations of Harry's bourgeois home are revealed by the exclamations of Cass and the descriptions in the play. His home, as portrayed in the play, embodies the *dualistic* imaginary and practice of home: home and work, the feminine and the masculine, the private and the public, the domestic and the civic,

emotions and rationality, reproduction and production, tradition and modernity, local and global, stasis and change. Harry performs the social role of the patriarch in his home through his attitudes, demeanors and dressing, while Alice performs the gendered role of Irish wife and mother, who seeks dutifully to construct home as a site of social reproduction for her husband and children. Moreover, the delineations of Harry's mother indicate the still tenacious gendered ideology of Irish nationalism and Catholicism in the 1960s. However, these are ridiculed by the son Dom and further contested by Cass, whose presence unravels the neglected influences of Irish diaspora on the home in Ireland. The Irish home in the 1960s is therefore contended by differentiated social processes and dynamics. Cass's life story exposes the ways in which the diasporic women contribute to the economic prosperity of home(land) in Ireland, even though they have initially been forced to leave their home, owning to the stifling milieu of Ireland. Both the departure and return of Cass are measured by normative mechanism of gender, sexuality, national identification and Catholic morality imposed on and expected of Irish women. Cass is sharply contrasted with Alice and her mother, as the latter two embody the ideal relationship between women and home in post-partition Ireland. Consequently Cass struggles with Harry over the meaning and idea of home in their respective attempt to define and create their own ideal home. Eventually confined in the Eden House, Cass is compelled to negotiate with this public asylum, endeavoring to create her own homely home in her delusional monologue and the unhomely asylum.

The following part then turns to elucidate the specific social processes which transfigure the scale of home in post-partition Ireland. Based on the historical reviews on Irish nationalism, British colonialism, Irish Catholicism and post-Famine as well inter-war economic developments in Ireland, it aims to further contend that the economic, religious and political forces construct not only a particular notion and

practice of Irish women's gender, sexuality and identity but also the scale of home as the rightful and natural place for women.

The primary social processes or relations that constitute the home scale as well as other embedded scales, such as nation, region, urban, community and body, in the newly independent Ireland are Irish Catholicism, economic restructurings after the Famine, and Irish nationalism and later nation-building, all of which contribute to the highly feminized notion and practice of home after independence from the British Empire. After the successful repeal of Penal Laws against Catholics in Ireland in 1829 under the leadership of the Liberator Daniel O'Connell, Ireland has gradually become a *Catholic* Ireland, due to the emergence of an Irish Catholic middle class mainly through the acquisition of English and access to politics (Innes 36). The gendered ideology of Irish Catholicism is reflected through its adoption of the doctrine of Immaculate Conception (1854), which brings about immense impacts on Irish women, especially on their social role, gender and sexuality. The image of the Blessed Virgin Mary becomes the model and ideal, to which women should comply. However, there is a paradox about this Mother of Christ—Virgin Mary, as her appellation itself indicates, is the representative of a *de-sexualized* mother (Innes 38). Through the cult of the Virgin-Mother, motherhood becomes the "ideal role for women" (38); nevertheless, "the sexual intercourse necessary for all other women to fulfill this destiny" (38) has been deliberately played down. The corollary is that sex can only be practiced, when a *married* woman wants to, or is forced to, bear children, and hence enacts the role as mother. The religious patriarchy of Catholicism thus severely confines not only women's possible roles but also their femininity and sexuality, as the cult of the Virgin also demands that women should be chaste, humble, obedient and passive, for the benefits of men (Innes 40). The gender relations of religious patriarchy therefore seek to restrict women to a "virtuous" mother, helping to generate

the cult of feminized domesticity within the boundary of home.

In addition to Catholic moral imperatives, the feminized allegory or metaphor employed and developed in the anti-colonial discourses of Irish nationalism also brings about the social and spatial confinement of Irish women. "Ireland as woman" has frequently been evoked for political and military mobilization of the Irish against the British imperial rule. Moreover, the feminized image of both the Irish people and territory can be further classified into two categories: Ireland as maiden and mother. The feminized Ireland is usually called and represented as *Erin* in popular newspaper cartoons and illustrations (Innes 17), in contrast to the English version of Ireland as *Hibernia* (Innes 12). The English version of Ireland as Hibernia portrays the colonized Irish people or territory as a "virginal maiden, threatened by Fenians and other Irish radicals and solely in need of rescue by paternal John Bull" (Innes 12). The contested colonial power relationships are represented in the *triangular* relationships between the British colonizer as a father or husband, Ireland as a daughter or wife and the Irish rebels as non-human Frankenstein or Pest (12-3). This masculine/feminine gendering of colonial power struggles between the colonizer and colonized reflects the unequal power relations between men and women in a male-dominated society, and reproduces the normative perspectives on what constitutes masculinity and femininity. Ireland as Hibernia therefore is portrayed as embodying the "angelic femininity dreamed by Victorian Englishmen—beautiful, graceful, spiritualized and passive" (Innes 14), while Irish nationalists or republicans are represented as "bestial, dirty, loutishly masculine, aggressive and ugly: the extreme of masculine bestiality feared by Victorian Englishmen" (14).[1]

[1] Nevertheless, the British Empire is not just represented in the masculine terms, nor is the colonized Ireland only in the feminine images. The former also depicts itself as a womanly figure, such as Britannia. The difference between Britannia and Hibernia lies in their femininity—Britannia is an active and triumphant warrior woman, whereas Hibernia is helpless, passive and in need of governance (Innes 13). On the other hand, though the English press tends to represent the British colonies in

The Irish representations of their people and country as maiden or/and mother are mostly derived from Gaelic mythologies, legends, ballads and oral folk traditions (Innes 18). From the *aisling* poetry of the eighteenth century,[2] which is developed from the *bean si* (banshee) tradition,[3] Ireland is represented as "a beautiful woman pleading for rescue from the invaders, or, less frequently, as a harlot collaborating with them" (Innes 19). The image of "sexual debasement, violation and rape" (20) is conspicuously underscored, when Ireland is portrayed as marrying the wrong suitor, the English, but not "the Catholic and anti-English allies" (21). On the other hand, the bardic tradition also imagines a feminized version of Ireland through the land-goddess, who as Mother Earth represents the tribe and its territory and therefore embodies Sovereignty (20). Through the male bard, the land-goddess is wedded with the pre-Christian Irish kings, who are thus bestowed sovereignty, and the land-goddess is transformed from a hag to a beautiful queen, as the saga of the Hag of Beare delineates (20). But no matter it is a maiden or a mother-goddess, the sexual image and desire are essential to the representation of Ireland as woman. Nonetheless, gradually the aggressive and sexual portrayals of Ireland as woman have been dissipated, with the increasing emphasis on her helplessness and need of being rescued by a rightful man, as reflected in James Clarence Mangan's "Dark Rosaleen" and "Kathaleen Ny-Houlahan" (22). Probably influenced by the Catholic imagery of Virgin Mary and her womanhood, the nationalist representations of Ireland as woman

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feminized terms, there are still some nuances between Ireland and other colonies. Hibernia is often delineated as "a desirable wife or daughter whose relationship with England is to be a domestic one" (14), while Africa and India are characterized as the exotic, wild other (14).

[2] The genre of *aisling* poetry emerged "after the English policy of plantation in the seventeenth century and the cruel massacres and repression of the Cromwellian occupations" (Innes 18-9). Richard Kearney contends that the intensified dispossession experienced by the Irish from the seventeenth century is keenly reflected in the more feminized representation of Ireland in the eighteenth century.

[3] The *bean si* is "the fairy woman whose appearance is an omen of death but who may also appear as a more benevolent guardian figure" (Innes 17). The *bean si* is later converged with the *badhb*, the war-goddess Badb, becoming the figure of Fedelm, who embodies "the contradictory attributes of the *bean si* and *badhb*: she is war-goddess and land-goddess, death, aggressiveness, ugliness, old age, youth, beauty, abundance and benignity" (17).

gradually becomes "more spiritualized and etherealized" (22). Consequently the ideal of "emblematic mothers and desexualized and spiritual maidens" (35) not only become the iconic representations of Ireland as woman, but also generate an "increasingly puritanical and asexual ideal of women" promulgated by the Catholic Church (22) in real life. In the late nineteenth century "the images of Mother Ireland or Erin, and Mother of God, often linked through iconography to Mother Church" (41) offered "models of behaviour and ideals of identity" (42) for Irish women.[4]

The feminized trope of Ireland as woman therefore is actually not a singular, homogeneous cultural construction. The Irish representations of feminized Irish people and territory derive from multiple Gaelic cultural traditions, and are differentiated into diverse but related images, while, compared with the Irish Erin, the British Hibernia is far more identifiable and singular. Nevertheless, both are the cultural products generated from their own patriarchal societies, further constituting and reproducing similar version of ideal womanhood. Hibernia, as aforesaid, is expected to possess angelic femininity: beautiful, graceful, spiritualized, passive and in need of governance. Erin, though initially is also described as aggressive, bellicose and sexually seductive, gradually becomes spiritualized, desexualized and in need of salvation.[5] Moreover, the Irish Catholic cult of the Blessed Virgin Mary also demands

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[4] In addition to the British and Irish portrayals of Ireland as woman, with their nuanced variables, the Anglo-Irish are engaged in this feminization of Ireland too. Threatened with "dispossession" (Innes 27) in the surge of anti-colonial Irish nationalism, some Anglo-Irish writers seek to validate their "right of possession and [their] claim to Irishness" (27) by resorting to, and identifying with, the Gaelic traditional culture, mostly through translating the Gaelic folklores and legends into English. Samuel Ferguson, a Protestant and Unionist (33), for instance, has dedicated his life to "recovering a considerable portion of the Celtic heritage and … his development of the Celtic hero and heroine types" (33). The Celtic mythical female figure Deirdre in his one-act verse drama *Deirdre* is particularly resonant. Deirdre is "a possession to be contested, the focus of conflict between the sons of Usnach and a possessive old man, a patriarchal figure" (34). Unlike the Irish version of the feminization of Ireland in diverse publications such as journalism, poetry and drama, "the Anglo-Irish writers of Protestant background often acknowledged sexual desire and power as significant elements in the characters and roles of their female heroines" (35).

[5] Richard Kearney contends that "[t]he more colonially oppressed the Irish became in historical reality, the more spiritualized became the mythic ideal of the motherland" (qtd. in Innes 18). The body and sex of the colonized Irish women are metaphorically and literally the focus of contest between the male British colonizer and Irish colonized. For the Irish male nationalists, the Irish woman/nation cannot be

women to be chaste, humble, austere and passive. These social processes and relations, despite their different intentions and goals, hence come together to cultivate a similar version of idealized womanhood, forging a severely restrictive notion of women's role, femininity and sexuality.

These social relations and processes not only produce ideological and discursive impacts on Irish women, who have to struggle to conform to or/and contest over these hegemonic norms, but also "take place" in specific sites of everyday social life. As Swyngedouw points out, "[a]ll social life is necessarily 'placed' or 'situated', and engaging place is fundamental to maintaining the process of life itself" (168). The feminist geographer Doreen Massey also argues that "'place' is formed out of the particular set of social relations which interact at a particular location" ("A Place Called Home?" 12). Irish Catholicism, British colonialism and Irish nationalism not only produce the feminization of the Irish nation and the corresponding ideal womanhood,[6] but also configure the meanings and characteristics of different places. In addition to the national scale, the *home* scale, compared with other scales such as community, city and region, is particularly relevant to the gendered outcome of these political and religious dynamics and transformations.

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desired, obtained and penetrated by the English men, and hence "she" has to be disciplined to be more asexual and spiritualized; in other words, she has to be chaste and virginal, so as to reject the temptation of the wrong suitor.

[6] One of the consequences of the Famine is the transformation of the land-use in Ireland. Innes points out that the "area under cultivation and the size of holdings began to increase rather than diminish" (36-7). He further quotes from E. R. R. Green, who observes that after the Famine family farms were "engaged on mixed tillage and livestock production, with the stock rather than grain increasingly providing cash income" (37). Furthermore, the larger cultivated area was generally passed to "the oldest son, rather than subdivision among members of the family" (39). Simultaneously the Catholic clergy grew in "numbers, power and authority" (37), as the rest of the sons often chose priesthood as their livelihood. Innes further holds that therefore "there was a close connection between the changing agricultural system to larger family farms and the changing structure and authority of the Catholic Church" (37) by quoting J. J. Lee, who argues that "[e]conomic circumstances therefore conspired to make Ireland an increasingly male dominated society after the famine" (37). Due to the halt of subdivision of family farm, "the strong farmer" (37) emerged, and "coincide with the growth of clerical power" (37). The woman married to the oldest son of the family farm in this increasingly patriarchal society was expected to bring with her a dowry, and was expected to be chaste and devoted to maintaining the home, as she is increasingly excluded from working outside th household.

Chapter Two

"What has happened to this house?": Gender, (Un)-Homely Home and Irish Nation-Building in Brian Friel's *Dancing at Lughnasa*

Ⅰ. Re-membering Irish Women in the Post-Independence Era of the 1930s

On April 29, 1935 the Abbey Theatre produced *The King of Spain's Daughter*, written by Irish woman playwright Teresa Deevy. This play, with its exotic title, bears no relation to the foreign world of Spain outside Ireland, but addresses directly and sharply to the everyday life of a young Irish woman in post-independence Ireland. Annie Kinsella, as the play unravels, struggles between the gendered and sexual norms expected of young women like her in the process of nation-building of a newly independent Ireland and her own unyielding desire to lead an alternative life. However, the possibilities offered to her are quite limited: either performing the domestic tasks for men, or working in a factory, or migrating to foreign countries. Although she fantasizes marriage as an escape from her present life, she cannot help but perceive that it may make no difference for her in the end, whether staying with her father, or becoming a wife of her suitor Jim Harris (35). Considered as "a bold, wild thing" (Deevy 21) by Mrs. Marks, the elderly woman who censures her philandering with men without reserve, Annie suffers domestic violence inflicted by her father, as she fails to deliver his dinner on time; that is, failing to fulfill the domestic task of nurturing and caring for the household members. Later learning that Annie will be betrothed to Jim, Mrs. Marks, who assimilates the normative discourse on the role, body and sexuality of Irish women, admonishes that she should be "a good wife to him now" (34), taking charge of the "nice little place" (34). Mrs. Marks'

counsels on Annie being a good wife, as well as a proper mother, and her earlier reprehensions on her "wantonness" are reminiscent of the dominant discourses of the post-independence Irish patriarchal society on women. The "nice little place" referred by Mrs. Marks is the *home* place, which is considered as a private, domestic and *feminized* place, taken care by a dutiful wife and virtuous mother. Mrs. Marks therefore expects that by entering matrimony Annie will conform to the *idealized* Irish womanhood, constructed and promoted by the leaders of the Irish Free State. Although Annie near the denouement proclaims that she "couldn't bear [she]'d be no more than any other wife" (35), she *de facto* has little opportunity to be otherwise in a society predominated by Irish Catholic moral tenets and idealized national womanhood.

More than half a century later in 1990, contemporary Irish male playwright Brian Friel seeks to further explore the political, economic and socio-cultural predicaments of Irish women, like Annie Kinsella, in the 1930s in *Dancing at Lughnasa*. Dedicated to his aunts and mother, *Dancing at Lughnasa* is not only Friel's personal, nostalgic re-memory of his childhood but also his historical project of re-writing the relationships between women, home and nation-building in post-partition Ireland. Friel has long been concerned with interrogating the given or problematic representations and interpretations of Irish history and culture, both the past and present, as well as the South and North, since the commencement of his writing career. After the controversial Field Day period of the 1980s,[7] Friel premiered

[7] Although Field Day, established by Friel and Rea and later co-managed by David Hammond, Tom Paulin, Seamus Heaney and Seamus Deane, contributed a lot to scrutinizing the political and cultural dilemma in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland in drama, pamphlets and other productions, Field Day is often criticized for its lack of attention to the problems of Irish women and gender, no matter in their plays, pamphlets or *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*. In addition, critics often contest over the real political ideology of certain members of Field Day, which is often denounced by Protestant, Belfast-based critics, as nothing but Irish nationalism in disguise, despite their seemingly benign endeavor to scrutinize the historical origins and developments of the present Northern Troubles, and to offer progressive alternatives to the present political impasse.

Dancing at Lughnasa in 1990, which is so unlike his 1980s play, in the subject matters, theatrical devices and modes of production. "[H]is first ensemble piece for women" in a "patriarchal, claustrophobic society" (Lojek 79), *Dancing at Lughnasa* does not address to issues related to the so-called Grand History like what he has done in *Translations*, *The Communication Cord* and *Making History*, but represents a relatively secluded female world outside the village of Ballybeg[8] in domestic scenes, especially the kitchen, in the summer of 1936. In *Making History* Friel challenges and questions what constitutes history and how history is constructed through the debates between Hugh O'Neill and Bishop Lombard. In *Dancing at Lughnasa* Friel *ipso facto* follows what he has intended to achieve in *Making History*, attempting to recuperate the unspoken and submerged aspects of Irish history, long slighted by either nationalist or revisionist historiography in Ireland. Therefore *Dancing at Lughnasa* should not be regarded as Friel's own nostalgia for the lost childhood past or his weariness of engaging with "political" issues; rather, Friel like his predecessor Deevy pays attention to the quotidian life of ordinary Irish women, and addresses to the broader social condition of women of Ireland in the 1930s.

Deevy in *The King of Spain's Daughter* succinctly but poignantly delineates the life choices of single young Irish women like Annie, riveting on exposing how she is disciplined from "a wild creature" (Deevy 35) to a "proper" woman for men by Mrs. Marks discursively and her father and Jim practically. Although Deevy does not refer to any contextual information concerning the newly independent Ireland, the purport of her play cannot be fully appreciated without situating it firmly within the historical context of the 1930s. In order to achieve social order and stability in post-independence Ireland, the members of the new government and the Catholic

[8] Ballybeg, in which many of Friel's plays are set, is actually a fictitious place located in the County Donegal of north-western Ireland, which is part of the Republic of Ireland, but is adjacent to Northern Ireland.

Church, predominantly men, ascribe to Irish women the "responsibility of maintaining the integrity of Irish culture and identity" (Ryan 182), or more specifically, the preservation of the Irish language, Gaelic traditions and the "superior Catholic morality" (Valiulis 100). The idealization of woman as an icon and representative of the nation actually, and ironically, results in further restrictions on the body, gender and sexuality of women, in order to ensure that they will attain the idealized national womanhood. In a society dominated particularly by Catholic social teaching and gendered nationalist project, women cannot exist as individuals with their own volition, but always as part and embodiment of the nation.

Friel in *Dancing at Lughnasa* follows what Deevy has attempted to do in *The King of Spain's Daughter*, examining the social role, gender performativity and sexual regulation of Irish women in the 1930s, but with particular focus on the very place where these social and cultural mechanisms "takes place," namely, the *home* of the five Mundy sisters. Home place is not just a background and setting in which events take place and people exist, but is always constructed and intersected by multiple social processes outside the physical boundary of home, and recursively shapes and transfigures the identities and power relations within home.

This chapter thus seeks to explore the tensions and conflicts between home and women in post-independence Ireland in Brian Friel's *Dancing at Lughnasa*. This play, based on Friel's childhood memories of his five aunts, addresses to the constitution of social imaginary of home and Irish women in the political, economic and socio-cultural milieu of Ireland in the 1930s. After the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922, Irish women were forced to retreat to the private sphere of home, and suffered no less constraint in the new nation-state under the leadership of the male nationalist government than they had experienced in the colonial era. Drawing upon feminist theorizations on home and social constructionist approach to *scale*, I argue

that *Dancing at Lughnasa* represents and contests the spatial politics of home and gender in post-partition Ireland. This play problematizes and destabilizes the "naturalized" relationship between Irish women, home and nation through the everyday interactions and relations between the Mundy sisters themselves and the male characters, unraveling how the "homely" home constructed in the domineering social imaginary and practice is always an "unhomely" place, a reality that has to be negotiated and struggled by the still disenfranchised Irish women of the 1930s.

Ⅱ. Representing and Destabilizing Conventional Conceptualizations of Home

The *conventional* considerations of home, either in early academic studies or common perceptions, tend to downplay the fluid heterogeneity and perpetual transformations of a place called home. Generally speaking a place called home has been regarded as an enclosed, private haven or sanctuary for social reproduction and corporeal recuperation, away from the so-called public world of work, politics and business (Blunt and Dowling 11). Home is the very place where inhabitants or household members are supposed to feel senses of belongingness, attachment, security, familiarity, comfort and intimacy (Blunt and Dowling 2; 10; 15).[9] As *Dancing at Lughnasa* reveals, the home for the Mundy sisters can be a place of mutual support and affection between the household members, but their home can also be "a cage or a

[9] Carole Després derives ten categories of the meaning of home from the *non-sociological* literature on home: physical security and control; material characteristics of the dwelling and neighborhood; legal and economic meanings such as ownership and investment; cultural and symbolic meanings associated with self-expression, emotional security and social status; temporal meanings of permanence and continuity; social meanings connoting family, friends and social activities (97-99). On the other hand, Peter Somerville also categorizes ten classifications of the meaning of home from the *sociological* studies of home: home as the center of family life; a place of retreat, safety, relaxation, freedom and independence; self-expression and social status; a place of privacy, continuity and permanence; a financial asset; a support for work and leisure activities; the root of authentic human existence (227-8).

trap, a prison" (McDowell 88), both socially and physically, as the "tidal surges of desire welling up within one or other of the sisters…are constantly checked and diffused, sometimes good-humoredly or wittily, sometimes bitterly, sometimes sadly" (Andrews 222). More importantly what lies behind the received conception of home actually implies and embodies an essentialist, dualistic understandings of *home* and *places beyond home*—home vs. work, feminine vs. masculine, private vs. public, domestic vs. civic, emotions vs. rationality, reproduction vs. production, tradition vs. modernity, local vs. global and stasis vs. change (Blunt and Dowling 17).

This *separate-sphere* ideology of home and places beyond home, with the relevant associations, reduces what a home means and functions for different subjects in diverse historical and geographical contexts, further taking for granted the cult of *feminized domesticity* in the private sphere of home. Home is hence conceptualized and constructed, both ideologically and materially, as a bounded, stable, singular, static and secluded place. However, this conceptualization of home is not a given reality, but a regulatory fiction and discursive construct in an androcentric society. The unequal power relations between men and women in a given patriarchal society also "take place" in this definition of home, as women are more likely to be confined to the secluded, private home, and men are able to have greater access to places beyond home.[10] *Dancing at Lughnasa* at first sight seems to buttress, and even reinforces, this feminized domesticity of the private home, taken charged by a group

[10] Nonetheless, the separate-sphere ideology is not universally identifiable in any patriarchal society. There are still far more diverse variables and nuances in this similar phenomenon of dualistic thinking on home and places beyond home, when one considers the social divisions of class, race, ethnicity, generation, location, and so forth. Moreover, this seemingly universal cultural phenomenon is also the outcome of different social processes and relations in distinct societies. The development and intensification of the separate-sphere ideology are usually ascribed to the middle-class household of industrial societies in the West in the nineteenth century, especially Britain and US (McDowell 75-9; Blunt 16-8). In the context of post-independence Irish society, though the separate-sphere ideology, or the feminized domesticity of private sphere of home, is conspicuously emphasized and practiced, the reasons that contribute to the reinforcement of such gendered ideology are quite different from those of nineteenth-century Britain and US. The formation of feminized domesticity in post-partition Irish society has already been discussed in Chapter One.

of “angels of home” (McDowell 75) by a male playwright; nevertheless, this play, as I will argue, actually not only exposes but also problematizes this gendered ideology of separate sphere of home and places beyond home in the newly formed Irish nation-state.

In the opening scene of *Dancing at Lughnasa* the four Mundy sisters—Maggie, Agnes, Rose and Chris—“busy themselves with their tasks” (Friel 2). The tasks referred to are the *home-making practices* that contribute to the everyday maintenance of the household physically, socially, emotionally and culturally. Maggie, as we are told, “makes a mash for hens” (2); Rose brings “a basket of turf” (2) to be burned in the kitchen range; Chris irons clothing and her brother Jack’s surplice (2). All these household chores seem too trivial to be mentioned at all; however, frivolous as they may seem, they are the indispensable parts of *social reproduction* practiced in the feminized sphere of home. The work of social reproduction includes the reproduction of forces of production and further relations of production (Marston, “Social Production” 233). The social reproduction of forces of production comprises reproduction of labor force and means of production (233). The reproduction of labor force is largely achieved in “the small-scale social, physical, cultural and emotional infrastructure of the household where labor power is reproduced on a daily basis” (233).[11] Furthermore, the task of social reproduction in the household is conventionally considered as “women’s sacred duty” (McDowell 75), as it is believed that it is “women’s natural skills” (73) to manage the household. Raising hens, ironing clothing and preparing turfs by the sisters are therefore essential to the “production, provision and preparation of the means of existence” (Marston 234).

In addition to the activities of social reproduction conducted personally in the

[11] Simultaneously the reproduction of labor force is also attained in the “large-scale physical infrastructure of capitalism, such as the delivery of services and the building of schools and roads” (Marston 233).

so-called private sphere of home, the eldest sister Kate, assuming the role of patriarchal figure in this all female household, also practices the task of social reproduction through her *consumption* of goods sold in the village Ballybeg, including cod-liver oil, guanine (Friel 11), tea, soap, Indian meal, jelly, cigarettes, shoes, cornflower, salt, tapioca, sugar (15), paper, candles, matches (16), apples, butter, margarine, flour (18) and so forth. Kate, though enacting the social role of wage earner as a national school teacher in the allegedly public world, also takes up the feminized work of social reproduction outside home. The only exception is Agnes, who instead knits glove to make money by selling to the knitting agent Vera McLaughlin. Although the opening scenes seem to represent a typically feminized practice of domesticity in the relatively secluded home of the Mundys, they also implicitly indicate that home is not the only place for social reproduction, as the conventionally dualistic understanding of home tend to endorse and stipulate, for Kate too performs the feminized task of social reproduction through her consumption of everyday means of sustenance outside the sphere of home, and home increasingly becomes "a market for the mass-produced goods of the capitalist system, many of which had previously been made by individual women in their own homes" (McDowell 81). Moreover, home is not just a site of social reproduction either, since the knitting activities performed by Agnes, and later Rose, are part of the cycle of economic production of textiles used almost in every household, before the arrival of the mechanized knitting factory in Ballybeg. The feminized job of knitting is therefore transformed from an *unpaid* domestic labor to a *paid* domestic work for women like Agnes and Rose, who become instead active contributors to the economic production of textile market.

The reality of everyday operation of the Mundy home thus implicitly contradicts the usually male perception of and regulation on home, though the Mundy

home may seem to fortify such biased and problematic understanding of the distinction between home and places beyond home. However, a household full of women without a patriarchal figure does not mean that it is less influenced by the patriarchal ideology on home and women. On the contrary, the sisters, especially Kate, "still live the lives of the dually colonized despite the fact that they have been without a male head of home or a national colonizer for several years" (LaForge 109). The eldest sister Kate, "a very proper woman" (Friel 1), enacts the authoritative role of the patriarchal figure, constantly regulating what the sisters can and cannot do. Once "involved locally in the War of Independence" (Friel 8), Kate is the primary wage earner of the family by working as "a national school teacher" (Friel 1). Besides playing the role of wager earner conventionally assigned to men in the public sphere, Kate is also dedicated to the Irish nationalist cause, with its idealized national womanhood, and also the Catholic social teaching on women's role and body, as she characterizes her home as "a Catholic home" (Friel 17) in her harsh rejection of the sexually liberating, "pagan practices" (17) of the festival of Lughnasa in the back hills. Kate's assimilation of the feminized domesticity and separate-sphere ideology preeminent in the post-independence Irish society is vividly demonstrated in her depreciation of the little money Agnes and Rose earn by making home-made gloves and of the hard and time-consuming domestic work her sisters perform each day. After abruptly stopping their communal dancing due to the breakdown of the radio, Kate is more eager than usual to resume her authoritative position by censuring her sisters:

> KATE. Who's making the tea this evening?
>
> AGNES. Who makes the tea every evening?
>
> CHRIS. (At radio) The connections seem to be all right.
>
> KATE. Please take that surplice off, Christina.

CHRIS. Maybe a valve has gone—if I knew what a valve looked like.

KATE. Have you no sense of propriety?

CHRIS. If you ask me we should throw it out.

AGNES. I'd be all for that. It's junk, that set.

ROSE. Goddamn and bloody useless.

KATE. (To Agnes) And you'll buy a new one, will you?

AGNES. It was never any good.

KATE. You'll buy it out of your glove money, will you? I thought what you and Rose earned knitting gloves was barely sufficient to clothe the pair of you.

AGNES. This isn't your classroom, Kate.

KATE. Because I certainly don't see any of it being offered for the upkeep of the house.

AGNES. Please, Kate—

KATE. But now it stretches to buying a new wireless. Wonderful!

AGNES. I make every meal you sit down to every day of the week.

KATE. Maybe I should start knitting gloves?

AGNES. I wash every stitch of clothes you wear. I polish your shoes. I make your bed. We both do—Rose and I. Paint the house. Sweep the chimney. Cut the grass. Save the turf. What you have here, Kate, are two unpaid servants.

ROSE. And d'you know what your nickname at school is? The Gander! Everybody calls you the Gander! (Friel 23-4)

After the spontaneous and irruptive dancing of the five sisters provoked by the Irish dance music, "The Mason's Apron," from the radio, Kate immediately orders that tea be served at once from her sisters, taking it for granted that it is her sisters' domestic

duty to fulfill the social reproduction of the household members, especially the patriarch, who returns home after a day's work, expecting to be nurtured and cared for. She on the one hand dismisses the money earned by Agnes and Rose by knitting gloves, since it is not a proper "work" for them to do at the expense of the domestic tasks that should be performed in the first place. On the other hand, Kate also devalues the home-making practices undertaken by Agnes and other sisters, considering them not as kinds of "work" achieved through domestic labor, but as the sacred duty naturally for women in the home to accomplish. Ironically, though Kate as a woman earns money in the so-called public sphere beyond home, she does not consider it appropriate for women to make money through paid domestic labor to the neglect of their duties in the home, especially when the money made is so little and is spent on purchasing a radio that "[kills] all Christian conversation in this country" (Friel 66).

Her quasi-androcentric authority is contended outright by Agnes, who denounces that Kate treats them as "two unpaid servants" in their management of the household, dismissing their home-making practices in the "private" sphere as opposed to her work as a school teacher in the "public" sphere of school. Kate's reproaches of her sisters therefore reveal her ingrained hierarchical dichotomy of home and work, private and public, feminine and masculine, reproduction and production prevailing in the post-independence Irish society around her. Later Agnes seeks to defend the "modicum of domestic authority held by women rooted in the routine of the home" (Smith 69) by insisting that it is her responsibility to make tea: "I make the tea every evening, don't I? Why shouldn't I make it this evening as usual?" (Friel 37). Although slighted by Kate, who demands tea in an authoritative tone, making tea for Agnes is also the few moments when she can feel empowered by taking charge of the domestic activities imposed on her. In the end Rose ridicules Kate as a *gander*, a scornful

epithet, labeled by the community of Ballybeg, which not only challenges Kate's assumption of patriarchal authority in the home, but also indicates that Kate herself likewise does not conform to the idealized womanhood formed out of nationalism and Catholicism either.[12]

Ⅲ Social-Spatial Construction and Contestation of Home and Gender in the Process of Irish Nation-Building

The Mundy home is more a contested place of power struggles between the sisters than a serene, resting place, achieved through the cult of feminized domesticity and separate-sphere ideology. But how does this gendered ideology on home come into being in post-independence Ireland? Why are Irish women more closely associated with the home than ever before in this phase of nation formation? If home as a place is never a given, gender-neutral category, what are the alternative, or better, ways to really understand the various dimensions of home in specific contexts? Peter Somerville argues that home is "a complex, multi-leveled or multi-dimensional construct with a specific internal unity determined by relations at and among different levels or dimensions" (226). Moreover, it is "physically, psychologically and socially constructed in both 'real' and 'ideal' forms, and the different types of construction always occur in combination as part of a single process" (226). The home, like any other forms of space, has been regarded as a social product constructed in different histories and geographies in recent scholarship, especially by feminists and cultural geographers. They are concerned with the ways in which home is constituted in specific societies, the cultural meanings and ideas attributed to the material place

[12] Agnes later also denounces Kate as "a damned righteous bitch" (Friel 34), when Kate keeps accusing Gerry as a man with "no sense of ordinary duty" (Friel 34), since he violates the Catholic moral teaching by having sex with Chris, who later gives birth to Michael, out of wedlock.

called home, and the constructions of identity and power relations within home along class, gender, sexuality, age, ethnicity, location and other social axes.[13]

The home of the Mundy sisters is primarily the historical outcome of Irish nationalism and Catholicism. Alison Blunt and Robyn Dowling argue that "given that multiple social processes intersect in and constitute home, then it also follows that through home, multiple identities—of gender, race, class, age and sexuality—are reproduced and contested" (27). The political and religious social relations in Ireland in the early twentieth century not only constitute women's given roles as a mother and wife, but also concomitantly structure a feminized notion of home, bringing about the gendered separate-sphere ideology.[14] As aforementioned, the opening scenes of *Dancing at Lughnasa* represent a feminized domesticity, where the sisters are engrossed in their respective home-making practices related to motherhood and housewifery. The eldest sister Kate obviously assimilates the gendered ideology of separate sphere, as Agnes accuses Kate of treating Rose and her as two unpaid servants. Assuming the patriarchal authority, Kate is eager to create and maintain her

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[13] The introductions and elaborations of the spatial theory, particularly scale, have been discussed in Chapter One, please refer to pages 23-28. Moreover, the interpretation of the scale of home in Irish nationalist context through the approach of scale has been argued in Chapter One too, please refer to pages 28-36.

[14] Beaumont notes that "for women in many European countries during the 1920s and 1930s, the re-affirmation of gender categories following years of upheaval and unrest was a common experience" (94) in order to "restore cultural and social stability in the wake of the First World War" (95). She further expands that in Britain "despite the extension of the franchise to women over the age of thirty in 1918 and on equal terms with men in 1928, an ideology of domesticity prevailed throughout the inter-war years which the state endorsed through public service marriage bars, discriminatory social welfare policy and a failure to implement equal pay legislation" (95). Therefore, the gendered separate-sphere ideology in post-independence Ireland is not unique during the inter-war years in Europe. What differentiates the Irish experience from those of other countries is the different reasons that contribute to the rise of the gendered ideology of separate sphere. In addition to the political and religious factors that result in the separate-sphere ideology in the Irish context, Mary Daly also argues that the harsh economic condition after independence must be considered. She observes that "for single women the chance of securing paid work in industry, albeit low paid, was slowly increasing" (qtd. in Beaumont 98). The passing of the 1935 Conditions of Employment Act, which gives "the Minister for Industry and Commerce the right to limit the number of women working in any given industry" (98), indicates the attempt by the state to "protect male employment in industry from cheaper female competition" (98). In post-independence Ireland the economic condition as well the political and religious influences in the process of nation-building bring about the restriction of Irish women to the sphere of home and the feminized domesticity.

home as a *homely*, socially appropriate and ideal, home (Blunt and Dowling 100) in the neighborhood through her regular censures of the wayward behaviors of her siblings. Ironically, as the play gradually reveals, the Mundy home is in fact far away from the ideal home constructed in the normative discourse of post-partition Ireland.

Though preoccupied themselves with the domestic chores, Chris, Rose and Maggie actually in turn disrupt their everyday tedious routines. Chris yearns to have "a decent mirror" (Friel 2) to see herself clearly, wanting to wear a lipstick (3), desiring to spruce herself up (3). However, she is instantly checked by Maggie, who warns her: "Steady on, girl! Today it's lipstick, tomorrow it's the gin bottle" (3) and also by Agnes, who mimics the tone of Kate, jeering at her: "Do you want to make a pagan of yourself?" (3). Then Rose starts to sing and dance by "holding up her apron skirt" (3). Maggie pretends to restrain Rose, exclaiming: "Rose Mundy! Where's your modesty!" (3), but immediately joins Rose by "hitch[ing] her own skirt even higher than Rose's" (3). Again Agnes instinctually derides Maggie and Rose as "a right pair of pagans" (4). Rose later expresses that she wants to go to see "pictures in the hall next Saturday" (5), and Maggie regularly smokes cigarettes, crying out: "Wonderful Wild Woodbine. Next best thing to a wonderful, wild man" (23). When Kate comes home, on hearing Agnes' proposal that they should all go to the harvest dance held in Ballybeg, she immediately endeavors to suppress the wish of her sisters, admonishing:

> "Dancing at our time of day? That's for young people with no duties and no responsibilities and nothing in their heads but pleasure….Do you want the whole countryside to be laughing at us?—women of our years?—mature women, *dancing*? What's come over you all? And this is Father Jack's home—we must never forget that—ever. No, no, we're going to no harvest dance." (13)

Kate's rebuke reflects the dominant ideal of Irish woman, who is supposed to be austere, modest, asexual, chaste and humble, dedicated to motherhood and housewifery in order to maintain their home properly. Act I of the play constantly stages the conflicts and negotiations between the ideal and reality of Irish womanhood, especially around the controversial domain of gender and sexuality of women as well as the place where they should be. The occasional subversion of daily domestic routines by different sisters in their own alternative desires and wishes is always contained by other sisters, especially by Kate. Their "aberrant" pursuits in opposition to the political and religious doctrines on womanhood are reminiscent of the debates of the "modern" girl in the 1930s.

Louise Ryan affirms that in addition to the idealized national womanhood constructed in the process of nation-building after independence, the "archetype of the frivolous, fashion conscious flapper or 'modern girl' was used as a convenient symbol to represent all that was disorderly and deviant about young women" (182). The Mundy sisters' respective yearnings for alternative dressing, different hair styles, drinking, smoking, dancing, seeing films and even implied sexual intercourse with men outside matrimony are similar to the "negative" qualities associated with the "modern" girl, who love and embrace "shingle, short dress, cigarettes, modern dances, cinema and motor cars" (Ryan 193). Those young women are called "modern" girl because they are considered as being "contaminated" by the modern, that is, *foreign* cultural influences, and hence their gender performativity transgresses the "the boundaries of culturally acceptable feminine conduct" (Ryan 183). Appealing to the Gaelic and Catholic cultural traditions through the process of de-colonization, the new Free State continues to resort to its own indigenous cultural heritages, in order to reinforce a sense of national belongingness. The dichotomy between Irish tradition and non-Irish, foreign modernity is therefore prevalent in post-independence Ireland,

but it is the indigenous tradition that is privileged over the foreign modern. The "modern" girl is further constructed as the opposite of the ideal Irish woman, who through enacting the domestic mother and wife are "loving, caring, innocent ideals" (Ryan 185), the "guardians of order and morality" (185), "the biological reproducers of the nation" (184), and last but not least, "preserv[e] national culture and transmi[t] national identity…from the security of the domestic sphere" (184). Irish women are expected not only to become modest and asexual mother and wife, but also to be responsible for the "maintenance of traditional language, dress, folklore and traditions in the private sphere" (Ryan 183) and of the Catholic moral imperatives. The "modern" girl with her "aberrant" demeanors, on the other hand, is regarded as "weak, sly, evil temptresses" (185) and the "embodiment of immorality and immodesty" (185).

Struggling between regulatory domestic routines and occasional impulsive releases, the Mundy sisters seem to be the paradoxical fusion of the ideal Irish woman and the "modern" girl. However, their dynamic negotiations between the norm and aberration only *expose* the arbitrariness and fluidity of categorization of women into two simplified archetypes. Although Chris is the mother of Michael, performing the duty of biological reproduction of the nation, her being a single mother is deemed as a "shame…brought on the household" (Friel 9), for the Catholic doctrines stipulates that sex can only be practiced for the purpose of procreation within marriage, sanctioned by God in front of the priest (Valiulis 110-11). In spite of the sisters' dedication to social reproduction through various home-making practices to create a homely home, Kate, Maggie, Agnes and Rose are at best the "respectable spinsters" (Ryan 185), who likewise fail to achieve the idealized Irish mother and housewife in their life course. In addition to an unmarried mother and four spinsters, the Mundy home also consists of an illegitimate child Michael and later a renegade Father Jack.

Despite Kate's efforts to maintain her "Catholic home" (Friel 17), it seems that the Mundy home is already an *unhomely*, socially problematic, home in the community of Ballybeg.

Although Kate regularly censures the alternative desires and behaviours of her siblings; ironically, she also participates in the communal dancing provoked by the Irish dance music from the radio, despite her initial hesitation and protest. Kate herself therefore also negotiates between the ideal and "problematic" womanhoods, and epitomizes the struggles of the sisters with the normative national womanhood produced largely by the religious and political dynamics in this play. Despite Kate's inhibition of "mature women" like themselves dancing in the public sphere, the sisters constantly break up their everyday domestic routines and tasks through singing and dancing. The most renowned scene of *Dancing at Lughnasa* is the communal, irruptive dancing, invoked by the "Irish dance music—'The Mason's Apron', played by a ceili band" (Friel 21), of the sisters together. The music of radio, Marconi, is "beamed…all the way from Dublin" (Friel 2), and "Marconi is capable of emitting Irish discourse, like the "Mason's Apron", but more frequently its discourse is alien" (Corbett 136), such as the "Abyssinia" song (Friel 3; 4), "The British Grenadiers" (4), "the Isle of Capri" (6; 34), "Dancing in the Dark" (32), "Anything Goes" (63) and "It is Time to Say Goodbye" (71). But the music from radio is issued from "[g]overnment-run radio…broadcasting in 1926" (Lojek 82), which increased influence after "the 1933 opening of the Athlone transmitter" (82), and functioned as "a powerful instrument in unifying a fragmented post-independence society" (82). Irish dance music issued from Dublin is therefore part of the tactics of nation-building by Irish nationalist government, which resorts again to Gaelic music to forge a sense of cultural and national belongingness and membership through the new technique of radio across the whole nation-state, even to the north-western Ireland like County

Donegal. But simultaneously the radio with its varieties of music, Jack's Ryangan rituals and Lughnasa festivals possess "the appeal of the pagan" or "foreign elements" (Lojek 84) from the perspective of "Irish Catholic moral imperatives" (84), for they are all able to "release intoxicating, fiery emotions" (85) suppressed by the Catholic austerity. Kate once reproaches Maggie that "[i]f you knew your prayers as well as you know the words of those aul pagan songs!" (Friel 35). Considering the music of the radio as pagan songs in contrast to "Catholic respectability" (Corbett 136), Kate eventually exclaims impatiently: "Peace, thanks be to God! D' you know what that thing [radio] has done? Killed all Christian conversation in this country" (Friel 66).[15]

The radio not only kills all Christian conversation but also temporarily disrupts the idealized national womanhood. The communal, irruptive dancing of the sisters is generally interpreted as "release, escape, connection, romance" (Garratt 9), or more specifically, a "break in the acknowledged order, an irruption of the inadmissible within the usual routine, a ritualised suspension of everyday law and order" (Andrews 223). The order, routine and law are the normative regulation on the social role, gender, sexuality and place of Irish women in the process of nation-building. Irish dance music broadcast from the government-run radio is supposed to generate the sense of Irish identity and loyalty of the Mundy sisters, and therefore their adherence to the ideal of Irish womanhood relevant to the maintenance of the new Irish nation. Nevertheless, "The Mason's Apron" is actually *appropriated* by the sisters to be the catalyst for their subversion of this idealized Irish womanhood, at least temporarily,

[15] In 1935 the Public Dance Halls Act was passed, for the clergy regarded the unregulated dancing as lewd and immoral (Lojek 79). This constitution enjoins "licensing of dance venues," elimination of "set dancing (regarded as a foreign import) in favor of céilí dancing (regarded as indigenous)" (85), and inhibits certain music, such as jazz, which was proscribed by Radio Eireann in 1943, in order to safeguard "Irish youth from foreign contamination" (83). Nevertheless, after the gradual replacement of live music with gramophones and radio, "céilí music adapted contemporary rhythms and often yielded entirely to imported music" (85). Lojek therefore notes that "[t]he act reflected the Church's increasing influence on Irish statutes and unintentionally diminished participation in Celtic music and dance, rendering ironic De Valera's 1940s vision of Ireland as a rural idyll with comely maidens dancing at the crossroads" (85).

and hence ironically the project of nation-building through broadcasting traditional music is defied by the sisters, as, in their spontaneous dancing, "there is a sense of order being consciously subverted" (Friel 22).

However, the sisters' passionate but fugitive dancing is also highly circumscribed in their home place, for they are not allowed, by Kate, to dance in such public place as the village Ballybeg, not to mention the back hills. Their resistance to the normative order is transient and limited, for it can only take place in the spatial confinement of the home scale, without being able to extend to other scales beyond home. Although Maggie may be "animated by a look of defiance, of aggression" (Friel 21), it is noteworthy that she is described as wearing "a crude mask of happiness" (21). Although Maggie, Rose, Agnes and Chris dance in solidarity, as they "form a circle and wheel round and round….have their arms tightly around on another's neck, on another's waist" (Friel 21-2), their dance is portrayed as a "parodic reel" (22), for "there is a sense of…the women consciously and crudely caricaturing themselves, indeed of near-hysteria being induced" (22). Compared to them, Kate actually "dances alone, totally concentrated, totally private" (22), and her style of dancing is "simultaneously controlled and frantic" (22). The sisters at first glance seem to deride and undermine their everyday gender performativity through their instinctive dancing, but they also seem to concurrently ridicule their own temporary subversion through dancing in the boundary of the home scale. As we are told, Maggie's happiness is nothing but "a crude mask;" in spite of their raucous revolt; their style of dance is "parodic;" moreover, they "consciously and crudely caricatur[e] themselves." Without being able to expand the scale of their resistance beyond home, and thus genuinely redefine the meanings and contents of home, the Mundy sisters eventually suffer the impacts of contested social processes and transformations beyond the physical boundary of home passively. Nonetheless, the Mundy home is at

least temporarily transfigured from a domestic, private place defined and maintained especially by Kate to a public dance hall. The sisters' communal dancing hence reveals the fluidity of the meanings and functions of home for different subjects in various contexts. It also further indicates that home is never a private, secluded place; on the contrary, it is always a particular form of public place constituted by diverse social processes. Literally converted into the dancing venue like that either in Ballybeg or the back hills, the Mundy house provisionally becomes an authentic homely home, a place of comfort, intimacy, affection and belongingness, for the sisters.

However, the scale of home is not just a discursive or ideological product, it also has material outcomes (Marston, "A Long Way" 173), for "what home means and how it is materially manifest are continually created and recreated through everyday practices" (Blunt and Dowling 23). The natural landscape and cultural mores of western Ireland, the regional scale, are generally perceived as the exact embodiment of authentic, unadulterated Irishness in the trope and ideology of the anti-colonial campaigns, such as Gaelic League, for this region is considered to be least "contaminated" by the foreign, colonial influences. Landscapes such as the natural scenery, the pastoral idyll and the thatched cottage are celebrated, in order to forge a sense of national belonging, and to differentiate the indigenous community in such natural landscape from the alien English intruders. Eamon de Valera in his 1943 radio broadcast eulogized that Ireland is a land of "cosy homesteads…sturdy children…and the laughter of comely maidens" (qtd. in Beaumont 103). Therefore, the country cottage or homestead, especially the kitchen—"the stereotypical locale of Irish plays through the 1950s" (Lojek 79) in western Ireland—becomes the *material* embodiment of the homely home in the process of nation-building. The Mundy home, as we are told, has "the furnishings of the usual country kitchen of the thirties: a large iron range,

large turf box beside it, table and chairs, dresser, oil lamp, buckets with water at the back door….the austerity of the furnishings is relieved by some gracious touches—flowers, pretty curtains, an attractive dresser arrangement, etc." (Friel ii). The Mundy house is thereby the material representation of the traditional, Gaelic homestead of the rural, idyllic Ireland in the 1930s, extolled in Irish nationalist imagery and trope. Moreover, the descriptions of the kitchen, the primary work place of women, also indicate the feminized notion of domesticity and the function of social reproduction within home.

The material outcome of social production of the home scale, in addition to the architectural design, also includes the demarcation of *boundary* between home and places beyond home. As McDowell affirms, scale-making, including the social production of the scale of home, is "made through power relations which construct the rules which define boundaries" (4) and the boundaries are "both social and spatial—they define who belongs to a place and who may be excluded, as well as the location or site of the experience" (4). The back hills in the play are constantly evoked as the opposite of the Mundy Catholic home. There are not only a *physical* boundary between the Mundy house and the area beyond, but also a *social* boundary drawn between the two, regulating the proper place in which a virtuous and chaste Irish woman is located. The back hills are the only place where the married Danny Bradley can spend time with Rose. The Festival of Lughnasa is held in the back hills, where the Sweeney boy gets burned during the riotous carnival. And Kate is especially vexed, reprimanding Rose, for she informs her sisters of the dreadful event of the Sweeney boy from the back hills:

> And they're savages! I know those people from the back hills! I've taught them! Savages—that's what they are! And what pagan practices they have are no concern of ours—none whatever! It's a sorry day to hear talk like

> that in a Christian home, a Catholic home! All I can say is that I'm shocked and disappointed to hear you repeating rubbish like that, Rose! (Friel 17)

The back hills are thus understood as a pagan, or *un*-Catholic, place, where women would be forced, or have the opportunity, to transgress Catholic moral imperatives on their body and sexuality. When Rose is found missing by the other sisters, because she has succeeded in meeting Danny Bradley alone in the Lough Anna of the back hills, the rest of the sisters suddenly fall into panic. When returning safely, and pressed by Kate's demand on knowing what has happened, Rose retorts that "[i]t's a very peaceful place up there" (Friel 59). Throughout the play the back hills are implicitly, except for Rose, understood as a place full of sexual temptations and wantonness in opposition to the Mundy Catholic home, in which women are disciplined as the guardian of national order and morality, and in return create their home as a site of Catholic austerity and temperance.

The *mobility* of the Mundy sisters is therefore quite circumscribed, as they are literally trapped in the domestic place of home. Their access to and control over space are largely limited in the home scale, and do not extend beyond the community of Ballybeg. The male figures in the play, on the contrary, are able to leave the boundary of the home scale. Father Jack has gone far away to Uganda, Africa, devoting himself to the Catholic mission, and once involved in the British imperial expansion in East Africa as the army officer chaplain. Before accidentally coming back to the Mundy home, Michael's father Gerry, a Welsh, has roved around Ireland, giving dancing lessons in Dublin, lately becoming a gramophone salesman around the country, and will be setting out for Spain as a foreign mercenary. Michael, "when [his] time came to go away, in the selfish way of young men [he] was happy to escape" (Friel 71), later tracks down the whereabouts of Rose and Agnes twenty-five years later in

London, after they have been found missing one morning (60). Compared with these male characters depicted in the play, the mobility of the Mundy sisters are much more limited than these Irish men in the newly independent Ireland. The unequal power relations between Irish men and women during the highly patriarchal milieu of the 1930s are thus embodied in the sisters' self-conscious restraint from transgressing the physical boundary of the home. Rose's adventure into the back hills with the married Daniel Bradley is her own attempt to stretch and reinscribe the scale of her daily life beyond the home scale, defying the political and religious discourses' socio-spatial confinement of Irish women, which is realized in the discriminatory legislations and the 1937 Constitution.[16]Agnes and Rose' eventual departure from their home to London belongs to the perennial trend of Irish female migration, which is attributed to the moral degeneration of Irish women in the popular discourse of post-independent Ireland. Their emigration away from home(land) to England is especially regarded as an embarrassment to the newly formed nation-state, since their destination is the country of their former colonizer. Irish female migrants also defy the naturalized relationship between woman, home and nation developed in the nationalist project, as they leave the boundary and scale of home, relinquishing their familial and national

[16] A number of restrictive legislations on women were passed and enacted during the 1920s and 1930s, including 1925 Civil Service Regulation (Amendment) Bill (but never enacted), 1924 and 1927 Juries Acts, suspension of application for divorce in 1925, 1929 Censorship of Publications Act (on artificial birth control), 1932 Public Service Marriage Bar, 1934 Conditions of Employment Bill and 1935 Conditions of Employment Act (Beaumont 96-9). These repressive legislations, despite their different purposes, all intend to confine women in the home by excluding them from the so-called public world of politics and business. Irish women, especially the married ones, are thus denied the full citizenship promised in the Article 3 of the 1922 Constitution of the Free State, as they are forced by law to fulfill motherhood and housewifery. The 1937 Constitution is the culmination of the gendered separate-sphere ideology of post-independence Ireland. Article 41.1.1 announces that "by her life within the home, woman gives to the State a support without which the common good cannot be achieved" (qtd. in Beaumont 99). Furthermore, Article 41.2.2 declares that "mothers shall not be obliged by economic necessity to engage in labour to the neglect of their duties in the home" (99). Irish women are directly identified as mothers, who are supposed to be only devoted to household management through unpaid domestic labor, within the sphere of home. Irish women are thus required to sacrifice themselves for the benefits of the whole nation. These legislative regulations are contested by diverse women's organizations. For more information on women's oppositional movements, please refer to Beaumont (102-6) and Valiulis ("Power, Gender, and Identity in the Irish Free State").

responsibilities and tasks. Therefore, Kate's mourning for the departure of Agnes and Rose also stems from the fact that the Mundy home can never be a homely home in the milieu of post-independence Ireland, as Agnes and Rose's transgression of the boundary of home is not only a familial loss but also a mortified stigma in the neighborhood.

Ⅳ Contested Process of Transfiguring the Irish Homely Home

The prevailing social *imaginary* of Irish home of post-independence Ireland is a feminized, private sphere, where women as mothers and wives are responsible for the biological and social reproduction of the nation, maintenance of Catholic morality and transmission of Gaelic cultural mores. In addition to Irish Catholicism, Irish nationalism, British colonialism and economic restructurings, the home scale of post-independence Ireland is also transfigured by other social relations and processes. Marston observes that "[s]cale productions are often contradictory and contested: a political process, shaped as well by social, cultural and economic forces, and endemic to capitalism, making any particular scale construction always potentially open to further transformation" ("A Long Way" 173). Blunt and Dowling also remark that "home as a place is a porous, open, intersection of social relations and emotions" (27). The Mundy home is not just constituted by the political, religious and economic forces. The return of Jack and the intrusion of the knitting factory bespeak the fact that Irish nationalist vision of a *purely* Gaelic and Catholic Ireland embodied in the everyday living place of home is not an authentic reality, but merely a regulatory fiction and a discursive construct.

Although Kate eagerly hopes that Jack can recover his English language and resume his priesthood as soon as possible, Father Jack still does not become the

familial and religious patriarch eventually. After speaking Swahili for twenty-five years with Ryangan people in Africa, Jack has gradually forsaken English language and its system of linguistic significations, and moreover, the culturally ascribed perceptions and cognitions. Jack has thus experienced "a shift between worlds" (Corbett 135), and "has exchanged the world view created by one language for that of another without realising it" (135). His wholehearted partiality for the "pagan" ceremonies of the Ryangan religion instead of Catholicism particularly astonishes Kate. Whenever he appears on stage, he is keen to share the Ryangan rituals and customs with his younger sisters, including the belief in the ancestral spirits, the local medicine men, the Ryangan harvest, and the animal sacrifices (Friel 38-9; 47-8). His revelations of the "pagan" Ryangan religion has always unnerved, and even shocked, Kate, who in the end can only console herself with the idea that Jack must make "his own distinctive spiritual search" (Friel 60). The return of Jack and his "preaching" of the Ryangan religion, together with the Festival of Lughnasa held in the back hills, contradicts and destabilizes Kate's imagination and maintenance of the Mundy household as a *Catholic* home, despite her endeavor to practice the Catholic social teaching by containing her sisters' un-Christian desires and behaviors.

Jack, on the other hand, challenges the ascetic conception of women and sexuality in Catholicism through his elaborations on the custom of "love-children" (Friel 41) and Ryangan matrimony (63). Instead of censuring Chris as an unmarried mother with an illegitimate son, as a Catholic priest is supposed to do, Jack supports Chris, adding that "[i]n Ryanga women are eager to have love-children. The more love-children you have, the more fortunate your household is thought to be. Have you other love-children?" (Friel 41). His anti-Catholic notion on women's sexuality is immediately, and unsurprisingly, curbed by Kate: "She certainly has not, Jack; and strange as it may seem to you, neither has Agnes nor Rose nor Maggie nor myself. No

harm to Ryanga but you're home in Donegal now and much as we cherish love-children here they are not exactly the norm" (Friel 41). In her determination to construct her home as a normative Catholic one by molding the religious identity of her household members, Kate therefore rejects Jack's Ryangan alternative view on women's practice of sexuality and its outcome, affirming the relation between women's sexuality and holy matrimony. Nonetheless, the Mundy home, with the existence of the unmarried mother Chris and the illegitimate child Michael, has already become more like a "pagan" home instead of a Catholic one.

On the other hand, Jack has once been the British army officer chaplain in 1917 to the British forces in East Africa (Friel 8). Although celebrated by the local newspaper *Donegal Enquirer* as "our own leper priest" (Friel 8) for his overseas mission to "civilize" the native Ryangan, his involvement in the British imperial project is "never referred to in th[e] house" (8). In contrast to Kate's participation "locally in the War of Independence" (8) in Ireland, Jack's experience ironically controverts Irish nationalist historiography's held belief that the Irish has always been the victim of the British rule and that the whole nation has dedicated to the causes of de-colonization. The homecoming of Jack therefore thwarts Kate's attempt to sustain a model home from the nationalist perspective: a country cottage responsible for building an Irish home culturally and morally distinct from the English or foreign influences or contaminations. The parochial nationalist vision of Irish home(land) as a traditional, Gaelic one is contested by the renegade Jack, who refers to the fact that despite the intention and practice of the nationalist ruling class, Ireland is never made up of a homogenous national culture, tradition and identity. Furthermore, though expected by Kate to say Mass again (Friel 46), Jack is unwilling or unable to fulfill her expectation of forming a model home by enacting the Irish patriarchal figure. The nonchalance of the parish priest to the return of Jack (Friel 16; 36) and later dismissal

of Kate (35; 41) imply that Jack's presence has become a stigma of and menace to the ideal of Catholic and Gaelic home(land) in the newly created nation-state.

Although the Mundy home initially looks like a private, enclosed place of feminized domesticity, especially eagerly maintained by Kate, the arrival of radio with its foreign songs, the knitting factory, the return of Father Jack and the visits of Gerry all have varied influences on the meaning, feeling, identity and boundary of the home of the sisters. The *homely* home in post-independence Ireland, the Gaelic and Catholic one in Irish nationalist ideal, which generates a specific perspective on women's role, gender and sexuality, is desired and bolstered by Kate. Nevertheless, her endeavors to sustain this ideal are often defied by the "deviant" practices and discourses of her siblings—the more she wants to construct her home as a familiar, secure, intimate and comfortable place, the more she is forced to confront the reality that her home is closer to an *unhomely* place away from the normative Irish homely home in the 1930s, for it consists of an unmarried mother, four spinsters, an illegitimate child and a renegade priest, with their respectively "aberrant" everyday practices. The *unhomely* here refers not only to the socially inappropriate condition or existence, but also the peculiar sentiment of dread and repulsion explored by Sigmund Freud.

Sigmund Freud in "The Uncanny" (1919) seeks to explore the little discussed feeling expressed by the German word *unheimlich*, often translated in English as the *uncanny* or the *unhomely* (219). He points out that the general understanding of the feeling of the uncanny reduces it to "what is frightening…what arouses dread and horror…what excites fear in general" and "the feelings of repulsion and distress" (219). He argues that the uncanny is actually "a special core of feeling" that is "within the field of what is frightening" (219)—"the uncanny is that class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar" (220). Surveying the

meanings of *heimlich* in the German dictionary compiled by Daniel Sanders, Freud shows that it is actually an ambiguous word, as it comprises two seemingly incompatible meanings—on the one hand, *heimlich* is "belonging to the house, not strange, familiar, tame, intimate, friendly" (222); on the other, it is "[c]oncealed, kept from sight, so that others do not get to know of or about it, withheld from others" (223). Freud concludes that "among its different shades of meaning the word '*heimlich*' exhibits one which is identical with its opposite, '*unheimlich*'" (224), and "[w]hat is *heimlich* thus comes to be *unheimlich*" (224). Drawing upon Schelling, Freud further contends that "everything is *unheimlich* that ought to have remained secret and hidden but has come to light" (225), and *unheimlich* is "in some way or other a sub-species of *heimlich*" (226). The feeling of *unheimlich*, or the uncanny/unhomely, is hence employed to describe a particular feeling of fear and repulsion, which is caused by "all those properties of persons, things, sense-impressions, experiences and situations" (220), which have become secret and hidden for some reasons, despite the fact that they had been used to be familiar and agreeable, but *recur* in different forms or ways.

Jack does not, as Kate hopes, resume his priesthood and thus patriarchal authority, which will sustain an ideal home in post-partition Ireland, but rather becomes the source of Kate's *unhomely* feeling. Notwithstanding Kate's endeavor to maintain a home of nationalist ideal, the return of Jack exposes the imperial collusion with the British Empire by the Irish overseas and the existence of non-Catholic pagan cultures in Ireland. During the anti-colonial nationalist struggles, the Irish are constructed as the victim of the British imperial enterprise, and seek to liberate themselves from its rule by all means. The fact that the Irish has always played a pivotal role in the British imperial project is deliberately diluted, and even obliterated, in the nationalist historiography. Nevertheless, Jack's "brief career in the British

army…never referred to in [the] house" (Friel, *Dancing* 8) *disproves* this discursive construct of nationalism. Moreover, Kate is always "startled…shocked…stunned" (Friel 60) by each new revelation by Jack of the "pagan" rituals and practices of Ryanga, where he genuinely feels "at home" (68). The growing alliance of Irish Catholicism with the nationalist cause actually creates a more Catholic Ireland than Gaelic one, seeking to extirpate the Gaelic religious ceremonies and beliefs, such as the Festival of Lughnasa still prevalent in the back hills. The exotic, "pagan" Ryangan religious practices similar to those of Lughnasa carnival is by corollary not acceptable in the "Catholic home" of the Mundy's (Friel 17). Kate once exclaims to Maggie after hearing anxiously Jack's elaborations of the Ryangan harvest ceremony: "Completely changed. He's not our Jack at all. And it's what he's changed into that frightens me" (Friel 49). What Jack has changed into therefore unravels the *familiar* fact of the imperial collusiveness with the British colonizer by the Irish and the prevalence of pagan cultures in Ireland, both of which are deliberately ignored and downplayed in a nationalist Ireland dominated by Catholicism. Kate therefore, due to Jack, experiences the *unhomely* feeling, as these two neglected and surmounted events, once known and familiar, recur once again, and intrude the Mundy home.

In addition to Jack's "going native" (Friel 39) and his complicity with the British imperialism, the arrival of the knitting factory that produces gloves in place of hand-made ones signifies that the "Industrial Revolution had finally caught up with Ballybeg" (Friel 59). Irish cultural nationalism has sought to differentiate Ireland from England through a binary, essentialist rhetoric and ideology—"England was described as pagan, Anglo-Saxon, urban and materialistic while the Free State was Celtic, Irish-speaking, rural and Roman Catholic" (Valiulis 100). The Irish home is a particular place and symbol of a pure, indigenous Irish Ireland. Women as mothers and wives within the bounded place of home are responsible for biological and social

reproduction of the Irish nation, play the role of "cultural boundary guards of the uniqueness of an Irish way of life in opposition to that of other foreign cultures" (Ryan, "Negotiating" 184) and are the embodiment of Catholic morality. However, the arrival of the knitting factory near the end of the play indicates that the new Free State *ipso facto* is not entirely dedicated to creating an idealized *traditional* Irish Ireland. Industrial Revolution, first developed form Britain and other Continental countries, is another structural force that transfigures the scale of community of Ballybeg and the home of the Mundys. The newly independent Ireland therefore still has to negotiate with the *modernity* of the British Empire and "its ideals of material progress" (Radhakrishnan 84). Deniz Kandiyoti observes the "Janus-faced quality" (378) of nationalism, arguing that it "presents itself both as a modern project that melts and transforms traditional attachments in favor of new identities and as a reaffirmation of authentic cultural values culled from the depths of a presumed communal past" (378). Radhakrishnan in discussing Indian nationalism also comments that "[f]orced by colonialism to negotiate with Western blueprint of reason, progress and enlightenment, the nationalist subject straddles two regions or spaces, internalizing Western epistemological modes at the outer or the purely pragmatic level, and at the inner level maintaining a traditional identity that will not be influenced by the merely pragmatic nature of the outward changes" (85). In other words, a de-colonized nationalist country usually develops an essentialist dualism in ideology and practice between inside and outside, home and world, woman and man, tradition and modernity, native identity and material pursuits, etc. (84), in order to negotiate with the continual material and cultural influences of the former colonizer.

The leaders of the new nation-state want to construct a traditional, Gaelic and Catholic, home place charged by women, and a public sphere outside home for the pursuit of "modernising economic and political projects" (Ryan, "Negotiating" 183).

In other words, the new nation-state "embark[s] on a project of nation-building in which negotiations of the contradictions around tradition and modernity, and foreign and indigenous cultural influences, had very particular implications for women" (183). The knitting factory is the exact evidence of the continual imperial impact of Britain on the economic policies of the new nation-state and the lives of Irish people. Although the newly freed Ireland has appealed to the Gaelic and Catholic traditions and cultures in the process of nation formation, it has also chosen to, or been forced to, selectively assimilate and appropriate the economic developmental patterns of Britain, "internaliz[ing] rather than problematiz[ing] the [imperial] blueprint in the name of progress, modernization, industrialization, and internalization" (Radhakrishnan 86). Ballybeg ultimately counteracts the imagination of a traditional, Gaelic Ireland, as the territory of western Ireland is transformed from a pastoral, idyllic landscape to a location of mechanical production of ready-made-wears. Although Irish nation-state is eager to maintain a dualistic pattern between the feminized home and masculine world beyond home through the idealized national womanhood, the arrival of the knitting factory actually exposes the fragility and hypocrisy of such dichotomous imagining, for it is the lower-paid women who are recruited to work in the factory. The labor of Irish women are hence further exploited, and the Mundy home is reshaped from a site of manual economic production through Agnes and Rose' glove-knitting to that of social reproduction of labor force in capitalist economic production, as Chris later reluctantly works there in order to support the family. Despite the normative idealization of the role and responsibility of Irish women in the home scale, they are simultaneously forced to work in the public sphere of the industrialized factory as the source of cheaper labor force, and hence contribute directly to the economic development of the new nation-state.

The home for Kate then can never be the same as it was used to be. Kate

ineluctably acknowledges that her home is far from a stable, singular and private place, for it is always "a site of intersecting spheres, constituted through both public and private" (Blunt and Dowling 18):

> You work hard at your job. You try to keep the home together. You perform your duties as best you can—because you believe in responsibilities and obligations and good order. And when suddenly, suddenly you realize that hair cracks are appearing everywhere; that control is slipping away; that the whole thing is so fragile it can't be held together much longer. It's all about to collapse. (Friel, *Dancing* 35)

Although Kate may not realize the causes of her *unhomely* feeling within her home, she is keenly aware that her striving at creating and maintaining a Catholic and nationalist home, is ultimately futile, as her home is always an open, porous place perpetually intersected by diverse social processes and relations. She attempts to uphold the normative order of Catholicism and nationalism on women by insisting on the proper roles, responsibilities and the ascribed gender and sexuality of Irish women. Nevertheless, primarily due to Jack's return, she cannot help but feel that "hair cracks" are emerging in the home, which is so "fragile" that it will "collapse" eventually; that is, the home turns out to be a place far from her ideal imaginary of home. Kate therefore also experiences the "estranging sense of the relocation of the home and the world" (Bhabha 445). The private, secluded home for her is invaded by "the world," represented and embodied by Jack, the music from the radio and later knitting factory outside home. She realizes that the "intimate recesses of the domestic space becomes sites for history's most intricate invasions" (Bhabha 445), since her home, actually already a temporary outcome shaped by the political, religious and economic forces in post-independence Ireland, is further transfigured by other structural forces, such as the "pagan" cultures, British imperialism and the foreign

technological progresses. Suffering the peculiarly *unhomely* feeling, Kate is so despondent that she eventually exclaims: "What has happened to this house? Mother of God, will we ever be able to lift our heads ever again?" (Friel, *Dancing* 59).

V. Conclusion

Dancing at Lughnasa is Friel's continual effort at exploring and problematizing the given understandings of various aspects of Irish history. Through vividly representing the daily life of the Mundy sisters, he is able to further uncover and question the broader social milieu of Ireland in the 1930s, especially the relationship between Irish women and nation in the process of nation-building after independence. The home is not just the site where the gendered politics of nation-building takes place, but is also the temporary outcome structured by the political, religious and economic forces, both materially and imaginatively. The Mundy home initially seems to be the embodiment of the ideal of Irish home of the newly free Ireland; nonetheless, as the play reveals, it is always a contested place that struggles and negotiates between the ideal of the separate-sphere ideology and the reality of the sisters' alternative practices. Although Kate strives to maintain the Mundy home as a model and homely home by insisting on the idealized national womanhood, which regulates women's role, gender, sexuality and place, her endeavors are constantly defied by her siblings. The Mundy home also reflects the *material* idealization of the homely home of post-partition Ireland, especially the kitchen. The material outcome of the Mundy home constituted by religious, political and economic processes is sharply demarcated from the space beyond home, both physically and socially, especially from the back hills. The mobility of the sisters is thereby highly circumscribed, as they are literally trapped in their home and the adjacent neighborhood. The feminized notion of home

also restricts women's spatial access to place beyond home.

Nevertheless, the Mundy home is not just configured by religious, economic and political forces, it is also an open and porous place constituted by other social processes. The return of Father Jack and the appearance of the knitting factory counteract and destabilize the prevailing imaginary and construction of Ireland, as well as its home, as a traditional, Catholic and Gaelic place in the nationalist vision. The presence of Jack illuminates the familiar fact of the collusion of the Irish with the British Empire overseas and the existence of "pagan" cultures within Ireland. Kate, due to Jack, is forced to recognize these facts denied and relegated in the nationalist discourse and historiography, and therefore experiences the *unhomely* feeling within her supposedly homely home. Kate and her siblings are generally portrayed as passively suffering the impacts of diverse social processes and relations on their home, and even the irruptive dancing that seems to subvert the hegemonic regulation on Irish womanhood is implicitly revealed as the striking evidence of their social-spatial confinement in the scale of home.

Dancing at Lughnasa therefore should not be regarded as Friel's own personal nostalgia for his childhood spent with his aunts, though the narrator Michael in his last monologue admits that in his memory of the summer of 1936 "atmosphere is more real than incident and everything is simultaneously actual and illusory" (71), and "the air is nostalgic with the music of the thirties" (71). It can be argued that Friel instead of speaking for the women characters actually honestly exposes how he re-members the unspoken and unspeakable history of Irish women in Ireland in the 1930s. In the end the narrator Michael concludes that he always remembers this summer as dancing: "Dancing as if language had surrendered to movement—as if this ritual, this wordless ceremony, was now the way to speak, to whisper private and sacred things, to be in touch with some otherness" (71). There are too many verbal

discourses and narratives on Irish women's body, gender, sexuality and place in the nation-building process, and the non-verbal dancing, though ephemeral and ineffectual, seems to be the only way the Mundy sisters can adopt to genuinely express their defiant alternative to performing otherwise.

Chapter Three

"Home at last. Gee, but it's a good thing to be home": Diaspora, Gender and Home in Brian Friel's *The Loves of Cass McGuire*

Ⅰ. Friel's Dramatic Historiography on Irish Female Migration

The high levels of migration from Ireland to the United States, Britain, Australia, Canada, South Africa and other parts of the world are paradoxically a trauma to be forgotten as well as a history to be remembered in the collective memory of the Irish in Ireland. Nowadays it is estimated that "some 70 million people around the world call themselves Irish, or claim Irish descent" (Gray 157). President Mary Robinson in her augural speech in 1990 "introduced the keynote theme later elaborated as 'cherishing the diaspora'" (Walter 11). On the other hand, President Mary McAleese further employs the rhetoric of "huge multicultural Irish family" (qtd. in Gray 173), which acknowledges that the Irish emigrants "brought our culture with them, refreshed and enriched it with the new energy it absorbed from the varied cultures into which it was transplanted" (173).

One of the most distinctive characteristics of Irish diaspora is the high proportion of *female* emigration from Ireland. Throughout the history of Irish emigration, Irish women "have left in greater numbers than men in most decades since 1871 when reliable statistics were first recorded" (Walter 15), and "the ratio of women to men in emigration streams increased steadily from 1,010 women per 1,000 men in 1871-81 to a high point of 1,365 in 1946-51" (15). The statistics not only reveal the increasing outpouring of Irish women from Ireland, but also suggest that more women chose or were forced to leave Ireland in the post-independence era than

in the colonial period. Irish women emigrants, especially after independence, tended to be "very young, with one third between the ages of 15 and 19 years, and a further third between 20 and 24 years" (Redmond 144). The fact that most of the female migrants were from the rural area of Ireland (Ryan, "Irish" 273) contradicts the *idealized* representation of the rural western Ireland in the discourse of Irish nationalism, which celebrates the natural landscape, idyllic scenery, farm family and the Gaelic and Catholic cultural practices of the west of Ireland, for this region has been regarded as least "contaminated" by the English colonial influence in the binary dichotomy between Ireland (Irishness) and England (Englishness) of Irish nationalist ideology.

Irish playwright Brian Friel in *The Loves of Cass McGuire* (1966) represents the homecoming migration of the eponymous female protagonist Cass back to Ireland after fifty two years in New York. Committed to scrutinizing and questioning the given versions and interpretations of various aspects of Irish history, Friel in this play addresses to the collective, but partially understood, memory of Irish diaspora. F. C. McGrath in his book *Brain Friel's (Post)Colonial Drama* contends that Friel's earliest plays are concerned with portraying "illusions of individuals" and "their immediate social environment" (64). Later on from *The Mundy Scheme* (1969) and *The Gentle Island* (1971) onwards Friel rivets on exploring "broader social, cultural, and historical registers with the individual characters becoming more illustrative or representative of these larger concerns" (64-5). In the 1980s with the establishment of The Field Day Theater Company Friel further takes ventures to engage with "larger canvases of Irish history and culture" or "more public and political issues" (65) in plays such as *Translations* (1980), *The Communication Cord* (1982) and *Making History* (1988).

However, McGrath's division of Friel's career implicitly reveals his dualistic

categorization between the individual experience and the collective history, as he remarks that Friel has moved all the way from delineating the "illusions of individuals" to "more public and political issues." Nevertheless, the classification between the petit and grand history is nothing but a convenient trope employed to differentiate the more momentous events and figures in the conventional recognition from the less known ones. In *The Loves of Cass McGuire*, written as early as 1966, Friel does not, as McGrath, asserts pays attention only to the illusions of Cass herself and other characters, but *de facto* seeks to situate Cass' own experiences within the context of 1960s. Feminist Geographer Doreen Massey argues that the "shifting, complex microspatiality of individual yet interconnected lives is, moreover, set within a broader social history. Which is also the history of the making and remaking of social spaces" ("Living" 460). Cass' forlorn and dejected life after a life-time labor away from home and Ireland should not be regarded merely as her own tragic story, but is always relevant to the ways in which Irish female migrants are considered in Irish society, which develops a particular notion of woman, nation and home during the post-independence period of nation-building. Cass' own tragic story can therefore be situated within the context of Irish female diaspora and Ireland in the 1960s, but her experiences also further reconfigure, and even contradict, the general perception and understanding of migrant women. Moreover, this play uncovers the contested relationships between Irish female emigrants and the place(s) called home in the process of dispersion and (re)settlement. Therefore, Friel in this play re-writes the history of Irish migration, centering not only on the often neglected experiences of Irish women and their homecoming migration, but also on the ways in which they negotiate with the home of settlement outside Ireland and the home of origin in Ireland.

In this chapter I aim to explore how Friel in representing Irish female diaspora

through Cass' individual experiences addresses the *spatial* issue involved in the diasporic experiences of Irish women, especially the *home* of displacement in Ireland and the home of placement outside Ireland. Furthermore, this play illuminates the quandaries of returned women migrants to the home of origin in Ireland—the ways in which Cass becomes incompatible with her younger brother Harry's middle-class home in Ireland of 1960s. Two versions and conceptualizations of home, embodied respectively by Harry and Cass, confront with each other in this play. Therefore, I argue that *The Loves of Cass McGuire* stages the intricate relationships between home, Irish female diaspora and homecoming migration of Cass, whose "problematic" Irishness, femininity and sexuality pose a threat to the normative social imaginary and practice of home in Harry's bourgeois house. Moreover, this play also uncovers the condition of physical, psychological and social *homelessness* of returned women migrants like Cass, who is eventually forced to construct a *homely* home of her own away from the home of origin.

Ⅱ. Social Production of the Scale of Home in Post-Independence Ireland

Home is not only a material house, or any physical architecture, but also a social sphere constituted by diverse social processes and relations beyond the tangible boundary of house. However, home as a particular kind of social and material place has been conventionally perceived as a bounded and stable place with fixed meanings (Blunt and Dowling 198); that is, home is perceived as a pre-existing, taken-for-granted entity that is expected to provide security, comfort, familiarity, intimacy, belongingness and other positive feelings for those coming back home. However, home is not always an emotional haven and sanctuary for those within it; more often than not, home "resonate[s] differently from different locations for

different subjects and often even for the same subject at different locations" (George 17). Similarly Massey also points out that it is incorrect to assume that "everyone once had a place called home which they could look back on, a place not only where they belonged but which belonged to them, and where they could afford to locate their identities" ("A Place" 10).[17]

Ever since the establishment of the Irish Free State in Ireland and later the Republic of Ireland, the scales of (women's) body, home, community, region and the national have especially been emphasized and constructed in the ideology and trope of Irish nationalism. In order to distinguish Ireland from Britain, chiefly England, politically and culturally and to justify its appeal of independence, "Ireland and Irishness were usually defined in opposition to England and Englishness" (Ryan, "Irish" 271-2); namely, "England was described as pagan, Anglo-Saxon, urban and materialistic while the Free State was Celtic, Irish-speaking, rural and Roman Catholic. Above all, it was virtuous" (Valiulis 100).[18] The rural West of Ireland, the regional scale, is considered as the exact embodiment of the nationalist version of Irishness and Ireland. The "representative of true Irishness" (Nash 87), "the landscape of the region, in the sense of its geology, climate and physical geography, was the base upon which themes of race, gender, spirituality, and the cultural politics of colonialism and nationalism were deployed" (88). The natural landscape, pastoral idyll, the country cottage and the economic activities of tillage and grazing of the West of Ireland are inscribed with cultural and political connotations in the process of de-colonization and later nation-formation in order to evoke an intensely place-based

[17] The spatial theory, particularly the concept of scale, has been introduced and elaborated in Chapter One; therefore, the theoretical foundation of my discussions and arguments will not be repeated here again. Please refer to pages 23-28.

[18] Louis Ryan further elaborates that there are actually a series of "overlapping and interconnected dichotomies of Ireland versus England, countryside versus city, innocence versus danger, Catholicism versus other religions, virtue versus vice, safety versus adventure, and home versus the streets" (272).

national belongingness and patriotism of the Irish in the territory of Ireland. The region of rural western Ireland not only is deployed to define Ireland from England nationally, but is also particularly gendered, or more precisely *feminized*, in the emphasis on the "traditional west-of-Ireland cottage" (Gray 162) during the periods before and after independence.

In Irish landscape paintings of the early twentieth century "the cottage in the landscape became a symbol of women, who were absent from the frame yet understood to be present within the walls, essential both to the operation of the enterprise and to the continuation of the nation, fixed yet dispossessed" (Walter 20). Taoiseach (Prime Minister) Eamon de Valera in his 1943 radio broadcast extolled that Ireland is a land full of "cosy homesteads…sturdy children…and the laughter of comely maidens" (qtd. in Beaumont 103). The young, innocent maidens of Ireland were then expected to become dutiful wives and virtuous mothers, dedicating to the maintenance of home and family biologically, morally and culturally within the boundary of cottage in the process of nation-building. Women do not have to appear in the landscape painting, for they are always placed, or confined, within the so-called private, enclosed scale of home. De Valera in 1937 also took for granted that "everyone knows there is a little chance of having a home in the real sense if there is no woman in it, the woman is really the home-maker" (qtd. in Beaumont 94). Earlier on 25 Oct 1924 the newspaper *Irish Independent* likewise directly stipulated Irish women's rightful place in the increasingly patriarchal society after independence: "Do not forget that you are Irish mothers; do not forget your glorious traditions…appear seldom on the promenade, and sit oftener by the cradles; come down from the platform and attend to the cot" (qtd. in Beaumont 94). The male politicians and the mainstream publications as well the Catholic clergy, in order to create social order and stability after years of political upheavals, not only regulate on Irish women's gender,

sexuality and identity, but also an idealized place called home. Irish women are "naturally" assumed to be mothers to take care of their "private" home and family, and should restrain themselves from the "public" places such as the streets and political venues. Their increasing social inferiority and disenfranchisement are also reflected in their restricted access to places outside home.

Ⅲ. Harry's Urban Bourgeois Home in *The Loves of Cass McGuire*

The primary structural forces during the period of de-colonization are the political and religious patriarchal ideologies of Irish nationalism and Catholicism.[19] These twin forces constitute not only an ideal of Irish women, who are expected to play such roles as the "biological reproducers of the nation" (Ryan, "Negotiating" 184), the "guardians of order and morality" (185) and the "cultural transmitters of Irish culture" (184), but are also responsible for the "security of the domestic sphere" (184) of home, where Irish women as mothers and wives should accomplish these *national* duties and responsibilities assigned to them. The restrictive legislations imposed on Irish women after independence seek to construct an ideal Irish *home* both as a site of feminized domesticity and a source of national stability by hindering women from participating in the activities of work, business and politics outside the boundary of home.[20] The 1937 Constitution without reserve stipulates that "by her

[19] A more detailed and nuanced study of the social construction of the scale of home—the primary social relations and forces that produce the scale of Irish home and the outcomes of the process of construction—is offered in Chapter One. Please refer to pages 28-36.

[20] A number of restrictive legislations on women were passed and enacted during the 1920s and 1930s, including 1925 Civil Service Regulation (Amendment) Bill (but never enacted), 1924 and 1927 Juries Acts, suspension of application for divorce in 1925, 1929 Censorship of Publications Act (on artificial birth control), 1932 Public Service Marriage Bar, 1934 Conditions of Employment Bill and 1935 Conditions of Employment Act (Beaumont 96-9). These repressive legislations, despite their different purposes, all intend to confine women in the home by excluding them from the so-called public world of politics and business. Irish women, especially the married ones, are thus denied the full citizenship promised in the Article 3 of the 1922 Constitution of the Free State, as they are forced by law to fulfill motherhood and housewifery (Beaumont 96-100).

life within the home, woman gives to the State a support without which the common good cannot be achieved" in Article 41.1.1 (qtd. in Beaumont 99). Moreover, Article 41.2.2 declares that "mothers shall not be obliged by economic necessity to engage in labour to the neglect of their duties in the home" (99). As a result, the religious and political prescriptions on Irish women's identity, gender and sexuality "always have a spatial form and spatial content" in the scale of home (Massey, "A Place" 12), which is "formed by the juxtaposition and co-presence of particular sets of social interrelations" (12) in the context of Irish nation-building.

The social construction of the scale of home is not only "a discursive practice, it is also the tangible outcome of the practices of everyday life" (Marston, "A Long Way" 173). The ideal home in the nationalist vision is the thatched cottage in the rural West of Ireland, as it is the embodiment and symbol of the authentic Irishness. However, in the economic progress of the 1960s, the homely, socially appropriate, home of the rising urban middle class is no longer the rural cottage with its plain decorations, but is transformed into a different type of material architecture. *The Loves of Cass McGuire* offers a glimpse of what a bourgeois homestead looks like in the 1960s. The living room in the "home of Harry McGuire, a wealthy Irish businessman-accountant" is a "spacious, high-ceilinged room, somewhere between elegance and austerity" (Friel 8). Though still reminiscent of the austerity of the country cottage in the nationalist ideal, Harry's middle-class house is also an elegant place embellished with a "large marble fireplace" and "[r]ound mahogany table" (Friel 8). When entering her younger brother's house, Cass is so impressed that she exclaims that "[w]hat a home" (Friel 37) to her brother, sauntering around the living room, "staring in admiration" (39), remarking again: "it's elegant, that's what it is" (40). Harry's house is as a site of comfort, intimacy and attachment through the material designs and furnishings; however, the stage directions from the outset of the

play also note that the living room of Harry's house also "serves as the common-room in Eden House, a home for old people" (Friel 8). The deliberate stage design has already suggested that the home of Harry and his family is not really a *private* haven and sanctuary of rest away from all the influences beyond the boundary of home, and moreover, his homely home later becomes the unhomely reality for Cass, as she is eventually forced to leave Harry's home, and strives to create a home of her own in Eden House. Harry's feeling of "being home", which refers to "the place where one lives within familiar, safe, protected boundaries" is founded on Cass's "not being home", for she is quickly compelled to realize that for her "home [i]s an illusion of coherence and safety based on the exclusion of specific histories of oppression and resistance, the repression of differences even within oneself" (Martin and Mohanty 197). Harry's homely home then is predicated upon the exclusion of the histories of Irish female migration associated with Cass, as migrant women like her are looked upon as failing to achieve the idealized national womanhood.

Though the *materiality* of the homely home of the 1960s may differ from that of the rural cottage immediately after independence, the *social relations* of the homely home seems to remain. The process of construction of any space, including the scale of home, involves the constitution of identities and the relevant social attributes. Alison Blunt and Robyn Dowling contend that "given that multiple social processes intersect in and constitute home, then it also follows that through home, multiple identities—of gender, race, class, age and sexuality—are reproduced and contested" (27). In the context of Irish nation-building Irish women are "naturally" associated with the scale of home by enacting the social roles of "virtuous mothers and dutiful wives" (Valiulis 100). This tenacious assumption on women's gender, sexuality, identity and place, as suggested by *The Loves of Cass McGuire*, is no less influential in the 1960s than in the era immediately following independence. In the opening

scene of the play Alice, Harry's wife, is depicted as "expensively, but not attractively, dressed" (Friel 12), "carrying chairbacks for the fireside chairs" (12). When returning home from work, Harry "gives Alice a perfunctory kiss, hands her the coat and hat, and sits at the fire" (13). Alice then habitually enquires whether Harry would care to have a drink, and informs that they will only have a light lunch, for she has arranged that his friends The Traynors are coming to dinner with them tonight (13). The brief and routine interactions between Alice and Harry reveal that Alice performs the social role as the household manager, who is responsible for myriad nurturing activities, which may include "cooking, care and 'home remedies' for illnesses, emotional support for family members, arranging recreational activities, establishing and maintaining ties to kin and community, and managing relationships to government (for example school) and business (for example shops)" (Hayden 82). Alice as portrayed in the play preoccupies herself with the domestic chores and tasks, such as cleaning chairbacks, offering means of sustenance to her husband, caring for her son Dom, who has caught a cold, as well her mother-in-law Gran, who is too senile to take care of herself and arranging a gathering with her husband's friends. Harry's bourgeois home is then a site of feminized domesticity, where the separate-sphere ideology between man and woman, work and home, production and reproduction, public and private and domestic and civic is reproduced and practiced.

The social *imaginary* of home as a site of feminized domesticity maintained by the ideal of Irish woman as mothers and wives is still prevalent in the 1960s; however, in this play it is simultaneously undermined and problematized by another motherly figure, Harry's senescent mother Gran, who sits in the wheel-chair throughout the play:

> Gran is eighty-nine and almost totally deaf. Black satin blouse, a rug around her knees, and a black shawl which has fallen from her shoulders.

> Were she able to walk around she would have the authority and self-possession of a queen; but because she is invalided she just looks monumental. The serene, superior expression on her face never varies because nothing can touch her now. Her speech is slow and dignified. (Friel 11)

Gran in this vivid description seems to be the incarnation of Cathleen ni Houlihan, one of the representative figures of feminization of Ireland, for she has the "authority and self-possession of a queen." The symbolic figure Cathleen in Yeats and Lady Gregory's *Cathleen ni Houlihan* transforms from an elderly hag to a glamorous queen, after the sons of Ireland have agreed to fight for her dispossessed land and property. In contrast, Gran undergoes a reverse transfiguration from a queen to her present condition as a hoary crone. Moreover, she is clothed in black from head to toe, as if she is mourning the loss of her glory. Though she still has the "serene, superior expression on her face," she is perceived as only "monumental." This *ironic* caricature of Gran as the incarnation of the allegory of Ireland as woman indicates Friel's implicit critique of the problematic reiteration and reification of feminization of Ireland and the simultaneous construction of an ideal of Irish woman in everyday reality.

Literally confined to the wheel-chair within the scale of home, Gran still spontaneously maintains her dignity as an ideal Irish woman by performing her role as a school teacher, asking: "Hands up any child who can tell me the name of the new cardinal. Anyone in the class now?' (Friel 11). However, she is immediately defied by her grandson Dom: "You're a deaf and doting old bag of guts. D'you know why Madam Lulana kept only Samoan girls? Because all they think of is sex, Gran—just like you and me. And no matter what climate they're in, they never wear underclothes" (Friel 11). Dom here challenges the ideal of asexual and

de-corporealized woman through the cult of Blessed Virgin Mary and Mother Ireland in Catholic belief and nationalist imagination respectively, exposing the "fragility and hypocrisy of th[e] moral code" imposed on Irish women (Ryan, "Irish" 280). The bourgeois home of Ireland in the 1960s in *The Loves of Cass McGuire* reflects yet destabilizes the tenacity of the naturalized relationship between women, home and nation through Alice's feminized home-making practices to maintain a homely home and Gran's somewhat fossilized existence as a symbol and embodiment of feminization of Ireland. Irish nationalism and Catholicism, the major social relations and processes in the process of nation-building, construct the materiality and imaginary of the scale of home in post-independence Ireland, even in the 1960s, and the gendered identities and social relations are also constituted in the home. Though partly different from the material outcome of the previous decades, Harry's bourgeois home still retains the social imaginary of a homely home through the dualistic dichotomy between home and places beyond home. The scales of women's body, home and nation are hence interconnected with each other, as they help to construct the meanings, roles and functions of each other mutually and dialectically.

However, this normative version of what a homely home is in post-partition Ireland has already from the outset been flouted and questioned by the younger generation like Dom. Moreover, the return of migrant Cass becomes a more blatant challenge to the imaginary and practice of Harry's patriarchal home. In theorizing social production of scale, Swyngedouw adds that the "scaling of the everyday… is expressed in bodily, community, urban, regional, national, supranational and global configurations whose content and relations are fluid, contested and perpetually transgressed" (169), for any scale making is "always already a result, an outcome of the perpetual movement of the flux of socio-spatial dynamics" (169). Besides Irish Catholicism and nationalism, Irish (female) diaspora, as revealed in *The Loves of Cass*

McGuire, is also part of the socio-spatial dynamics that structure the scale of home in the Irish context.

Ⅳ. Cass' Migratory Experiences: The Homing Desire, the Unhomely Presence and Homelessness

Home is never an enclosed, bounded place with static meanings and feelings; rather, it is always a "porous, open, intersection of social relations and emotions" (Blunt and Dowling 27). Not only home but also all the places are "open and provisional," and "formed by the juxtaposition and co-presence of particular sets of social interrelations" (Massey, "A Place" 12). Apart from political and religious forces, Irish emigration among other socio-cultural, economical and political transformations plays a crucial role in influencing the home of displacement in Ireland as well as establishing the home of placement outside Ireland, which is usually connected to the original home(land) culturally and practically.

Irish migration has long been remembered as "a national tragedy or 'wound'" in Irish collective memory (Gray 165). This "trauma of separation and loss" (Gray 161) has been attributed to the "coercive British policy" (Walter 11) in Ireland developed in the "myth of exile" (Ryan, "Irish" 272). Mass Irish emigration from Ireland then has been understood as the result of British colonialism by the anti-colonial nationalists, who believed that independence from British Empire will terminate the out-flow of Irish people from their own native land. Although British colonialism in Ireland through policies such as plantation and eviction was indeed responsible for mass Irish emigration, this national tragedy will not be put to an end simply by achieving political or formal independence from Britain without substantial reformations of the economic conditions of Ireland (Ryan 272). As it turns out, a large number of Irish

people did not consider it worthwhile to remain in their homeland after independence, and the "continuing levels of emigration in post-independence southern Ireland came as a disappointment to those who had believed that British colonialism had caused and perpetuated the emigration problem" (Ryan 273). Unable to cease the out-flow of Irish populations by carrying out successful economic policies in the European inter-war years, the political and religious leaders of the newly formed nation-state continued to regard Irish emigration as "exile and tragedy…as a means of masking its inability to stem out emigration following independence" (Gray 164) through the reiteration of the "nationalist narrative of emigration as postcolonial 'exile'" (164).[21]

In addition to continually blaming colonial governance and its aftermath for causing the incessant emigration of the Irish through the myth of exile, another "myth of holy Ireland" also emerged as the popular but problematic explanation for the endless loss of Irish population (Ryan, "Irish" 273). According to the historian J. J. Lee, emigration is considered in this myth of holy Ireland not as "the consequence of imperialist tyranny," but as "an index of the psychological inadequacy of emigrants themselves" (34). The "psychological inadequacy" refers to the moral depravation of those who choose to migrate, as they have eschewed or broken the Catholic moral teaching of holy Ireland. But this moralistic interpretation of the incentives of Irish emigrants is only partially true, for some women did try to escape from Ireland due to illegitimate pregnancy out of wedlock (Ryan 279), and the increasing pressure to conform to Catholic morality only caused more and more people to flee from Ireland. Ascribing the continual levels of migration to the moral degeneration of the migrants themselves only "relieved economic policy makers of responsibility for solving the

[21] In fact Irish emigration cannot be singularly considered as a national wound or tragedy either before or after independence. A great number of Irish migrants have participated in the imperial enterprises on other colonies of Britain, and collaborated with their colonial oppressor through their "whiteness" and English-speaking capacity. Therefore, the Irish are not always, as claimed by the nationalists, the victims of British colonial rule, nor are all of them dedicated to the campaigns of de-colonization.

problem" (Lee 35).[22]

Irish female migrants were the primary target of the moralistic censure by the church, state and the press in Ireland. Dr. McNamee, Bishop of Ardagh and Clonmacnoise observed in 1931 that young, single Irish girls chose to leave Ireland, for they were captivated by the "fascination of the garish distractions of the city, and by the hectic life of the great world as displayed before their wondering eyes in the glamorous unrealities of the films" (qtd. in Ryan, "Irish" 274). This commentary attributes the cause for the departure of Irish women from their home(land) to the foreign, especially English, material and cultural influences on the Irish girls, who were lured away from the "morally appropriate standards of behaviour" (Redmond 149), especially their sexuality. The insistence on Irish women's moral purity and modesty comes from both Catholic moral imperatives on women's sexuality and role modeled after Blessed Virgin Mary and the nationalist imagery of personification of Ireland as an asexual maiden and mother. Moreover, in the process of nation-building Irish women as mothers and wives in the sphere of home are responsible for transmitting Gaelic cultural traditions, reproducing the future citizens and embodying Irish Catholic virtue. Accordingly, Irish women are supposed to remain in the scale of home of Ireland in order to fulfill their national responsibilities. *Woman migrant* is therefore a term of contradiction, for it counteracts the naturalized relation between women and home in the dominant male perception by revealing the fact that women

[22] Irish diaspora is interpreted differently in different contexts. In the 1960s "a revisionist view began to represent emigration as voluntary, individualised activity" (Walter 203). In the Celtic Tiger economy of the 1990s Irish diaspora is considered entirely different from the earlier decades. The general trend, exemplified by President Mary Robinson, seeks to reclaim Irish diaspora as "a means of refiguring the national as global" (Gray 157) through the trope of "global Irish family" (170) and "huge multicultural Irish family" (171), which negotiate the "tensions produced in the disjunctures of national, diasporic and global codes of belonging" (171) by employing diaspora to argue that the Irish nation and its culture have already been globalized. Irish identity or Irishness is "constructed as trans-temporal, trans-spatial and reliant on diverse narratives of cultural belonging" (163). However, in the global consumer market nowadays the sign of Irishness is continually associated with the idea of national tragedy and trauma of Irish diaspora in such cultural products as Riverdance. Ironically the "position of the 'other' and sentimentalism become positive resources in a multicultural present in which spaces of consumerism seek out diversity and signs of otherness" (Gray 165).

constantly transgress the boundary of home, and hence defying the idealized national womanhood.

The Loves of Cass McGuire is concerned with the interrelations between women, home and Irish diaspora. But unlike most explorations of diasporic experiences, either in literary or historical studies, this play addresses the seldom discussed aspects of Irish diaspora; that is, the *homecoming* migration of Irish female emigrants. Irish women continued to leave Ireland temporarily or permanently after the foundation of the newly formed southern nation-state. The problematic discourses on the migration of Irish women are still influential in the relatively prosperous era of the 1960s. Therefore, the *returned* women like Cass are still forced to confront with the moralistic "myth of holy Ireland," which has ironically played a crucial role in driving them out of Ireland initially. Denounced by Tessa, the maid in Eden House, as a "dirty, mean aul' pagan" (Friel 35), Cass is characterized as "a tall, bulky woman of seventy," who "wears a gaudy jacket…over gaudy clothes; rings; earrings; two voluminous handbags which never leave her" (14). In addition, she "smokes incessantly and talks loudly and coarsely (deliberately at times)" (14). In stark contrast to the idealized national womanhood embodied by both Alice and Gran, Cass' presence unravels how an ideal of Irish woman is never an authentic, given reality, but only a discursive construct and regulatory fiction, to which some women choose to conform, from which some desire to escape and with which others endeavor to negotiate in their everyday life.

Cass is indeed a "deviant" woman, according to the Catholic moral rectitude of post-partition Ireland, which imposes rigorous requirement on the sexuality of women, who are further considered as the embodied representatives of Catholic virtue, one of the constituents of Irish identity. As implied in the play, Cass does *choose* to leave Ireland, for she has committed fornication out of wedlock, and been discovered by

Father O'Neill: "The night he caught Connie Rowley guzzling the hell outa me below the crooked bridge! 'You bastard,' he sez—well, mebbe he didn't use that word—'Are you comfortable in you sinning?' And poor Connie, Jeeze I could feel his knees going, he sez, 'Please, no, Father. The grass's damp.' Anyways, I saved up and gathered the passage money and left a note for Momma and one for Connie…and off I blew" (Friel 23-4). Following the cult of Virgin Mary in Immaculate Conception, Irish Catholic social teaching of sex is highly restricted, for the only sexual practice permitted is the heterosexual one between a man and a woman within a God-sanctioned marriage for the purpose of procreation. Having sex outside this institution is therefore condemned as a "sinful" behaviour, for it transgresses Catholic version of virtue and morality. After being found out by the clergy what has happened between Cass and Connie, Cass under the pressure of "sinning" is in fact forced to leave Ireland. However, her emigration from her home(land) only justifies the popular discourses surrounding Irish migrant women as already or potentially "fallen" women. Moreover, Cass, when coming back to Ireland after fifty two years in New York, is still "marked by the pressure to conform to particular notions of Irish femininity" (Gray 169).

The concern with Cass' femininity and sexuality is implicitly revealed in the curious enquiries of her family members. Her nephew Dom, who has taunted his grandmother Gran earlier, asks Cass the following questions: "Did you live with Jeff Olsen, the man that owned the place you worked in, Auntie Cass?...Were you ever married to him?...Did you sleep with him?" (Friel 31). Alice is also obsessed with the idea of Cass remaining a garish spinster: "Why did you never marry out there?" (38). Cass herself is also fully conscious of her being an aged, single and bizarrely-behaved Irish woman, who sang "at the top of her voice half the night" (Friel 12), called her own mother "a Big Cow" (13) and sabotaged Sweeney's pub when being drunken (14). Apparently for her family Cass is an *unhomely*, socially inappropriate and

problematic, presence in the “subdued domestic atmosphere” (14) of Harry’s bourgeois home. Fully aware of her incompatibility with Harry’s home and the ambient community, Cass also pretends to admonish Dom for trying to form a close relationship with her: “The less you see of your old Auntie Cass the better, because she ain’t got no money, and we suspect she doesn’t go to church, and we’re not too sure if she’s a maiden aunt at all” (Friel 16). The idea of her not being married and not “a maiden aunt” is related to the suspicion that she has not attended Catholic Church services when in New York. Cass later also in her soliloquy cries that “Hell, I hate Sundays” (Friel 35). Attending to Catholic Church on Sundays is necessary for Irish women overseas not only to abide by to their religious faith with its moral regulations on women’s body and sexuality but also to maintain the familial and cultural ties with the home(land). Bronwen Walter observes that “[m]any Irish women, especially in the older generations, participate extensively in Catholic church activities” in their places of settlement outside Ireland, for this involvement “represents continuity with their earlier life in Ireland” (211-12). And it is “more common to find accounts of emigrants whose behaviour maintained traditional values of Irish morals than those who radically altered their behaviour” (Redmond 152). Therefore, the accounts of diverse emigrants often reveal that “migrants are trapped in time warp holding on to the cultural practices” (Gray 163) associated with home(land). For many Irish women, sticking to the Catholic morality on women’s sexuality is hence more a source and proof of their maintaining cultural and national connection than merely a religious matter.

However, Cass’ experiences offer an alternative condition, for she has literally escaped from Ireland due to her sexual transgression, and later resisted the “excessive enforced piety” of Irish Catholicism by evading the church community and its activities in New York (Redmond 152). Moreover, she works as “a head waiter” (Friel

45), an employment "where modesty and virtue may be exposed to great dangers" (qtd. in Ryan, "Irish" 274). Pat, one of the inmates of Eden House, ruthlessly sneers at Cass as nothing but a "skivvy—that's what you were—written all over you! And a drunken aul' skivvy, living in sin with a dirty aul' Yank that kicked you out in the end" (Friel 49). Consequently Cass faces the risk of being "denationalised by exceeding the codes of Irish femininity on her return" (Gray 169). Her transgression of gender, sexuality and place of an ideal Irish woman in the context of nation-building of Catholic Ireland—her resistance to Catholic moral imperatives on women's body and sexuality, her employment as a waitress in the "joint on the Lower East Side" (Friel 17) of New York and her disassociation with the Catholic community—also problematizes her national identity as an Irish woman. Cass is actually dubbed "the returned Yankee" (Friel 16) by the folks of the community immediately after her return; moreover, Pat also mocks her as a "big swank American lady" (49). Even in the ordinary conversation with the other inmates of Eden House, Trilbe unwittingly calls Cass "you Americans" (59). The "denationalising consequences of emigration" (Ryan, "Irish" 278) of Cass, who speaks in a "raucous Irish-American voice" (Friel 14), derive from not only her absence in the process of nation-building in Ireland but also her violation of nationalized Irish womanhood developed from the combination of Irish Catholicism and nationalism of post-independence Ireland. Though Cass may resemble the "deviant" women of migration in the dominant discourse surrounding Irish female migration, it is not appropriate to assert that Friel in *The Loves of Cass McGuire* advocates this partial and problematic interpretation of the incentives and consequences of migration of women by banishing Cass from the home of Harry. This play rather exposes the "particular stringent code of morality and virtue" (Ryan, "Irish" 280) imposed on women by representing the ways in which a defiant migrant woman like Cass is ultimately contained and disciplined during her negotiations with

the conventional understanding of Irish female migration developed from the 1920s in the 1960s.

Despite leaving the home(land) in the first place and later being driven out of her brother's home upon her return, Cass' migratory experiences are closely associated with the place(s) called home. Avtar Brah argues that the "concept of diaspora places the discourse of 'home' and 'dispersion' in creative tension, inscribing a homing desire while simultaneously critiquing discourses of fixed origins" (192-3). Diaspora therefore offers an opportunity to revision the concept of home, which is never a fixed, stable, original and singular place, but always an open and porous intersection of social relations. The concept of diaspora is not only concerned with conditions of dispersion from the place of origin, but also with how a home is constructed in the place of settlement as well how a relationship with the home of origin is formed. Alison Blunt and Robyn Dowling also remark that the "lived experiences and spatial imaginaries of transnational migrants revolve around home in a range of ways: through, for example, the relationships between home and homeland, the existence of multiple homes, diverse home-making practices, and the intersections of home, memory, identity and belonging" (199). The memories of Cass in the play reveal her efforts at creating a home in her settlement in New York as well her attempts to connect with the home she has left behind. Nevertheless, her return back to her brother's home in Ireland poses a threat to the social imaginary and relations of Harry's homely home, and therefore is in conflict with Harry's conception of home.

In addition to sexual transgression, the other important factor that causes Cass to leave Ireland when she was eighteen is the economic pressure. Although women are expected to stay at home by playing the roles of mothers and wives, the economic necessity still forces many of them to work outside the home. But the limited employment in inter-war years and the legislative attempts at withdrawing women

from the public sphere of work and business ultimately compel women to leave Ireland in order to survive. However, the "economic necessities, lack of life opportunities or the family obligations" are deliberately overlooked in the prevailing perception of Irish female migration (Redmond 144). Ironically the moralistic censure on women's emigration only provokes their desire to leave. The descriptions in the play characterize Cass as a coarse woman, for "[a] life of hard physical work has ravaged her" (Friel 14), and "[o]nly her spirit is strong and resilient" (14). Cass in one of her monologues reports that "[f]or fifty-two years I work one block away from Skid Row….[w]ashing, scrubbing, fixing sandwiches—work so that you don't have no time to think, and if you did you thought of the future" (Friel 19). Furthermore, she also recollects the result of her hard labor: "I wear sneakers, you know, with the toes cut out 'cos my feet, boy, they sure give me hell standing behind that counter. Fine on a Monday morning, and not too bad on Tuesday, but by Wednesday—Jeeze—way up like this; and for the rest of the week they're throbbing like they had the neuralgia" (Friel 26). Like most of the Irish migrant women, Cass sends back the money earned from the hard physical work aboard in order to support her family and home in Ireland.

Sending *remittances* back to the home of origin is one way of maintaining Irish belongingness and identity outside Ireland. Though not going to the church and involved with the Irish Catholic community during her sojourn in New York, Cass sill relies on economic means to create a connection with her home of displacement in Ireland. The remittances sent back by the women migrants can "contribute to the home economy" (Redmond 148). However, though "remittances can help to 'maintain a stake in the home'…until the middle of the twentieth century at least, they also helped to prop up the patriarchal system that contributed to Irish women leaving in the first place" (Gray 169). The religious and political patriarchal system in Ireland after

independence still naturalize the relationship between women and home(land), in spite of the fact that the economic development and prosperity in Ireland are largely contributed by those women not in the home place in Ireland. When informed by Harry that actually the remittances sent back home are not necessary, because "we were never in want" (Friel 40), due to Mother's salary as a teacher and his fortunate ventures in business (40), Cass becomes "madly, desperately elated" (42), even all the money she has sent has been banked by Harry (41). Cass is depressed by this surprising tiding, which has never been revealed in the letters written by Harry, who believes that "[t]here would have been no point in telling you we really didn't need it: you would have sent it all the same" (Friel 40). This fact discloses that all the sacrifices she has made by travelling overseas to work as a waitress in the poor region of New York means nothing to her family in Ireland. And Harry even tells her that due to this "nice little nest-egg" (41) saved in the bank, she is "independent of everyone" (41). The idea of being *independent* of everyone in fact implies that Harry's home cannot afford to accommodate Cass after her more-than-half-a-century drudgery abroad, for she has already been *denationalized* as a sexually and morally problematic migrant woman, a disgrace to Harry's bourgeois homely home.

Simultaneously Cass' "homing desire" (Brah 193) is attempted not only by her continual economic connection with her family, but also by her "creation of new homes, an entitlement to claim the area of settlement as one's own and a state of 'feeling at home'" (Walter 194). Though not entering matrimony with the joint owner Jeff Olsen, with whom she has worked in New York, Cass still maintains a loving relationship with him, who on the Christmas night of 1942 offered her a brooch, which is "a shamrock with three leaves and all, and with green and white and orange diamonds plastered all over it—only they were glass" (Friel 34). Reminiscing this Christmas present, Cass confesses that "I dunno what happened to me; maybe I was

drunk or something; but I began to cry…you know, he was so kind to me" (Friel 34). Shamrock is the symbol of Ireland, for it has been alleged that St. Patrick once used the shamrock to explain the concept of Trinity in his missionary tour around Ireland. Forming an unconventional home by cohabiting in New York
with Jeff, who offers her a brooch in the shape of shamrock, the symbol of her homeland, and sending remittances back to Ireland therefore represent the "doubled relationship or dual loyalty that migrants, exiles and refuges have to places—their connections to the space they currently occupy and their continuing involvement with 'back home'" (Lavie 14). Through her memories of her days in New York, Cass reveals implicitly the ways in which she manages to sustain her identification with the original home in Ireland and to create a new home in New York concurrently. The "coexistence of two forms of home" (Walter 194) as well "two places of identification" (195) for migrant women like Cass conflict with Harry's bourgeois notion of home. Harry's middle-class home is maintained through the feminized domesticity and separate-sphere ideology, which are realized through the identities and practices of Alice, Mother and Harry respectively. Harry's patriarchal home therefore is a bounded, enclosed and static place, which is made through patriarchal "power relations which construct the rules which define boundaries" that are "both social and spatial—they define who belongs to a place and who may be excluded" (McDowell 4). A social construct *per se*, Harry's bourgeois homely home is formed by the exclusion of the unhomely presence, such as the returned migrant Cass.

When received by Harry and his family upon her return, Cass exclaims that "[h]ome! I can't even begin to tell you what this means to me, Harry" (Friel 37). The long-term experiences of migration has already transformed the meaning and idea of home for Cass, who has long sustained a relation with the home of displacement in Ireland, and also attempted to create a home in the place of settlement in America.

Home for her is not fixed in one single place, nor does it certainly offer positive feelings for her. However, after going through the process of relocation from one place to another, home for Cass still remains a desirable place. She still hopes to find a place which she can call home; that is, where she can feel a sense of belongingness, attachment, comfort, security, familiarity and intimacy. Therefore, she cries out: "This is what it was all for—to come home again" (Friel 37). Migration is not only dispersal from home, but is always to find a place that can be called home, which is not limited to a house, but can be a community, a region and even a country, for the migrants. However, as a migrant woman Cass' "homing desire" (Brah 193) is twice thwarted. In her monologue Cass confesses the reason for her return: "You wanta know why I never got married? 'Cos I hadn't time—that's the why—working—and then I sorta fell in with Jeff, and we had our own arrangement. He was no sweet guy but he liked me—I know he did—he never said it but I know he did. And when he died, well what d'you do but come home….That's what it's all about, isn't it—coming home" (Friel 44). The second time is immediately after the first week of her return. Cass' gender performativity, sexuality, migrant identity and her antics following her return embarrass Harry, who eventually makes the decision to send Cass to Eden House, "where the workhouse used to be" (Friel 25), despite his earlier cordial welcome: "this is your home, now, Cass; look on yourself as one of the family" (38).

The impression of the uncanny/unhomely is likewise aroused in Harry in *The Loves of Cass McGuire*, owning to the intrusion of Cass in his home. Cass' presence alludes to the long *familiar* fact of Irish migration in Irish collective memory. Irish diaspora, in the nationalist myth of exile, has been remembered as the national tragedy and trauma caused by the colonial rule of British Empire. The continual loss of population from Ireland after independence is a disappointment of and an embarrassment to the new nation-state. Irish *female* migration is especially a familial

mortification preferred to be forgotten, as the popular discourses surrounding the migration of women after independence are predicated on their moral degeneration for leaving their home(land). Therefore, for Harry, though the emigration of his sister Cass is a *known* fact in the community, he has managed to live without associating with it, for instance, by refusing to use the remittances sent back by Cass. However, the return of Cass forces him to confront not only the national tragedy of Irish emigration but also the abashed reality of being associated with Irish female migration, much denounced in the process of nation-building. Cass is also aware of the *unhomely* sentiment felt by Harry and his family due to her return: "how patient you all were with the terrible woman that appeared out of the blue after fifty two years!—how her Momma doesn't recognize her, and how her brother is embarrassed by her, and how Alice—Jeeze, yes—I think poor Alice is afraid of her!" (Friel, *Loves* 15). Considered as a "terrible woman," Cass reminds Harry and his family the long suppressed, humiliated fact of Irish female migration both in the national and family history.

Cass in *The Loves of Cass McGuire* is characterized as a "loud, bawdy, impulsive, drunken and foul-mouthed…disruptive force which frightens and shocks the established order" (Andrews 96), represented by Harry and Alice, the "traditional, middle-class Catholics" living in "the genteel setting of their home" (96). Harry also suffers the "estranging sense of the relocation of the home and the world" (Bhabha 445), as he likewise is obliged to encounter the fact that the "intimate recesses of the domestic space become sites for history's most intricate invasions" (445). Cass and the history of Irish (female) migration hence destabilize Harry's home as a private, enclosed place away from the world of politics, business and work. The imaginary and material home of Harry is the social product of Irish nationalism, Catholicism and the economic boom of the 1960s, which is partly contributed by the economic connections of emigrants with their home(land) overseas. Cass' invasion then exposes

that the "private and public, past and present, the psyche and the social develop an interstitial intimacy, an intimacy that questions binary divisions through which such spheres of social experience are often spatially opposed" (Bhabha 448). The "subdued domestic atmosphere" of Harry's home is therefore "suddenly and violently shattered" (Friel, *Loves* 14) by Cass' personal experience of migration as well the nation's painful collective history, which reconfigures the social imaginary and relations of the scale of home. Harry's home is thus never a bounded and secluded place but a site of intersecting sphere constituted both by the private and the public. Owning to Cass, Harry hence experiences not only the feeling of being *unhomely* (uncanny) but also the "shock of recognition of the world-in-the-home, the home-in-the-world" (Bhabha 445).

Driven out once again from home, Cass lapses into the condition of *homelessness*, as she is "stuck in the gawddam workhouse" (Friel 15). Eden House, "a rest home for elderly people" (Friel 16), is experienced not as a home place for Cass, who considers that she is "only temporary here" (20). However, during the process of struggling with her memories of the past, especially the week after her return in Harry's home, she is forced to create a home of her own in Eden House, despite her insistence that "that' all over and done with—history; and in my book yesterday's dead and gone and forgotten….and there will be no going back into the past!" (16). The residents of Eden House Trilbe and Ingram introduce to Cass the way in which they "tak[e] the shabby and unpromising threads of his or her past life and weav[e] it into a hymn of joy, a gay and rapturous and exaggerated celebration of a beauty that might have been" (Friel 7). As a matter of fact, Trilbe and Ingram *reinvent* their "shabby and uncompromising threads of his or her past life" in their own imagination through the monologic "rhapsody" (Friel 7).

Anna McMullan in "Unhomely Stages: Women Taking (a) Place in Irish

Theatre” observes that for many Irish women depicted in the plays by a number of contemporary female authored texts “[h]ome is not a stable container, but a place which is subject to a continual process of dislocation and relocation” (88). The dis- and re-location, or homelessness, experienced by Irish women refer not just to the physical displacement from their home(land), but more often to the mental detachment and alienation. McMullan further comments that young women characters are often compelled to search for “any kind of socially and communally acceptable place” (76), as they are banished from their home, because their “aberrant” behaviours can not be tolerated by the mores of the community. They often end up with a “lack of a homely place to nurture self-formation” (81), and are often on the way to quest for a home place that will “both nurture the individual and support [their] connections with [their] loved ones” (81). Continually driven from the places called home in her life, Cass has always sought to create a place that she can feel at home. However, her attempt at creating a home in New York ends up with nothing, and her homecoming migration quickly removes her from her brother’s home to the asylum for the elderly. Struggling with her afflictive memories and experiences of her past, she ultimately seems to surrender to the fantasizing strategy deployed by Trilbe and Ingram to create her ideal home with her loved ones, as if her “home is in the private core of mind, hermetically sealed off from the external world” (Andrews 104). However, Cass has always negotiated her relationships with home all her life either in the home of origin and settlement, and thereby it seems more appropriate to contend that in her ostensible conformation to the social norms of what a homely home and its social relations should be, she does not just form a home in her own imagination, but manages to transform Eden House to a place where she can feel at home by reconciling the dominant ideology on women, home and nation with the reality of her confinement to an asylum for the elderly. Therefore, in the denouement of the play, she is able to

cheer: "Home at last. Gee, but it's a good thing to be home" (Friel 70).

V. Conclusion

In *The Loves of Cass McGuire* Friel turns his attention to the relationships between home, gender and Irish diaspora, revolving especially around the homecoming of Irish female migrants and their multiple, shifting experiences of the places called home in the process of diaspora. The negative delineations of Cass as a migrant woman do not indicate that Friel (un)wittingly reproduces the patriarchal perspective on Irish women in the process of nation-building. Rather Friel has committed to exploring how a migrant woman like Cass, defying the normative assumptions on women, home and nation, negotiates with the political and religious mechanisms in the newly independent Ireland.

Though forced to leave Ireland due to sexual transgression and economic hardship, Cass still maintains a familial and cultural relation with the home(land) primarily by sending remittances. On the other hand, she also manages to form a home of settlement in New York by establishing a love relationship with the joint owner Jeff out of matrimony. Therefore, the "homing desire" of Cass in the process of dispersal from Ireland is not merely realized in her continual connection with the home(land) of origin economically, but also achieved through her endeavour to create a new home in the land of placement. Cass develops identification with two forms of home in her long-term diasporic experience. However, her experiences of home as a multiple, fluid site of social interactions, not constructed through "continual temporal threads in the confines of one place" (Massey, "Living" 470), is in contrast with her younger brother Harry's creation of a bounded, private home of Irish middle class in the 1960s. Though different materially from the rural cottage favored by Irish

nationalists, Harry's bourgeois house is still a site of feminized domesticity maintained and embodied by Alice practically and Gran symbolically. Irish Catholicism and nationalism not only develop a particular code of women' s gender, sexuality and identity, but also construct the scale of home as women's rightful place in the nationalist project.

However, Cass' return undermines Harry's bourgeois home as an enclosed, secluded place as well as the naturalized relationship between women, home and nation. The homely, socially appropriate and ideal, home of Harry is rendered an unhomely place for Cass, whose problematic gender, sexuality and identity cannot be accommodated in the Irish bourgeois home of Harry. Cass' presence further reminds him of the familiar but hidden reality of Irish female migration, the mortifying stigma of the familial and national history and memory. An *unhomely* existence to Harry, Cass once again lapses into the condition of homelessness, physical, psychological and social. "[H]omesickness with nowhere to go" (George 27), Cass still attempts to create a place of belongingness and identification, despite the fact that she is social-spatially confined to Eden House without being able to transcend this "home" for the elderly.

Conclusion

Irish Women, (Un)-Homely Home and Nation Formation in *Dancing at Lughnasa* and *The Loves of Cass McGuire*

In the process of nation-building Irish women have "high visibility in symbolic representations of Ireland" (Walter 18) but also "a marginalised social position in Irish society" (18). The idealization of Irish women as the allegorical bearers of the Irish nation and territory ironically restricts the sexuality, gender, identity and place of Irish women in reality, for women are regarded as existing for/as the nation. Drawing upon what I have already discussed in the previous two chapters, I aim to explore in this conclusive chapter how Irish women and home are associated and constituted in the process of nation-building. *Dancing at Lughnasa* and *The Loves of Cass McGuire* represent and interrogate the social imaginary, materiality, gendered identities and power relations within the Irish home respectively in the 1930s and 1960s. I propose that these two plays dramatize dialectical negotiations between the idealized national womanhood and the alternatives, such as Irish "modern" girl and Irish female migrant, in the everyday life of the Mundy sisters, Alice, Gran and Cass. *Dancing at Lughnasa* and *The Loves of Cass McGuire* therefore represent the contradictory and contested meanings and feelings of home for Irish women in the newly independent Ireland through their galling and wretched searches for their home. On the other hand, as the familial patriarchs, Harry and Kate experience the fear and repulsion of the *unhomely* or uncanny in their home, because of the return of their socially problematic household members, whose presence and influences further transfigure the imaginaries, contents and boundaries of the scale of home of their siblings.

Irish nationalist trope and rhetoric have resorted to Gaelic folklores, ballads,

legends and myths to forge a sense of national belongingness and identity among the Irish. The feminization of Ireland as a maiden, mother or old woman is derived from such literary and cultural traditions and figures as *bean si*, *aisling*, *badhb*, bardic tradition, *Fedelm*, and so forth (Innes 16-25). Originally the images and characteristics of these various female figures in these traditions used to be diverse, contested and even contradictory; however, they have become more spiritualized and desexualized during the increasingly intense movements of political and cultural de-colonization since the nineteenth century. The popular feminization of Ireland as woman in such figures as Erin, Rosaleen, Cathleen Ni Houlihan, Deirdre and Mother Ireland are consonant in their passive helplessness, need for salvation by the rightful men and desexualized spirituality. Simultaneously the cult of Blessed Virgin Mary as an asexual mother in Irish Catholicism since the mid-nineteenth century has endorsed "not merely chastity and motherhood as womanly ideals, but also humility, obedience and passive suffering" (Innes 40). Consequently the "spiritualized ideal of Erin is also intensified by and linked to the increasingly puritanical and asexual ideal of women by the Irish Catholic Church in the nineteenth century" (Innes 22), and the "images of Mother Ireland or Erin, and the Mother of God, often linked through iconography to Mother church" (41) become the "models of behaviour and ideals of identity" (42) for Irish women. These two primary political and cultural forces therefore construct an idealized norm on Irish women's identity, sexuality and gender performativity. Moreover, they further constitute the *place* where these social imaginary and practice should "take place," for "[a]ll social life is necessarily 'placed' or 'situated', and engaging place is fundamental to maintaining the process of life itself" (Swyngedouw 168).

Home is the very place which is closely, or exclusively, associated with Irish women during the process of nation-building. Irish women as mothers, wives and

household managers are expected to reproduce the future citizens of the nation biologically and socially, preserve and transmit Gaelic cultural practices and traditions, and embody Catholic moral social teachings within the scale of home. The popular press, the male politicians and clergymen as well legislations all seek to confine women within the boundary of home by insisting on their "natural" ability for domestic affairs instead of engaging in economic and political activities beyond the scale of home. The post-independence Ireland then develops an essentialist dualism between home versus *places beyond home*: home versus work, feminine versus masculine, private versus public, domestic versus civic, reproduction versus production, tradition versus modernity, emotion versus rationality, and so forth (Blunt and Dowling 17).

Home is conventionally considered as a haven and sanctuary for rest and social reproduction practiced by women as wives, mothers and carers through their diverse home-making practices. The *homely* feelings—belongingness, attachment, security, comfort, familiarity and intimacy—are actually achieved in the cult of feminized domesticity and the separate-sphere ideology. Home like other places is not only a material architecture but also a social sphere constituted by diverse social relations and processes in particular histories and geographies. To understand home only in a dualistic sense is to reduce home from "a complex, multi-leveled or multi-dimensional construct with a specific internal unity determined by relations at and among different levels or dimensions" (Somerville 226) to a bounded, stable, singular and fixed place.

A particular kind of place and scale, home is "a contingent outcome of the tensions between structural forces and the interventions of human agents" through distinct social processes in specific contexts (Marston, "A Long Way" 172). Contested and contradictory social processes such as economic, political, social and cultural

ones intersect in and constitute a gestalt of nested scales, including body, home, community, city, region, the national, the supranational and the global. In the context of Irish nation formation, Irish Catholicism and nationalism particularly construct the national, regional (Western Ireland) and home scales of Ireland. The materiality and imaginary of what a homely home should be, as well as the identities and power relations within the home scale, are the outcomes structured by the religious, political and economic forces. The normative imaginary of home in post-independence Ireland, reflected in both *Dancing at Lughnasa* and *The Loves of Cass McGuire*, envisions a homely home as not only a site of feminized domesticity but also a site of Catholic virtue, Gaelic cultural mores and biological and social reproduction of the nation. Though similar to most patriarchal societies, the newly established Ireland generates its own specific kind of separate-sphere ideology, with particular emphasis on the national order and stability, through the maintenance of an Irish homely home.

Despite the tenacious persistence of the ideal imaginary of home after independence, the material designs of an Irish homely home is transformed from a rural cottage of the 1930s in *Dancing at Lughnasa* to a bourgeois house in the 1960s in *The Loves of Cass McGuire*. Western Ireland in nationalist vision is looked upon as the embodiment of the authentic, unadulterated Irishness—rural, Gaelic, Irish-speaking, virtuous and Catholic—in contrast to Englishness—urban, Anglo-Saxon, English-speaking, materialistic and pagan. The natural landscape, the pastoral idyll, economic activities, cultural practices and the thatched cottages are constructed as the very testimonies of the difference between Ireland and Britain, in order to produce the internal cohesion of the Irish and external differentiation from the English colonizer. The Mundy home in *Dancing at Lughnasa* is one of the typical rural cottages, whose "austerity" (Friel, *Dancing* ii) conforms to the idealized imaginary of what a homely *house* should be in the process of nation formation,

dominated by both Catholicism and Gaelicism. The Mundy sisters, literally cooped up in their "cosy homestead," as the opening scene portrays, are preoccupied with the feminized home-making practices within their austere kitchen. The social imaginary of an Irish homely home is hence materially manifest in the rustic cot of the Mundy's as a nationalized and feminized sphere attended by women as the home makers.

The rural cottage idealized in post-independence Ireland is transformed into an urban bourgeois house in the 1960s. In the economic prosperity of the 1960s due to foreign investments, the economic developments of Ireland gradually moved from the agricultural tillage and grazing in the rural area to the mechanized industries around the urban districts. Harry in *The Loves of Cass McGuire* is not only an accountant but also a successful businessman selling bricks. His living room is a "spacious, high-ceilinged room, somewhere between elegance and austerity," with a "large marble fireplace" and "[r]ound mahogany table" (Friel 8). Though reminiscent of the austere style of the rural cottage in the nationalist ideal, it is also an elegant place much admired by Cass. The material transformation of home in the eras following Irish independence therefore indicates that home, with its material representation in the form of house, is always open, porous and constituted by diverse social processes and practices. The architectural elements and styles of Irish bourgeois house is hence a temporal outcome formed out of economic, cultural, religious and political forces of the 1960s.

Home is not only materially and ideologically produced in the context of Irish nation-building, but also constitutes the identities of those within it. Alison Blunt and Robyn Dowling observe that "given that multiple social processes intersect in and constitute home, then it also follows that through home, multiple identities—of gender, race, class, age and sexuality—are reproduced and contested" (27). Both *Dancing at Lughnasa* and *The Loves of Cass McGuire* ostensibly reproduce and reinforce the

idealized national womanhood developed in the nationalist milieu of Ireland; however, the everyday reality of the women characters depicted in the plays in fact exposes the naturalized association between women, home and nation as no more than a discursive construct and a regulatory fiction. The opening scene of *Dancing at Lughnasa* represents a typical scene of feminized domesticity, in which Maggie, Rose and Chris are engrossed in their respective household chores. Although the Mundy household is composed of four spinsters and an unmarried mother, the sisters at most times are dedicated to their home-making practices, like what a virtuous mother and a dutiful wife are expected to do in the nationalist Ireland. In the 1960s, represented in *The Loves of Cass McGuire*, the portrayals of Alice's attire, habitus, domestic labor and interactions with her husband Harry implicitly reveal the still tenacious hold of dualistic separate-sphere ideology in the middle-class household of Harry.

Nevertheless, the ideal of Irish womanhood in both symbolic and practical domains is only the contingent product constructed in the period of de-colonization and nation formation. The endeavors of the eldest sister Kate in *Dancing at Lughnasa*, who insist on the sisters' complying with the normative femininity, and prohibit them from desiring and behaving otherwise, only suggest the arbitrary and coercive nature of the ideal womanhood. The sisters habitually disrupt their own tedious domestic routines, yearning to dress up, smoke, wine, dance, sing, see films and even have sex with men, all of which are usually censured by the Church, the press and the male politicians as morally deviant, and are the negative qualities associated with Irish "modern" girl—an "archetype of the frivolous, fashion conscious flapper or 'modern girl'," who "was used as a convenient symbol to represent all that was disorderly and deviant about young women" (Ryan, "Negotiating" 182). The Mundy sisters depicted in the play are then the paradoxical fusion of these two archetypes of women in the newly independent Ireland, actually exposing the arbitrariness of categorization of

women into two bipartite types. The sisters therefore constantly struggle between the gendered mechanism and the "deviant" alternatives within their domestic sphere.

The Loves of Cass McGuire also stages two incongruous womanhoods in the homestead of Harry in the 1960s. Alice and Gran embody and represent the model womanhood in the nationalist milieu practically and symbolically; however, Cass, a migrant woman, defies the normative expectations of women's place, identity, sexuality and gender. Similar to Irish "modern" girls in the 1930s, Irish female migrants also transgress the boundary of home, forsaking their "sacred" duty and "natural" skill of motherhood and housewifery. They are also denounced as morally deficient like Irish "modern" girl, for their border-crossing beyond the scale of home is attributed to their being influenced by the immoral, foreign and "modern" influences outside Catholic Ireland, but not to the economic necessity. Though most of Irish migrant women do attend to their "womanly" responsibility in their home of placement beyond Ireland, and maintain ties with their home of origin in Ireland, they still run the risk of being denationalized as an Irish woman for exceeding the codes of Irish femininity by leaving the home place. However, migrant women like Cass are constantly in search for a place called home in their experiences of dispersal. When returning from New York to Ireland after fifty-two years, Cass quickly realizes that her alternative gender performativity in contrast to Alice and Gran still renders her incompatible with her home of origin in Ireland. Her transgression of the boundary of home suggests her attempt at access to places beyond home; however, fracturing her (home) place-based identity as an Irish woman, her desire for home is always thwarted. Instead of being accommodated in her brother Harry's home, she once again lapses into the dreadful condition of homelessness.

The Mundy sisters, in contrast, are most of the time trapped in their own rural cottage without being able to stretch beyond the scale of home to other scales. Rose'

adventure to the back hills with Danny Bradley is clearly considered as morally divergent by Kate and the emigration both of Agnes and Rose in the end is also mourned bitterly by Kate, for their behaviour shatters her perpetual attempts at creating a homely home in the nationalist vision by reducing the mobility of women within the border of home. Nonetheless, the senile, literally *immobile* Gran in *The Loves of Cass McGuire*, cloaked in black from head to toe, seems to lament the socio-spatial confinement of women in the supposedly secluded, private home. She may still have the "authority and self-possession of a queen" in the "serene, superior expression on her face," but she is at best "monumental" (Friel 11). The sarcastic portrayals of Gran, resembling the mythic figure of Cathleen Ni Houlihan, *ipso facto* reveal the ways in which an ideal Irish woman is rendered disempowered, with her movement restricted, space closed down and spatial freedom hemmed in (Massey, "Living" 466).

Through *The Loves of Cass McGuire* and *Dancing at Lughnasa*, Friel represents what a home means for ordinary Irish women in the process of nation formation. Rather than being a sanctuary or haven—a place of intimacy, comfort, familiarity, security, belongingness and attachment—the home in these two plays for most women characters are more like a cage or even prison—physically, psychologically and socially. Not permitting women's spatial access to scales outside home through restrictive legislations, the idealized national womanhood seeks to contain women in the domestic sphere of home, which is constructed as a private rather than public place, despite the fact that it is always constituted both materially and ideologically. However, women like the Mundy sisters and Cass still strive to create a place that can be called home for them in their everyday negotiations with the dominant Irish femininity, sexuality and identity in the sphere of home. Though most of the time surrendered to the normative ideal, home for them is never only a site of

feminized domesticity and social reproduction defined in the patriarchal ideology of separate sphere developed in post-independence Ireland. Home for them is always a site of political engagement and identity formation, where they contest over the meanings and ideas of home, the alternative gender performativity and identity as well the gendering of national imaginary and practice. Unable to stretch to scales beyond home practically, the ephemeral or futile defiance of Cass and the Mundy sisters in their everyday practices are quickly suppressed by the other members of the family, especially by other women. Nonetheless, the eldest sister Kate in *Dancing at Lughnasa* and the familial patriarch Harry in *The Loves of Cass McGuire*, in their respective endeavors at maintaining an Irish homely home in the nationalist project cannot help but experience an *unhomely*, or uncanny, feeling due to the socially inappropriate and problematic existence of household members like Father Jack and Cass, whose intrusion into the home illuminates that a homely home is always an *unhomely* reality. The Mundy home, due to Jack, is further restructured by the un-Catholic, “pagan” cultures and practices, especially on women’s sexuality and the collusion of the Irish with the British Empire oversees, as well as the intrusion of the knitting factory. The McGuire home, on the other, is contested by Cass, whose gender performativity, sexuality and Irishness destabilize the normative gendered roles and relations in Irish bourgeois home. In addition to Irish Catholicism, Irish nationalism and the economic developments after the Famine and during the inter-war years, Irish home in post-independence Ireland, as these two plays represent, is simultaneously transfigured by British imperialism, “pagan” religious cultures, industrialization and Irish diaspora.

The Loves of Cass McGuire and *Dancing at Lughnasa* represent the gendered politics of home in the newly formed Ireland after political de-colonization. Moreover, they both stage the contested struggles with the normative gendered mechanism

imposed on Irish women's mobility, identity, gender and sexuality within the scale of home. The social imaginary of an Irish homely home, with its material embodiments respectively in the 1930s and 1960s, is mutually constituted with the gendered identities and relations of the household. Home in both plays means differently for different characters in their own subject positions. Home is a site of feminized domesticity, national order, Catholic virtue and Gaelic traditions, but it is also a conflicting site of power struggles and identity contestation, especially for certain defiant women characters. On the other hand, for those eagerly to sustain a homely home in the normative vision, they also suffer the peculiar *unhomely* sentiment, as they are compelled to recognize the recurrence of the once familiar but surmounted existences and facts in their daily life. Furthermore, they are also pressed to confront the reality that their supposedly private home is always an open, public place perpetually reconfigured by myriad social processes and relations beyond the scale of home. In the process of representing the domestic sphere of home in both plays, Friel not only delineates the various aspects of home in different contexts, but also addresses to the conflictory and fluid meanings and feelings of home for varied subjects in their individual struggles to create a place that can be claimed home for themselves; that is, a sense of belongingness to a certain place. Accordingly, home depicted in Friel's plays is always a "meeting place" with "no internally produced, essential past," but "always and continuously being produced" (Massey, "A Place" 14).

Anne McClintock in "Family Feuds: Gender, Nationalism and the Family" argues that "[a]ll nations depend on powerful constructions of gender. Despite nationalisms' ideological investment in the idea of popular unity, nations have historically amounted to the sanctioned institutionalization of gender *difference*. No nation in the world gives women and men the same access to rights and resources of

the nation-state" (61). Irish nationalist politics likewise depend on deploying women both symbolically and practically during the process of nation formation. The feminized construction of the nation simultaneously constitutes an idealized national womanhood. Though differentiating the Irish as a whole and Irishness from the British and Englishness, it is women who are responsible for achieving the national order and stability by fulfilling the womanly duties within the scale of home. But ironically, despite being bestowed with such national responsibility, women are thus socio-spatially confined within home without being able to access to other scales beyond home. In the name of "national priorities," it is in fact "men's interests" (Kandiyoti 376) that are realized in the nationalist polity, and it is "the territoriality of female, domestic space" (McClintock 44) that are contended between the male colonizer and the male nationalist. Irish women characters, including the Mundy sisters, Alice, Gran and Cass, either choose to conform to, or escape from, or negotiate with the gendered politics and nationalized home after independence. But being literally trapped in the scale of home socially and physically, these women characters hence suffer the "dread of exile" and "desolation of homesickness" (Friel, *Molly* 473) in their own home(land), as the Irish homely home defined in the patriarchal nationalism is always an unhomely place for them.

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