



Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences

Department of English Language and Literature

British Cultural Studies

TRANSITIONS IN IRISHNESS: CONOR MCPHERSON'S *THE WEIR AND SHINING CITY*

Tuğba ŞİMŞEK

Master's Thesis

Ankara, 2016

TRANSITIONS IN IRISHNESS: CONOR MCPHERSON'S *THE WEIR* AND
SHINING CITY

Tuğba ŞİMŞEK

Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences

Department of English Language and Literature

British Cultural Studies

Master's Thesis

Ankara, 2016

KABUL VE ONAY

Tuğba ŞİMŞEK tarafından hazırlanan “Transitions in Irishness: Conor McPherson’s *The Weir* and *Shining City*” başlıklı bu çalışma, 17 Haziran 2016 tarihinde yapılan savunma sınavı sonucunda başarılı bulunarak jürimiz tarafından Yüksek Lisans Tezi olarak kabul edilmiştir.



Prof. Dr. A. Deniz BOZER (Başkan)



Yrd. Doç. Dr. Şebnem KAYA (Danışman)



Prof. Dr. Huriye REİS



Yrd. Doç. Dr. Alev KARADUMAN



Yrd. Doç. Dr. Evrim DOĞAN ADANUR

Yukarıdaki imzaların adı geçen öğretim üyelerine ait olduğunu onaylarım.

Prof. Dr. Sibel BOZBEYOĞLU

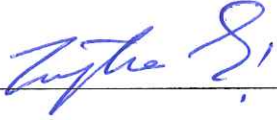
Enstitü Müdürü

BİLDİRİM

Hazırladığım tezin/raporun tamamen kendi çalışmam olduğunu ve her alıntıya kaynak gösterdiğimi taahhüt eder, tezimin/raporumun kâğıt ve elektronik kopyalarının Hacettepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü arşivlerinde aşağıda belirttiğim koşullarda saklanmasına izin verdiğimi onaylarım:

- Tezimin/Raporumun tamamı her yerden erişime açılabilir.
- Tezim/Raporum sadece Hacettepe Üniversitesi yerleşkelerinden erişime açılabilir.
- Tezimin/Raporumun yıl süreyle erişime açılmasını istemiyorum. Bu sürenin sonunda uzatma için başvuruda bulunmadığım takdirde, tezimin/raporumun tamamı her yerden erişime açılabilir.

17.06.2016



Tuğba ŞİMŞEK

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I would like to thank my supervisor Assist. Prof. Dr. Şebnem Kaya for her great motivation and patient guidance to me. I would not imagine this thesis without her precious advice and feedbacks, and most importantly without her moral support. I would like to express my gratitude to her because she was always there to enlighten and comfort me when I was confused and stressed.

I am very grateful to Prof. Dr. A. Deniz Bozer, Prof. Dr. Huriye Reis, Asst. Prof. Dr. Alev Karaduman and Asst. Prof. Dr. Evrim Doğan Adanur for their critical comments, suggestions, and for the very epiphanic moments.

Moreover, I would like to thank all my friends who always believe in me more than I do and never stop encouraging and cheering me up whenever I am worried. I just want to remark that all of them have a special and indispensable place in my life. Besides, I would like to express my special thanks to my friends Sümeyra Üner, Melike Şerbet, Kübra Çebiş, Kübra Vural, Ece Çakır and Seçil Erkoç for their precious support, great motivation and help to me throughout the writing process of this thesis.

I would like to express my gratitude to my dear teacher Ayten Kılıç Karımış for the inspiration she has given to me since the high school and for her priceless support to me. In addition, I would like to thank the faculty members, assistants and lecturers of Artvin Çoruh University who always helped and supported me, and made everything easy for me to finish my thesis. I am really grateful to all.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my family for their invaluable support and help throughout my life. I am very indebted to my mother Şerife Şimşek, my father Ayhan Şimşek, my sister Melahat and my brother Barış for their endless faith in me.

ÖZET

Şimşek, Tuğba. Conor McPherson'ın *The Weir* ve *Shining City* Adlı Oyunlarında İrlandalılığın Geçirdiği Değişimler. Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Ankara, 2016.

İrlandalılar açısından Kelt Kaplanı dönemi yirminci yüzyıl başlarından bu yana İrlanda'da yaşanan toplumsal, ekonomik ve politik değişimlerin etkilediği İrlandalı kimliğinin yeniden tanımlanmasında çok etkili olmuştur; çünkü 1990'lı yıllar toplumun mevcut İrlandalı kimliği algısına yeni bir bakış açısı getirmiştir. Yirminci yüzyılın başında milliyetçi ve soyutlayıcı politikanın sonucu olarak İrlandalı kimliği kırsal, tarımsal ve Katolik olarak inşa edilmiştir. Fakat bu geleneksel İrlandalılık anlayışına, Eamonn De Valera'nın (1882-1995) soyutlayıcı politikasının terk edildiği 1960'larda, geleneksel ve çağdaş değerlerinin çatışması sonucu meydan okunmuştur. 1990'larda doruğa ulaşan, çağdaşlaşma ve kentleşme, İrlanda toplumunda gitgide artmaya başlamıştır. Bu dönemde İrlandalılar, kentsel ve çağdaş toplumlarda var olan aile, cinsellik ve din ile ilgili çeşitli konu ve problemleri irdeleyebilmek için daha fazla kişisel öykülemelere odaklanmaya başladılar. Çağdaş İrlandalı yazar Conor McPherson *The Weir* (1997, Savak) ve *Shining City* (2004, Parlıtlı Şehir) adlı oyunlarında geleneksel ve çağdaş bağlamda eski ve yeni İrlandalı kimliğini yan yana göstererek İrlandalılığın kırsaldan kentsele nasıl dönüştüğünü ortaya koyar. Tezin birinci ana bölümünde *The Weir* modernleşme ve küreselleşmeden etkilenen kırsal aile, toplum, cinsel ve dini değerler bağlamında eski ve yeni İrlandalı kimliğini çatışması bakımından 1990'leri temsil eden bir geçiş oyunu olarak ele alınır. İkinci bölümde ise, *Shining City*'de görüldüğü şekliyle yeni İrlanda tanıtılır; kentleşmenin ve bireyseliğin etkisiyle geleneksel kırsal İrlandalı kimliğinin zayıflaması sonucu çağdaş, kentsel ve küresel yeni İrlandalılık anlayışını vurgulanır. Söz konusu oyun incelemelerinin sonucunda *The Weir* and *Shining City*'nin İrlandalı kimliğinin kırsaldan kentsele, gelenekselden moderne doğru geçirdiği oluşum sürecini yansıttığı; oyunların 1990'ların ve 2000'lerin başlarına tarihlenen İrlanda toplumunun birer temsili sayılabileceği ortaya atılır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Conor McPherson, *The Weir*, *Shining City*, Kelt Kaplanı dönemi, kırsal ve kentsel İrlandalı kimlikleri

ABSTRACT

Şimşek, Tuğba. Transitions in Irishness: Conor McPherson's *The Weir* and *Shining City*. Master's Thesis, Ankara, 2016.

For the Irish, the Celtic Tiger period from the mid-1990s to the mid-2000s was very influential in terms of the redefinition of the Irish identity which was already affected by the changing social, economic and political circumstances since the early twentieth century because the 1990s brought a new perspective to the sense of Irishness in Irish society. As a result of the nationalist and isolationist policy, the Irish identity was constructed as rural, agricultural and Catholic in the early twentieth century. However, later on traditional Irishness was challenged by the collision of traditional and modern values in the 1960s when Eamonn de Valera's (1882-1995) isolationist policy was abandoned. Modernisation and urbanisation began to accelerate in the Irish society, reaching their peak in the 1990s. During this period, the Irish started to focus on personal narratives more in order to explore various issues and problems in relation to family, sexuality, and religion existing in urban and modern Irish society. As a contemporary Irish playwright, Conor McPherson presents how Irishness changed from rural to urban within the traditional and modern Irish context by juxtaposing the old and the new Irishness in his plays *The Weir* and *Shining City*. In the first chapter of the thesis, *The Weir* is analysed as a transition play representing the 1990s in terms of collision of the old and the new Irish identity with regard to rural familial, communal, sexual and religious values influenced by modernisation and globalisation. In the second chapter, *Shining City* is concentrated on as a depiction of the new Ireland and new sense of Irishness which is modern, urban and global as a consequence of the decline of the traditional rural Irish identity with the impact of urbanisation and individualisation. Thus, the thesis comes to a conclusion stating that McPherson's *The Weir* and *Shining City* reflect the process of the construction of the Irish identity from rural to urban, from traditional to modern respectively, and the plays can be regarded as representations of the changing Irish society in the 1990s and early 2000s.

Key Words: Conor McPherson, *The Weir*, *Shining City*, the Celtic Tiger period, rural and urban Irish identities

İÇİNDEKİLER

KABUL VE ONAY.....	i
BİLDİRİM	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
ÖZET.....	iv
ABSTRACT.....	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS	viii
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER I: IRELAND IN TRANSITION IN THE WEIR	36
CHAPTER II: NEW IRELAND IN SHINING CITY.....	59
CONCLUSION	79
WORKS CITED	89
APPENDIX 1: ORIGINALITY REPORTS	106
APPENDIX 2: ETHICS BOARD WAIVER FORMS FOR THESIS WORK	108

INTRODUCTION

“The present generation of young Irish people,
wanting nothing to do with the ideals of
either Pearse or de Valera, has found its preferred
liberty in secularism, tolerance,
and a new, very appealing, humanism”

--Christopher Murray, *Twentieth-Century Irish Drama*

Conor McPherson (1971-) is one of the most influential Irish playwrights of the last two decades. Stylistically, he is well known for his use of storytelling technique reminding of the Irish fireside storytelling tradition, which in fact makes him very popular both in Ireland and abroad. In most of his plays, he mostly deals with male characters trapped in the past or in their irretrievable guilt and trying to redeem themselves. McPherson started to write in the 1990s; therefore, his plays take place “at the intersection of Ireland’s new economic and emotional freedoms and its ancient moral imperatives, both inside and outside the theatre” (Wood 7), when there is a great economic boom called the “Celtic Tiger” affecting every level of Irish life and leading to a reconstruction of Irishness. McPherson reflects this new conception of Irishness in his plays through personal narratives. He at the same time depicts various types of identities such as urban, modern, global and European rather than just the national Irish identity because now there is not one homogenous type of Irish identity but multiple Irish identities. Therefore, his plays can be regarded as representations of contemporary Ireland and Irish identity. McPherson’s plays “show his [...] experimentation with theatrical form and his fascination with the need for a moral response to the new freedoms in the Republic of Ireland” (Wood 83). He challenges the established values and norms of identity, sexuality, and religion by exploring his characters’ struggle “to face down the dilemmas, confusions, inequalities, opportunities and pleasures of living” (Chambers et al. 17), thereby creating a new sense of Irish identity which is in transition from rural to urban and from traditional to modern. The characters McPherson delineates suffer from alienation, isolation, and conflicts due to the loss of values and

faith, as especially seen in *The Weir* (1997) and *Shining City* (2004), which will be evaluated in this thesis as representations of changing Ireland and Irishness. Yet before continuing with how the Irish identity has been transformed from rural to urban within the Irish social and cultural context, it is necessary to point out Conor McPherson's dramatic work and achievements.

Conor McPherson is a substantially prominent playwright, screenwriter and director, enjoying an international reputation with his widely acclaimed plays and films. The playwright, who was born in Dublin on 6 August 1971, studied English and Philosophy at the University College Dublin (UCD) and took an MA degree in Philosophy with a thesis entitled "Logical Constraints and Practical Reasoning: On Attempted Refutations of Utilitarianism" in 1993. Roche states that his thesis "is a strong-minded and robust defence of the theory of utilitarianism, arguing that people undertake goals in life not because they are trying to be objectively moral but to satisfy their own wants and desires" ("The Early Years," 25). When McPherson's such plays as *The Good Thief* (1994), *This Lime Tree Bower* (1995), or *Dublin Carol* (2000) are examined, this utilitarian approach can be clearly seen in terms of his characters' pursuit of their desires only to end up with a huge regret of what they have done. Indeed, the characters in McPherson's plays are always in a dilemma between their responsibilities and desires or yearnings. Almost all of his plays begin with miserable characters seeking freedom or salvation. They are victims of their desires and burdened by their guilty conscience. Although McPherson is not judgemental of his characters or their impulses, he portrays the characters as suffering from what they did. Yet the playwright apparently believes that if one wants, there is always hope and redemption in the end.

In one of his interviews, McPherson says that "he never wanted to be a playwright but a musician" ("Interview with Conor McPherson" 275), but in his English classes, he was influenced by David Mamet and Arthur Miller. In relation to this, he asserts: "[t]he day I read [David Mamet's] *Glengarry Glen Ross*, that was it, [. . .] I knew exactly what I was going to do" ("Conor McPherson: Unrivaled"). In addition, Irish playwrights like Samuel Beckett (1906-1989), Brian Friel (1929-2015) and Tom Murphy (1935-) had a great influence on McPherson. To explain further, Friel influences McPherson stylistically with his use of monologue in *Faith Healer* (1979) in which three characters

narrate to the audience their own versions of the story. This also reflects how fragile memory and individual perception can be, as seen also in McPherson's *This Lime Tree Bower*. Besides, Murphy has an impact on McPherson thematically. In *Bailegangaire* (1985), the main character Mommo tries to redeem herself from her past and sense of guilt to move on by telling what happened, which refers to the common theme employed by McPherson: redemption through narrative. As regards Beckett's influence, McPherson adopts an existentialist perspective in his theatre by making use of minimalistic settings like in Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (1953).

McPherson began to write plays during his college years as a member of the UCD Drama Society. His first plays are *Taking Stocks* (1989), *Michelle Pfeiffer* (1990), *Scenes Federal* (1991) and *Inventing Fortune's Wheel* (1991). He, together with his friends Peter MacDonald, Jason Byrne, Valerie Spelman, Kevin Hely and others, founded a theatre group called Fly By Night Theatre Company in 1992 (Wood xiii). However, McPherson states in his article that

[t]wo years after our first production it was clear that although we'd had fun and learned a lot, we weren't professionally successful. We found it difficult to get reviewed in the papers and none of us seemed organised enough to approach the Arts Council or take the company to the next level. ("We are the Masters of Illusion")

Despite this, with the help of the UCD Drama Society and Fly By Night Theatre Company "McPherson effectively achieved an unstructured, extensive and decisive early training in theatre and performance" (Chambers et al. 4).

The playwright's early plays *Rum and Vodka* (1992), *The Good Thief*, *This Lime Tree Bower*, and *St Nicholas* (1997) mostly consist of monologues, which is generally associated with the tradition of Irish storytelling. As Roche asserts: "McPherson's plays are a reminder that Irish drama arguably had its origins at least as much in the communal art of the oral storyteller performed in the home or in the pub as in a fourth wall drama performed on a proscenium stage" ("The Early Years" 23). However, storytelling is not the only Irish literary tradition reflected in McPherson's theatre. He also "experiment[s] with the communication between the actor-playing-a-character and 'the audience'" (Wood 112) through monologues. McPherson uses monologues as vehicles to explore the characters' intimate feelings to redeem them from such feelings

as guilt or loneliness which become unbearable for them. He explains his use of monologue as follows:

I wanted to tell smaller stories but in a bigger way. [...] What I thought people liked about the monologue was the titillation, the grey area, that we know this is an actor playing a character, and he knows that we know that he is, or she is, an actor. But we are all playing, a sort of a collusion. (“An Interview”128)

Through his use of monologue, McPherson unmasks theatricality on the stage and challenges the tradition of conventional theatre. He is rather inclined to be realistic by breaking down the barriers between the actors and the audience, and to focus on feelings and thoughts. As Gerald C. Wood explains, “[s]uch dedramatisation in favour of the story itself is the basis of McPherson’s achievement to date, even as he has moved into writing and directing for film” (2). In other words, for McPherson, the story matters the most, beyond everything. This is why McPherson, like Beckett, employs a minimalistic setting to convey what the character wants to say or how he/she (mostly he) makes sense of the world through narration. Besides, as for his use of supernatural elements, “McPherson’s theatre [is] to walk a tight-rope between fairytale and naturalism” (K. Wallace 99). On the other hand, monologues are criticised by some critics for being untheatrical, but Roche thinks that “the use of the monologue makes the plays more theatrical, not less, allowing for a more unmediated and intimate relationship between actor/character and audience” (*Contemporary Irish* 223).

To dwell on the fact that McPherson employs the monologue form is important to be able to understand contemporary Ireland and Irishness. During the 1990s and early 2000s, Ireland became a modern country dealing with the realities and demands of a modern society. With the increase of individualism and urbanisation, the Irish started to speak for themselves individually, rather than as a community, which can be taken as the reason why monologue was employed prevalently in the Irish drama of the 1990s. Besides, due to the influence of Catholicism, monologue can be regarded as a type of a ritual of confession. Therefore, monologue is very significant to understand the Irish psyche and their cultural characteristics. It makes it clear that the Irish left behind their national narratives and started to focus on individual narratives as a consequence of their modern and urban way of living and that the religious aspect of Irish society seeking absolution was projected into the monologue form. For these reasons, the

monologue technique is examined in this thesis in order to demonstrate how McPherson represented the transitions in Irishness in the 1990s and early 2000s.

Unlike his early monologue plays, McPherson's later plays like *The Weir*, *Dublin Carol*, *Shining City*, *The Seafarer* (2006), *The Veil* (2011) and *The Night Alive* (2013) generally consist of dialogues. Yet between these plays, the playwright returns to the monologue in his *Port Authority* (2001) and *Come on Over* (2001). Besides, except for *The Weir* and *Dublin Carol*, he has directed all of his plays, which he explains in his interview with Noelia Ruiz: "I like it because it is very efficient in the sense that I can try things out and change the play very quickly. [. . .] That's how I finish a play" ("Interview with Conor McPherson" 280). In these works, McPherson still makes use of storytelling through monologues, regarding "himself as a storyteller" (Roche, *Contemporary Irish* 223). In one of his interviews, McPherson expresses his adherence to storytelling/stories: "Stories allow the listener to go through experiences virtually, without having to face the consequences. You identify with the character: 'What if I did that? How would I feel? How would I cope?' And I suppose in a way it's therapeutic. It's helpful" ("Original Sin"). The playwright believes in the healing power of storytelling on people. Moreover, in his interview with Wood, McPherson expresses his belief that the storytelling tradition perhaps results from their Catholic upbringing:

I think the guilt and fear that you are essentially a bad person who needs to be redeemed stays with some kids. [. . .] And that's why I think there is a very strong storytelling and playwriting tradition for such a small country. The people can exorcise their fears through these 'what-if' scenarios. ("An Interview" 139)

Therefore, the influence of the storytelling tradition is not only pervasive in the Irish culture. Storytelling also refers to the rituals of confession practised in Catholicism. Most of McPherson's characters make confessions by narrating what they have done or gone through to be redeemed from their guilty conscience. In fact, they are seeking forgiveness in one way or another.

Concerning the supernatural elements in his plays, McPherson asserts that

I don't see any line between the natural and the supernatural. To me nature is a mystery, completely, and that's what we live in. To me that's life, so when I write anything its borders have to be those borders otherwise the story makes no sense to me. ("Interview with Conor McPherson" 278)

Yet, he questions and demonstrates not only the mysterious aspect of life but also the manifestation of the past in the present or the present haunted by the past. The characters McPherson creates are generally so trapped in the past because of their regrets or mistakes that they cannot move on. They need to heal themselves, otherwise they will remain haunted forever. That is why McPherson's theatre is defined as confessional as Pamela Renner states in her review:

The theatre McPherson knows best is intimate, a kind of profane confessional. His protagonists are people you might encounter in a pub, slugging down tall glasses of stout and telling tales as though their lives depended on it. The viewer participates in his characters' obsessive storytelling. And they come to us fresh from the little purgatories of ordinary days: drinking, sex, violence, thuggery, vampirism, kidnapping, wanking, puking and deep-down remorse. ("Haunts of the Very Irish")

The characters make confessions whereby haunting narratives are related with their very personal lives. Such narratives enable McPherson's characters to find comfort in the end.

Alcohol is a predominant vehicle for McPherson's hopeless male characters to escape from their unbearable lives. In his early plays, "the central characters are men at the peak of some existential crisis, which they attempt to solve through the emotional crutch of alcohol" (Keating 36). Alcoholism was a problem bothering McPherson, too. He nearly died in 2001 as a result of heavy drinking, leading him to pancreatitis. McPherson expresses his condition saying, "I would get up in the morning and go straight to an early house and drink until the horrible feelings of alcohol withdrawal, paranoia and terror went. Then at lunchtime off I'd go again, come back and do the work. The work was still fine" ("Fighting Demons"). So, in a way he understood the psychology of an alcoholic person and reflected it through the characters in his plays. Moreover, McPherson describes the Irish love of drinking as follows:

In Ireland everything revolves around drinking. Say you're going out to a night of theater. In Ireland, most people will meet up before the performance to have a few drinks beforehand, maybe have one during intermission, and a few drinks afterward. It's that way at social gatherings, weddings, funerals. [...] I'm interested in the toll that drinking takes and how sad it makes people and they don't even know. It's endemic in the culture. It's not normal not to drink. If you don't drink, it's sort of weird and unusual in Ireland. ("The Pint")

For McPherson, alcohol is a tool he employs as a driving force to release his characters' intimate feelings as well as a way of escape from their bitter lives. According to the playwright, "it unleashes the unconscious onto the stage" ("The Haunted Stage"); thus, the characters turn out to be real and sincere. This is what McPherson tries to achieve in his theatre: to create a true character thoroughly exposed on the stage and make the audience empathise with him/her.

In the early monologue plays, McPherson portrays exclusively male characters. Women exist only in the male characters' narratives, and they do not have a voice to express themselves. Yet, with the dialogue plays, female characters are also employed despite the fact that they are still few in number. Whereas McPherson generally gives voice to men who are psychologically crippled and entrapped in their pasts, women are, in general, in supporting roles and "[s]tructurally speaking women do not have an active role in the play except as ghosts. This crisis of masculinity at work in his theatre is not due to the obsolescence of 'traditional' gender roles but rather the inability of these men to fulfil those same gender roles" (K. Wallace 97). So it can be said that "[w]omen represent unmet obligations and are sources of regret" ("Exploring Conor McPherson") and are "the stimulus for men to reflect on men, and their experience of the world" (Walsh). Women are mostly motives for men's faults in McPherson's plays. They are there to remind men of their social roles and responsibilities. However, the male characters McPherson draws do not fulfil their responsibility or role as a father, a husband, a priest, etc., and they mostly surrender to alcohol to escape from their miserable lives. Despite this escapist approach, redemption is possible in McPherson's plays as long as the characters have the courage to confront their pasts or ghosts, guilt and fear. It can be said that

[t]he brilliance of McPherson's play lies in the way it demonstrates man's tragedy-the unexpressed emotion they repress. The women the men talk about, the wives and girlfriends, earn their chance at happiness with their courage and direct talk. It isn't their fault they do not hear their men's quiet longing. (Orel)

At this point, it is necessary to briefly introduce his plays – except for *The Weir* and *Shining City* which will be analysed in the chapters – to understand McPherson's dramatic career better through his style and themes as a whole. In the early monologue plays and later in his ensemble plays, the playwright mostly deals with masculinity

crises, rejection of roles like husband or father, or wife or mother, alongside escapism and the search for redemption. He employs monologues/storytelling, alcoholism and supernaturalism as driving factors in his plays to unleash the mind and the hidden inside.

His early monologue plays *Rum and Vodka* and *The Good Thief* have an existentialist and escapist approach. They both employ unnamed narrators trying to figure out what they are doing in life. In *Rum and Vodka*, the narrator denies his social and familial roles as a father, a husband and an employee, and runs away to discover who he is, yet finds himself at the same place. In *The Good Thief*, the narrator is a paid thug working for a villain but repentant in the end. This play has also religious overtones as the title may refer to the story of the Crucifixion and the good thief (Chambers et al. 64). The Gospel mentions that there were two thieves with Jesus Christ on the cross, one on the right and one on the left. At their last moment, the good thief became repentant and accepted Christ as the messiah whereas the bad thief did not do so. Thus, Christ promised the good thief a place in Heaven with him (Vall 277; Connolly 299). This biblical story suggests that salvation or redemption is possible even at the last moment. McPherson adopts this theme for his own play, showing that “the humanisation of the monster, such as it is in *The Good Thief*, will always be credible” (“The Good Thief”). Redemption always appears to be possible in McPherson’s plays.

This Lime Tree Bower and *St. Nicholas*, like the other two plays, question the characters’ chaotic existences. The first play presents three characters in different ages and jobs, telling their crossing stories revolving around rape, robbery, sex, alcohol and betrayal. The other play depicts a married alcoholic theatre critic who abandons his life to follow an actress he fell in love with. As in *Rum and Vodka*, in this play, too, there is a dysfunctional family and a man dissatisfied with his marriage, job and fatherhood. Unfulfilment, denial of social and familial roles, and following desires without thinking its consequences are the main themes of McPherson’s plays.

As understood from the early plays, McPherson generally portrays self-destructive and lonely male characters or emotionally damaged characters. This characterisation is again employed by the playwright in his next plays *Dublin Carol* and *Port Authority*. Furthermore, his later play *Come on Over* not only goes deep down into personal

narratives, but also holds a mirror to the social events and religious hypocrisy revealed in Ireland in the 1990s. In the play, a Catholic priest, Matthew, is back from Africa, and he is badly injured having been stabbed by a girl he tried to rape, which alludes to the sexual scandals created by the Church. It represents the changing values and religious norms of the Irish.

In addition to his characters, McPherson adopts supernatural elements as shown in *The Seafarer* which is reminiscent of Christopher Marlowe's (1564-1593) *Doctor Faustus* (first published in 1604) in terms of the pact between the devil and a human. In the play, Sharky, Richard and their friend Ivan spend the evening together playing cards with a stranger called Mr Lockhart who later turns to be the devil who has come to take Sharky's soul in accordance with the deal they made 25 years ago. In one of his interviews, McPherson told that "[t]o be damned means to live forever. I think the Devil is envious of humans. He can see that they have grace, that they can be redeemed. He feels this great injustice. God is good. And evil? That's me, damn it" ("The Devil"). Even though the characters he creates are self-destructive and victims of their own mistakes, McPherson always suggests that redemption and reconciliation is possible for them.

McPherson's first historical play *The Veil* is set in an Irish country house, in 1822, reflecting the Ascendancy Ireland in decline. Besides haunted and self-loathing characters, this play reflects the decline of the Celtic Tiger period by paralleling it to the collapse of the Irish society in the Ascendancy Ireland. As for McPherson's last play, *The Night Alive*, in this work, too, the writer explores a lonely male character in contemporary Ireland. In brief, McPherson's plays are reflections of the 1990s and early 2000s encompassing the Celtic Tiger era.

Alongside his plays, the writer also makes adaptations, writes scripts and directs films. He also took many awards, which clearly manifests his eclecticism and remarkable success in his career. His adaptations are *The Birds* (2009), an adaptation of Daphne du Maurier's (1907-1989) short story "The Birds" and the first part of August Strindberg's *The Dance of Death* (2012). These plays are about how people are suffocating themselves within a stifling environment and their struggle to sort out their relations with others in such an environment. As a matter of fact, the characters McPherson

creates always try to figure out how to live on with what they have or do not have. Among his films, there are *I Went Down* (1997), *Saltwater* (2000), *The Actors* (2003) and *Eclipse* (2009), the last three of which he himself directed. To mention some of his awards, he got the Spanish Circle of Screenwriter's Award for Best Screenplay, the CICA Award for Best Film and the Méliès d'Argent Award for Best European Film.

Considering McPherson's literary works, his main objective is "the desire to connect and how our selfishness can get in the way of that, the wish to be a part of a community and the means by which one can save oneself" ("Conor McPherson Interview") as Brennan states. His use of monologues enables the playwright to provide a space to talk for his characters. The characters in McPherson's works express and mirror the conflicts, anxieties and violence seen in the early 1990s, representing the changing contemporary Ireland with its problems, social, cultural, religious and sexual conflicts or dilemmas. Besides, McPherson is remarkable in his technique and style in that he "combines old-fashioned yarn-spinning skills with a canny grasp of the frayed contemporary psyche" (Brantley, "A Most Dramatic Drama"). His use of monologue and a specific linguistic pattern makes McPherson reveal and grasp the reality and circumstances people are living in and with, since his "plays are not about action; they are about words: words woven together into stories" (Gutman).

Through his narratives, McPherson represents Irishness or, more correctly, "a new sense of Irish identity at the close of the twentieth century" as Clare Wallace expresses it ("Conor McPherson" 286). However, it is important to note that McPherson makes it clear that he does not self-consciously produce works about the Irish identity like his predecessors. He says: "I am from the Republic of Ireland and that's where my plays have their genesis, but not from any need to address anything about my country" ("If You're a Young Playwright"). The new sense of Irishness in his works is constructed through the writer's references to the social and cultural occurrences affecting the structure of what Irishness is.

Besides, if not often, McPherson's early plays are sometimes categorised as examples of in-yer-face theatre, but this is a view refuted by Christopher Austin Hill who argues that

Enda Walsh and Martin McDonagh set out to accomplish precisely what Aleks Sierz is describing in his book – to shock and provoke an audience, to produce a visceral reaction. McPherson’s plays are designed to cause a reaction that Sierz has explicitly forbidden for In-Yer-Face plays – speculative contemplation. [. . .] It is true that McPherson’s plays include material that may be construed as provocative or shocking, but he does not include the material to cause that reaction. (26-27)

The material is narrated but not acted on the stage because the stories are powerful means of redemption and reconciliation in McPherson’s plays. His plays consist of violence, bad language and shocking circumstances as exemplified by the rape in *This Lime Tree Bower*, the adultery in *Rum and Vodka* and the child abuse in *The Weir*. However, there is nothing overtly shown onstage. These are all narrated in place of being performed. Therefore, McPherson’s theatre is antithetical to the purpose of in-yer-face theatre which is to shock the audience by showing onstage violence and in this manner make them get the message.

As a distinguished playwright, McPherson masterfully combines the traditional Irish setting and storytelling with contemporary Ireland, and depicts or narrates the crisis of masculinity, faith, sexuality and identity through mostly lonely and haunted male characters against a background of changing or already-changed Ireland. To be able to understand his place in and significance for Irish theatre, it is necessary to point out the three phases of Irish theatre which starts with the foundation of the Abbey Theatre and continues with theatre of the 1960s and lastly of the 1990s.

With regard to the representation of Irishness on the stage as of the foundation of the Abbey Theatre, there were remarkable changes in accordance with the developing conditions in Ireland for more than a hundred years. From the late nineteenth century onwards, “[t]he Irish literary revival, including the Abbey Theatre as instrument, created not just images of historical self-appraisal and expressions of individual experience within an invented community but also a habit of mind and a set of conventions and themes whereby the people might understand who they were” (Murray 163). W. B. Yeats (1865-1935), Lady Gregory (1852-1932) and John M. Synge (1871-1909) promoted a distinct Irish identity by establishing the Abbey Theatre.

The first aim of the Irish Literary Revival was to reverse the “Paddy” or the Stage Irishman which is “a comic, quaint, drunken Irish buffoon” (Hirsch 1119). According to

Yeats and Lady Gregory, “[t]he Irish identity [. . .] was one rooted in a highly idealized image of western Ireland – the most Irish of Irish places, they believed, peopled by humble peasants who told stories of fairies in their native tongue” (State 218). Furthermore, Yeats dealt with Irish folklore and mythology whereas Synge reflected the Irish peasants and their rural way of life in a realistic way. Nevertheless, Yeats’s *The Countess Cathleen* (1899) and Synge’s *The Shadow of the Glen* (1903) and *The Playboy of the Western World* (1907) were still attacked by the nationalists as insulting of Irish women although they were “the dramatic representations of the reality [. . .] [and these playwrights] did not condemn, but used it [the reality]” (Price 31). This early phase of the Irish Literary Revival attempted to create a distinct Irish cultural and national identity by representing rural Ireland with its mythology and folklore. Later on Sean O’Casey’s (1880-1964) Dublin trilogy, *The Shadow of a Gunman* (1923), *Juno and the Paycock* (1924), and *The Plough and the Stars* (1926) “alter[ed] traditional Irish identities by pushing Dublin’s urban poor into the spotlight” (Meche 42). For O’Casey who went through poverty and harsh working conditions, economic independence was prior to nationalist dreams (Çapan 101). He therefore called the Irish national identity into question.

Ireland went through a second Literary Renaissance in the 1960s onwards. The playwrights of this period

are reacting to the complex social forces at work throughout the island during the late 1960s, the 1970s, and onward toward the present. Necessarily, since theirs are Irish plays about Ireland, their dramatic texts attempt to digest the conflicts, violence, and dissension that not only focus upon the nature of Irishness but that have become – in the interim – a part of Irish society. (Meche 4)

This second phase of Irish drama is mainly represented by the works of Brian Friel, Tom Murphy, John B. Keane (1928-2002), Thomas Kilroy (1934-), and Hugh Leonard (1926-2009). These playwrights mostly dealt with the pattern of emigration, – an inevitable choice and a marker of Irish identity – and its catastrophic impact on the young torn between traditions, homeland and the modern world as seen in Friel’s *Philadelphia Here I Come!* (1964) and Murphy’s *The Famine* (1968). Also these playwrights “were moving into new territory with their work, challenging the aesthetic, cultural, and political codes of their country in order to reassess Ireland’s past and

present histories” (Trotter 148) as exemplified in Friel’s *Translations* (1980). Irishness promoted in the first place as a national identity began to be challenged by new norms and values. The new ones began to collide with the old ones. Thus, Ireland

became a double world, a slippery state in which the traditional and the modern jostled for the status of reality, in which every truth was equally untrue, in which past, present and future seemed to melt into each other, in which the borders of reality and of personality became permeable. (O’Toole, “Irish Theatre” 51)

The developments taking place in society led to a collision between tradition and modernity in Ireland, which would continue up until and including the 1990s when modernity mostly superseded tradition.

By the early 1990s, as Eamonn Jordan asserts,

[t]he productivity of global economies alongside labour and technological alienation, new concerns about ownership and belonging, a growing redundancy of faith, an increasingly assertive intercultural penetration and a previously unknown dynamic economy have all led to a society in serious transition. (“Menace” 179)

The economic, social and political changes in the 1990s modified the perception of Irishness. Therefore, it will be appropriate to consider Friel’s *Dancing at Lughnasa* (1990) as a transitional play to the third phase of Irish theatre in the 1990s because it is “to challenge many Irish taboos and problems, both in 1990 and 1999 – about priests, single-parent families, homelessness, unemployment, gender, emigration, and so on” (Lonergan, *Theatre* 46) as well as immigration. Primarily Marina Carr (1964-), Martin McDonagh (1970-), Enda Walsh (1967-), and Mark O’Rowe (1970-) represent the third phase of Irish drama. Many plays of this period were to “stage moment of violence and breakdown of human relations from the deeply intimate to the broadly social, in ways which enable a deepening of audience understanding of the complexities of their conditions” (Merriman 200) such as Walsh’s *Disco Pigs* (1996) and O’Rowe’s *Howie the Rookie* (1999). In fact, these plays written in the 1990s are reflections of the new sense of Irishness. Especially under the influence of modernisation and globalisation, some of the plays of the third phase depict the changing physical environment in contemporary Ireland through gentrification and urbanisation, causing the collapse of the sense of community, friendship and kinship, as seen in Jimmy

Murphy's (1962-) *The Muesli Belt* (2000). Besides, Fintan O'Toole states about this new generation of Irish playwrights that they "began to pick up the pieces of the old, shattered, traditional Ireland and hold them up to the light. [. . .] They were interested simply in looking at these peculiar fragments of a dead society" ("Shadows") as in Carr's *By the Bog of Cats* (1998) and McDonagh's *The Cripple of Inishmaan* (1996). These plays by Carr and McDonagh manifest the rural Ireland, but they subvert the traditional values and satirise them in a humorous way. The playwrights of this period, in Clare Wallace's terms, deal more with "micro-narratives of identity rather than meta-narratives of nation" ("Irish Theatre" 663). The third phase of Irish drama in the 1990s is all about new possibilities and creativity, exploring multiple Irish identities.

Hence, starting from the Abbey Theatre till the 1990s onwards, the representations of the Irish identity indicate major changes in relation to social, cultural and political contexts over a hundred years. The Irish identity constructed at the beginning of the nation-building period in the early twentieth century – a romantic, idyllic, Gaelic and Catholic Ireland – differs from what it is now – a multicultural, secular, heterogeneous, inclusive, European and urban Ireland. During the 1990s, Irishness was still in transition from the old to the new, leading to disruptions at personal, cultural and political levels. Conor McPherson represents the third phase of Irish playwrights in terms of his representation of contemporary issues and new Irishness which is urban, modern, globalised and Europeanised. He presents new Irishness through personal narratives of identity, rather than of national identity, because there is no longer a single homogenous type of Irish identity. It is substituted by multiple identities which McPherson explores through monologues. Besides, the playwright portrays old and new Ireland side by side through personal narratives, thus mirroring the collapse of some established values and norms in both rural and urban Ireland. As O'Toole's remarks, McPherson looks at peculiar fractions of Irishness in his plays and reveals the plurality of Irishness ("Shadows").

For a better understanding of the transitions in Irishness which will be examined in *The Weir* and *Shining City*, it will be beneficial to touch upon how the Irish identity was defined in the early twentieth century and later transformed from rural to urban within the Irish social and cultural context. As for Ireland, a former colony of the British

Empire, the Irish identity, in the early twentieth century, was constructed against the British and defined on the basis of what the British were not such as rural, agrarian and Catholic in contrary to urban, industrial and Protestant. The surrounding conditions and changing patterns of time and space affected the formation of identity. For the state of affairs in Ireland, as George D. Boyce asserts, the colonial presence in the country “helped give Ireland a distinctive cultural identity, a sense of the individuality of the Irish nation, and of its peculiar linguistic, social and racial characteristics” (228). The British became the “other” in the Irish definition of the Irish cultural identity, as the Irish were the “other” for the British identity. Lawrence Grossberg, too, affirms that “[s]truggling against existing constructions of a particular identity takes the form of contesting negative images with positive ones, and of trying to discover the ‘authentic’ and ‘original’ content of the identity” (89).

As David Miller states that the attitudes and beliefs that constitute nationality are very often hidden away in the deeper recesses of the mind, brought to full consciousness only by some dramatic event” (18). An external religious and cultural intrusion by the British into the Irish way of living like the Penal Laws or bans on the Irish cultural features like clothes, music or native Irish laws or legal system (called the Brehon Law) became the basic constituent of the definition of Irishness. In the early twentieth century, the Irish identity was exclusive in order to reclaim and recreate its own unique cultural and national characteristics against the British. The Irish constructed a mutual past, leading them to “national” solidarity over a specific territory against everything foreign or different because the nature of identity is “to classify and categorize. [. . .] Identity and difference are about inclusion and exclusion” (Giles et al. 34). So, the revival of cultural identity was a way of going back to the ancient times to dig up the origins and authenticity to claim and define one’s existence and status for the present, as in the case of the distinct Irish cultural identity which emerged from or was discovered through the Gaelic League and Irish Literary Renaissance at the turn of the twentieth century. Stuart Hall describes cultural identity:

Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialised past, they are subject to the continuous ‘play’ of history, culture and power. Far from being grounded in a mere ‘recovery’ of the past, which is waiting to be found, and which, when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by,

and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past. (“Cultural Identity” 225)

Besides, from the perspective of the nationalist polity in the early twentieth century, having a territory is highly essential to generate a distinct national identity. As Nuala C. Johnson states, “[a]s harbingers of cultural nationalism, the Gaelic League and the Literary Revival both played significant roles in articulating an Irish ‘imagined community’ and in allowing the West of Ireland to act as a synecdoche of Irish identity” (180). The West or rural Ireland becomes associated with authentic Irishness, which can be evaluated as an outcome of the country’s colonial past. Edward Said states about the re-assertion and re-affirmation of national identity that

[o]ne of the first tasks of the culture of resistance was to reclaim, rename, and reinhabit the land. [. . .] The search for authenticity, for a more congenial national origin than that provided by colonial history, for a new pantheon of heroes and (occasionally) heroines, myths, and religions – these too are made possible by a sense of the land reappropriated by its people. (273)

Clearly, the land is regarded sacred as an emblem of national sovereignty, embodying history, myths and the identity inscribed on it. Landscape is not only a physical entity but also a cultural inscription because as Gerry Smyth construes that it “remains fundamental, providing both the actual physical terrain as well as the abstract conceptual basis upon which the empirical and ontological dimensions of human experience meet, compete and compromise” (*Space* 3).

In the Irish culture, every place embodies a mythical meaning dating back to the pre-Christian period (before 431 AD). *Dindshenchas* or *dinnsheanchas* are

studies in Gaelic prose and verse of the etymology and history of place-names in Ireland – e.g., of streams, raths (strongholds of ancient Irish chiefs), mounds, and rocks [...] [and] contain much pre-Christian mythology especially stories of gods and fairies. (“Dindshenchas”)

As an outcome of their pagan culture besides their long-term relation with the farm, Irishness was defined on the basis of the land/the place. Therefore, the place, which is used interchangeably with the soil, the land, or the farm in this thesis, is not only means of survival for the Irish, but also the embodiment of the Irish culture dating far back in time. Brian Graham suggests that “human landscapes and other cultural artefacts are

defined through the meanings attached to them, they are narratives and allegories that will be renegotiated and transformed as societies are renegotiated” (10). The meanings or values attributed to the land are outcomes of cultural and historical continuity of the Irish culture, thus their relation with the land becomes the indispensable characteristic of the Irish identity over time.

The Irish identity constructed at the beginning of the twentieth century in contrast to the British identity began to be influenced by modernisation in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Modernisation is described as “[t]he action or an act of modernizing; the state of being modernized” (“Modernization” 949) in the Oxford English Dictionary so it means a change as well as an adaptation to new developments or values within society. As can be understood from its definition, modernisation, together with economic developments, results in many new formations, values and norms within society and affects the construction of new identities in the light of these new values and norms. It changed the whole structure of society because “[t]he modes of life brought into being by modernity have swept us away from all traditional types of social order, in quite unprecedented fashion (*sic*)” (Giddens, *The Consequences* 4). Therefore, when one is separated from the traditional lifestyle, fragmentations and uncertainty come out, leading to a crisis of identity. As Stuart Hall states, “modern identities are being ‘de-centered’; that is dislocated and fragmented” (“The Question” 596) since the changing pattern of lifestyle affects and discloses a variety of identities in terms of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, religion and so on. Modern life leads to the eradication of traditional lifestyles due to new perspectives and understandings; urbanisation and individualism turn into the new values of modern societies.

In the Irish context, the modern and urban identity can be considered antithetical to what was established as traditional rural Irishness in the early twentieth century, “as its ideal denigrates its own urban space through a sense of cultural devaluation” (Berchild 24). The city and urbanity have an ambiguous, even negative connotation for the Irish due to the fact that they regarded these as the domain of the British identity for a considerably long time, which dates back to the twelfth century when the Anglo-Normans made Dublin their capital to administer the island but was escalated with the Protestant Ascendancy starting to dominate the island in 1690 and even continued

during the 1920s in the definition of Irishness by the nationalists. The Irish, at the outset, denounce the city/urbanity in their construction of the Irish identity and create “the myth of the rural, a narrative which has echoes of a more universal allegory of the communality and pastoral tranquillity of the rural idyll in the face of ever-expanding urbanisation” (Duffy 69). However, with the acceleration of urbanisation since the 1960s, “the iconic dominance of rural Ireland in the construction of cultural and national identity” (Shirlow 88) has weakened because “urbanization, changing employment patterns, economic and demographic changes, and membership in the European Community have brought about profound changes in the character of Irish nationalism” (White, “The Changing Social Bases” 113-14).

Besides, apart from being the colonial base of the British, the city is also associated with a decline of morality and values within the Irish context. As Thorns argues, the

bonds that form community are likely to be somewhat precarious in an urban industrial society with high rates of population mobility. Primary relationships are, therefore, often underdeveloped within the city, in comparison with the more settled and stable rural and pre-urban communities. (109)

Since the traditional way of living in Ireland is abandoned, the necessities brought by rural way of life change to a great extent and this leads to not only a shift in lifestyle but also a transformation in the perception of family and friendships as a result of more individualised-based living, because “as modernity gains ground, God, nature and the social system are being progressively replaced, through greater and lesser steps, by the individual – confused, astray, helpless and at a loss” (Beck et al. 21). It shows that individualism, as an outcome of the urban way of living, takes priority over solidarity, which leads to the collapse of the community spirit that values friendship, kinship, neighbourliness and family.

Additionally, in the 1990s, a new phenomenon affected Irishness: the growth of the global culture and tourism, leading people to think of who and where they are in a larger context. Globalisation “opens up a new era of more fluid, typical and uncertain construction of cultural identity” (Fagan 140), thereby “allow[ing] us to conceive of the world an imagined community in which the world is interconnected, where distance has been eliminated, where identity, race, and class are invisible” (Lonergan, *Theatre* 187).

The new definition of the Irish identity promotes the plurality of identities by being more inclusive than ever before. As a result of globalisation, tourism began to accelerate in the 1990s, leading to conflicts of identity in contemporary Ireland. Tourism caused the nation to be branded as archaic, rural and untouched by modernity to be able to draw attention of the tourists, thus setting this archaic Ireland against the developing modern and urban Ireland in the 1990s. Even though contributing to the development of the local economy by making possible the circulation of money, tourism can be taken into account not only as an exploration but also as an invasion of the country since the arrival of tourists can be disturbing for the locals who may not feel at ease in their homeland.

The colonial background of Ireland provokes anti-Englishness and anti-Protestantism in the Irish as an attempt to create a distinctive identity “as the site of self-differentiation, and therefore of resistance” (Whelan 96). Therefore, from the early to the mid-twentieth century, Ireland promoted an agrarian, rural and anti-modern Catholic Irishness. In an attempt to make everything national, Eamon de Valera (1882-1975) followed a protectionist economic policy to achieve a self-sufficient national economy after he came to the power in 1932. For this purpose, “the Fianna Fáil government had tried to reduce economic dependency by protecting Irish industry against foreign competition and by encouraging domestic production in both agriculture and industry to replace imported goods” (Share et al. 70). Until the late 1950s Ireland was still a predominantly agricultural country; nonetheless, when the protectionist economy was left behind, foreign firms began to invest in Ireland, which was about to transform the industry of the country. Cronin writes that “[f]oreign companies began locating in the Republic during the 1960s and a growth rate of 4 per cent was achieved across the decade” (224). This opened a new phase in the history of Ireland because it affected the whole structure of Irish society leading to the collision between the old and new values and norms. People then began to question the existing system of the State and the Church. Thus, in the late 1950s and 60s, Irishness defined against the British in relation to the idealised rural Ireland was shattered because industrialisation and urbanisation began to permeate Irish lifestyle as a result of which the Irish identity was about to be transformed.

Foster summarises the 1960s in Ireland with reference to the changing socio-cultural circumstances:

The overall theme of the 1960s was an exposure to the wider world: through the UN, through international economic initiatives, through the vast expansion in television licences (and the reception of British stations in the east of Ireland), through the cosmopolitan lingua franca of student radicalism, and through the tourist boom. (581)

Foreign initiatives and expansion to the world, and later entry to European Economic Community (later EU) in 1973 reconstructed the structure of Irish society so that “[f]rom then onwards [1960s onwards], the dynamic elements in the society’s social structure were those characteristic of the advanced capitalist societies: industrialisation and urbanisation” (Breen et al. 7). With increase of urbanisation, rural and urban conflicts multiplied in Ireland, creating a perception that rural Ireland was backward and traditional while urban Ireland was developing and modern. This transformation prompted a new definition of Irishness as urban and modern.

Moreover, for the first time since the Great Famine, Ireland experienced immigration (White, “What Does It Mean to Be Irish?” 118) showing that the economy of the country was becoming stable and even more than sufficient. However, this period of economic advancement lasted short because in the 1980s the country started to suffer from economic stagnation “in which the meltdown of ‘modernisation’ – as exemplified by chronic unemployment, 1950s-style emigration, and the crises for both the state and civil society presented by the hunger strikes and the abortion and divorce referenda” (Gibbons 94). With a huge increase in foreign debt, Ireland went into a crisis, leading to the escalation of unemployment and emigration again. Also in the North, the ethnic conflict called the Troubles, starting in the 1960s, was apparently about to reach a deadlock. In 1981, the IRA prisoners went on a hunger strike which ended up in many deaths because their demand for a political status in the prison was refused by Margaret Thatcher (1925-2013). The Troubles continued until the 1990s, affecting every level of society.

In the 1990s, there was an ultimate change in Irish society, which was regarded as a transition from traditional to modern structure, because the horizon of the people and their understanding of the life, especially their lifestyle launched out a new phase. For

the first time in Irish history a woman, Mary Robinson (1944-) was elected in 1990 as a President, “who had made a name for herself as a leading campaigner for divorce, contraception and women’s rights” (Ranelagh 250). When the restricted role of women, especially as mothers, as defined in the constitution, is taken into consideration, it becomes clear that this situation was a big step for the advancement of the Irish women’s condition. Besides, Robinson was also followed by another woman, Mary McAleese (1951-), as President.

In addition to woman Presidents, economic development marked the mid-1990s. With the economic growth in the 1990s, named as the Celtic Tiger “[a]lso called the ‘Boom’ and the ‘Economic Miracle,’ the last decade and a half have witnessed a fundamental transformation of the country from one of the western Europe’s perennially poorest to one of its richest nations” (State 342). Now Ireland was becoming more modern and secular as a result of self-confidence and self-reliance given by these recent changes. All social and cultural values were about to transform such as communality, religion, familial structure and sexuality which will be dealt with in detail later. On the other hand, there were negative outcomes as Kuhling et al. affirm: “[W]hile the boom has facilitated a transformation in collective cultural identity that can be characterised as positive, there has been a rise in poverty, job insecurity and social inequality” (11), which were regarded as the repercussions of the modern world.

Besides, the late 1990s remarked the end of the Troubles as an outcome of the Peace Process. As Clancy affirms, “[i]n addition to economic transformation, the country has changed profoundly demographically, socially, religiously, and with the all-island peace process culminating in the 1998 Good Friday (Belfast) Accord, politically” (9). The Articles 2 and 3 in the 1937 Constitution of de Valera which claimed the whole island of Ireland as a united Irish nation was removed from the Constitution, thus “recognising that a united Ireland shall be brought about only by peaceful means with a peaceful with a consent of a majority of the people, democratically expressed, in both jurisdictions in the island. (qtd. in Brown 395-96) as stated in Article 3.1. These transformations in the political scene were turning points for Ireland because they would bring stability to Ireland after unsettled times, although the government in Northern Ireland would not be established until 2007 because of the ideological and political conflicts between Sinn

Fein and the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP). The 1990s brought a new sense of society and politics, opening a new page for Ireland. Nevertheless, the impact of the Celtic Tiger economy came to an end in 2008 with an economic recession.

All these changes in the 1990s, especially the impact of modernisation which modified the traditional image of the Irish, affected Irish society and identity. Stuart Hall explains this situation stating that “identities are never unified and, in late modern times, increasingly fragmented and fractured [. . .]. They are subject to a radical historicization, and are constantly in the process of change and transformation” (“Who Needs ‘Identity’” 4). The collisions between the old and the new values and norms starting in the 1960s took a further step in the 1990s. Now Irish society was more open to diversity and more tolerant. There were still conflicts, but the modern way of living became prevalent in Irish society. Therefore, in the light of the abovementioned historical and political data which is essential to dwell on as it played an active role in the construction and reconstruction of the Irish identity, how the Irish identity evolved from rural to urban and from traditional to modern from the late nineteenth century towards the 1990s and early 2000s will be discussed, with an emphasis on the elements of local colour.

From the beginning, Ireland was an agricultural country, and it remained so for a very long time because the British monopolised the industry, especially in the Ulster region. With the Great Famine of 1845, this agricultural pattern changed and so did the whole *modus vivendi* of the rural community. As Mary E. Daly expresses, it precipitates “not only the long-term population decline but also emigration persisting over many decades, a low rate of marriage and late age of marriage, high marital fertility, and very late transition to smaller families” (4) which are deemed characteristics of rural Ireland.

Peadar Kirby et al. postulate that emigration “became a defining characteristic of [Ireland]” (33) particularly after the Great Famine which “just over a hundred years ago initiated a stream of emigration which halved the population” (O’Neill 43). As a result of the famine, Irish people began to look for better opportunities outside Ireland which reduced the population to a large extent. Yet the decline was not the result of emigration only. It was also caused by the starvation and diseases accompanying the famine. The Irish saw emigration as an inevitable escape. Nonetheless, “[e]migration meant a turning away from the rural world, a rejection of a whole way of life. It also meant

leaving behind a country deprived of many of its children” (Brennan 44). It changed the existing nature of demography causing decline of rural population. Moreover,

apart from the removal of the young, migration loss is sex-selective and rural areas in particular have been affected by the greater propensity of females to leave, producing distorted sex ratios which have important implications for the maintenance of community cohesion and marriage rates. (Coward 66)

Emigration, in short, functioned as a catalyst for the formation of the Irish rural identity.

The basic unit of the Irish rural community was the traditional farm family. To expand somewhat on the farm family, “[t]he long years of intimate association in the acts and events of a common life build up very complete adaptations and very close emotional bonds among all those who share the life together” (Arensberg et al. 60). There was a close-knit family life in rural Ireland because the members of the family worked together on the farmland. According to the Irish tradition, the Irish “was to divide land among all the children in a family, and divide those divisions further with each generation” (Williams 84). This situation accelerated early marriages in rural Ireland, leading to large families. Yet after the Great Famine, the demographic structure on the island changed in that

one son (not necessarily the eldest) must be selected to succeed, and one daughter (perhaps) equipped with the dowry that would enable her to make a suitable dynastic alliance with a neighbour whose affairs were in a satisfactory condition. Upon the rest of the family this unifying, centralising tendency had of course the effect of presenting them with two bleak alternatives – either to emigrate or to remain at home as relatives assisting on the farm, with little hope of ever breaking out of the pattern of perpetual bachelorhood or spinsterhood that had been devised for them. (Lyons 52)

The established pattern of family, marriage and sexuality broke down because of the repercussions of the Famine. Thus, bachelorhood/spinsterhood among the rural Irish increased; late-age marriage and permanent celibacy turned out to be local features of the countryside. Mary E. Daly illustrates this situation as follows: “[O]ne of the most striking features of postfamine (*sic*) population was a more than doubling of proportion of men and women who never married, from 10 percent of men and 12 percent of women in 1841 to 27 and 25 percent, respectively, by 1911” (13). On the other hand, while bachelorhood and spinsterhood were widespread, fertility was very high because

of lack of birth control under the influence of the Catholic Church. As Caitriona Clear states, Irish people “married comparatively late [. . .]. [Yet] once married [, they] had what were, by European standards, large families” (74) which could fulfil the needs of the farm they were working on. The Irish married late also because of economic reasons. They delayed marriage or did not marry at all if unable to have the necessary financial means to look after a family, which means that the “access to land defined both paternal authority and youth’s expectations of marriage and status in the community” (Scally 34). There was also the impact of the Catholic principles leading people to celibacy or virginity because the Church forbade sexuality out of wedlock as an immoral behaviour. Besides, the Church associated this immorality with urbanity, seeing sexuality out of wedlock as an urban threat to the rural values and norms of marriage and family.

The traditional Irish family was described as a heterosexual one consisting of a “husband, wife, and children, the group basic to the Irish society and especially to Irish rural life” (Arensberg et al. 68). Since marriage was mostly arranged on the basis of economic conditions, sexuality was also “equated with matrimonial reproduction and indisputable norms of familial reproductive heterosexuality” (Nash 115). It was also stated in the Constitution of 1937 that an Irish family “forms the basis for social policy presumes the dominance of a particular, two parent, heterosexual single residential patriarchal family form” (Kuhling et al. 21). Henceforth, the State and the Constitution disregarded other sexual orientations by promoting a heterosexual patriarchal family, which reflects that Irishness of the early twentieth century was an exclusive one.

Because Irish lifestyle was closely attached to the farm, commitment to the land was considered one of the local characteristics of Irishness. It was not only their agrarian way of life but also the idealisation of rural life that made the Irish more attached to the land on which they could establish their identity. The land can be marked not only as a definition of Irishness but also as an assertion of national identity. Graham expresses that “the ‘West’ became an idealised landscape, populated by an idealised people who invoked the representative, exclusive essence of the nation through their Otherness from Britain” (7). The land became an inseparable part of Irishness because

[a] nation tied to the land would be timeless and largely untouched by the forces of international capital, relatively self-sufficient, seeking spiritual and communal contentment over individual financial wealth, simplicity over complexity, and affective ties over purposive-rational ones. (Horgan 44)

The land, for the Irish, embodies both territorial and communal identity besides the national one. Attachment to the land shapes the Irish sense of family and community in that they have a sense of close kinship and neighbourhood within their communities, and the solidarity among them is very important to keep the peace as well as social and cultural continuity in the countryside. In addition to close familial relationships, their way of living leads to the formation of a communal sense of Irishness. As Arensberg et al. put it,

the sociology of Irish rural life and small-farm subsistence is largely as a matter of the anatomy of two institutions of characteristic form. These are the family and the rural community. The latter, in turn, cannot be described apart from the former. It is a framework of long-term customary relationships uniting persons beyond their family ties. Together these two unite essentially all the persons of the rural areas. (301)

Traditional Ireland and Irishness are reflected clearly through the sociological structure of the Irish rural life with its embodiment of peasantry, locality and communal solidarity based upon the commitment to the land.

As practices of the Irish rural community, storytelling and wake are regarded as peculiar aspects of the Irish cultural identity; hence, it is important to mention these here to better understand rural Irish culture. The storytelling tradition in Ireland goes back to more than a thousand years ago. The storyteller or *seannachie* “went from town to town telling stories that transfixed his audience, usually over a fire at a local pub or a home with folks gathered around” (Ferguson 106). Besides, the Irish, it seems, are fascinated with the otherworld and the supernatural. As Anthony Roche states: “[T]raditional Irish storytelling has drawn on the cluster of beliefs surrounding the fairy folk, the ‘others’, those who enjoy a continued existence after death” (*Contemporary Irish* 224). However, this tradition began to decline

[i]n most parts of Ireland [. . .] in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, [and] the traditional storyteller no longer had an appreciative local audience for his tales. [. . .] [Yet] their unique art and cultural inheritance were recognized and appreciated once again, as the nineteenth century drew

to a close and Ireland gained national independence in the 1920s. (Lysaght, “Traditional Storytelling” 264)

Especially Lady Gregory and W. B. Yeats, the founders of the Irish Literary Renaissance in the early twentieth century, were interested in Irish folklore and mythology to re-build an Irish literature on the basis of an authentic Irish culture. It is significant in that “folklore was central in the evolution of cultural nationalism into political nationalism during the nineteenth century when nationalists repeatedly tried to reflect as well as to recreate the oral traditions of the people” (Thuente 42). Revival of Irish literature marked the beginning of the Irish identity and nationalism as opposed to the British identity because “[t]he supernatural folklore and imaginative wealth of the Irish peasant were also posed against the modern industrial and commercial British spirit” (Hirsch 1120).

Like storytelling, the wake tradition, too, is a very important part of the Irish rural identity. The wakes “are recognized as forums for public grieving and as formalized means of showing respect toward the deceased and their families. [. . .] It was a communal gathering, which gave rise to traditional social activities such as storytelling, riddling, dancing, singing, and drama” (Harlow 151). The wake tradition, too, reflect the solidarity and neighbourliness within the rural community, “as an occasion during which family, relatives and the local community engaged in traditional mortuary practices in the presence of the corpse” (Lysaght, “Hospitality at Wakes” 418). In the wakes, people tell practical jokes in addition to eating and drinking profusely. Even if the family of the deceased is poor, the wakes are still flamboyant. Besides, keening or wailing is an indispensable part of the wakes. Keening is an important ritual for the Irish, because it represents

this very delineation between the world of the living and the world of the dead which harks back to the voice of the traditional keening woman. The power of the female voice in the liminal world cannot be underestimated as it facilitated the conclusion of the wake ritual, which allowed the community to resume its normal pattern of life having expressed its grief and joy towards the chaotic nature of death. (McCoy 623)

As regards the excessive drinking in the wakes, it probably points to the place of alcohol in Irish culture. The pub and alcohol are seen as essential components of Irish social and cultural life, and they have almost turned into national symbols with the

impact of globalisation. As Kuhling et al. state, “alcohol consumption has played an essential role in social recreation and cultural reproduction. [. . .] [A]lcohol has been inextricably bound up with community and religious life in Ireland” (130). On many occasions like wakes, weddings or after Mass, the Irish apparently like drinking. Especially in rural Ireland, the Irish pub or *shebeen*, “as a place of sale [that] would be a private and unlicensed establishment,” was the place for social gathering and where they consumed poitin, a home-distilled drink “made from potatoes or grain” (Lobdell 1149). The cause of their heavy-drinking habit is explained by Dennis Clark with the following words:

The Irish climate, dark, full of chill and damp in winter, and rainy even in the summer, is often cited as a contributing factor to the cult of drink. The diet of rural and urban Irish working people, never very elaborate, may also have played a role in encouraging reliance on beverages. The structure of Irish villages and towns, with their crowded and inadequate housing and scarcity of recreational facilities, provided conditions in which the shebeen or drinking place could become the central socializing influence for adults. (62)

Rural Ireland, along with its agrarian lifestyle and traditional cultural practices, became an element of propaganda for nation builders in the early twentieth century. They rebuilt their national identity on the basis of their cultural and social characteristics especially after the independence in 1922 by regarding “the virtues of a rural peasantry as the essence of Irishness” (Horgan 38). Particularly Eamon De Valera, as President of the Free State, promoted a conservative, rural-based and Catholic Ireland. His St. Patrick’s Day speech “The Ireland that We Dreamed of” delivered in 1943 became a very well-known statement about a rural idyllic Ireland:

The Ireland that we dreamed of would be the home of a people who valued material wealth only as a basis for right living, of a people who, satisfied with frugal comfort, devoted their leisure to the things of the spirit - a land whose countryside would be bright with cosy homesteads, whose fields and villages would be joyous with the sounds of industry, with the romping of sturdy children, the contest of athletic youths and the laughter of happy maidens, whose firesides would be forums for the wisdom of serene old age. It would, in a word, be the home of a people living the life that God desires that man should live. (466)

De Valera advocated a rural way of life which was idealised in terms of familial and communal values. As Hall states, “identities are about questions of using the resources

of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being” (“Introduction” 4) as in the case of the Irish identity shaped distinctly from the British one. In brief, during the early twentieth century, the sense of Irishness was constructed as rural, agricultural and based on communal norms.

Religion played and still plays a great role in the definition of Irishness because

[t]he Catholic religious identity served as a means of organizing and mobilizing the lower strata of society around the goal of defending the nation. By the late nineteenth century, Catholicism was an integral part, if not the defining element, of Irish national identity. (White, “The Impact” 6)

Catholicism was suppressed for years in order to eradicate its influence on the Irish through, for instance, the Penal Laws, resulting in that “the practice of Catholicism became an important part of resistance and a way of preserving cultural traditions [; thus,] the religion served to both define and widen the differences between the Irish and the English” (Cronin 56). Religious belief turned into a form of cultural resistance, and – especially towards the independence of the Republic of Ireland, with the influence of the Church – it began to be regarded “as a badge of national identity” (R. Kearney, *Postnationalist Ireland* 8).

Catholicism in Ireland evolved “as an ethnic and cultural marker not necessarily related to beliefs or practices” (Share et al. 409) because the Church operated actively in every level of the society by posing itself against the British and Protestantism from the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Thus, Catholic social teaching penetrated into every level of life in Ireland, as Breen et al. state:

The state adapted uncomplainingly to that setting upon independence and acted to uphold the family as defined by Catholic social and moral principles. This took the form of insulating the family from forces of change by a series of prohibitions: of divorces, of contraception, of married women’s wage employment. (102)

The State and the Church even started to remove and suppress everything that could threaten what they held to be the ideal way of living for the Irish. They even restricted periodicals and newspapers including birth-control advertisements. They saw them as causes of moral decline within society. Besides, indispensability of Catholicism for Irish

life and politics was marked by de Valera's Constitution of 1937 which specified a special position for the Church. Hence, in the post-independence period,

the Catholic Church was determined to consolidate its role as the decisive moral authority in southern Irish society and this was achieved primarily through the control of education and health services, and the regulation of sexuality, especially women's sexuality. (Cleary, "Postcolonial Ireland" 275)

Consequently, "Ireland became a 'confessional state'" (Martin 95). Being a confessional state refers to the close relationship between the Church and the State, embodied in religious practice of confession between the priest and people. The priest obtains an authority through his discourse and then speaks up for the people or nation as a representative of the Church. Angela K. Martin by using phrase "confessional state" wants to emphasise that the power balance and relations changed in the early-twentieth century Ireland. It was confessional in that the State and society were controlled and checked by the religious authorities that maintained the power of articulation to direct people politically and save them spiritually. As mentioned in the analysis of Conor McPherson's works, it is seen that the practice of confession inheres in the monologue form. In addition, the mentioned power balance seems to have altered in the 1990s when people began to speak up for themselves, most probably due to the increase in individualism and the collapse of the Church's influence.

Until the late 1950s and the 60s, the State, with an idealised Irishness in mind, followed a protectionist policy and described Irish society as mainly a rural and agricultural one as opposed to the urban and industrial British society. Yet, the shift in economy along with the emergence of multinational companies in Ireland in the 1960s onwards altered the socio-cultural structure of society, which undermined the image of an idealised rural Ireland. The Irish therefore began to question Irishness as a cultural and national identity which needed to be re-asserted in the light of the recent changes. Traditional values were changing with modernisation, which reached its peak during the 1990s when "[t]he Irish economy has been transformed from one based on agriculture and traditional forms of manufacturing to one increasingly based on the hi-tech and internationally traded services sector" (Share et al. 79), and the Irish identity had to be redefined according to the "demands for more up-to-date representations of Ireland, images of urban life, industrialisation and consumer culture in keeping with the

contemporary realities of a modernising society” (Kirby et al. 10). The new sense of Irishness turned out to be very different from what had been constructed before because it was more urban, modern and global besides being inclusive. Therefore, it seems necessary here to dwell upon how the urban and modern Irish identity was established.

Specifically, the 1990s and the early 2000s reflected the loosening of the old values and norms while the senses of spirituality and community were being replaced by materialism and individualism as an outcome of modernisation and globalisation. As Terence Brown asserts, “[f]or many however – especially since the 1960s when a thwarted, energetic materialism had been released and given respectability as economic nationalism which could result in Irish unity – commercial life was conducted with little or no sense of civic duty and compliance” (379). On the other hand, the more individualism increased, the more the Irish found ways to express who they were rather than being subservient to an essentialised Irishness, as Inglis clearly puts it: “The conflict over liberal individualism can be seen as emerging from a more general, long-term shift from a culture of self-denial to a culture of self-expression and self-indulgence” (“Origins” 23). Through self-expression and self-indulgence, the Irish began to move towards a more pluralistic and diverse society. So, it seems that “[w]hereas in the past self-indulgence was considered a mortal sin, at the zenith of the Celtic Tiger it became a type of rite of passage, something that underlined one’s freedom to do things that no longer had the stigma of sin attached to them” (Maher 22).

From the 1960s to the 1980s, sexuality, marriage and family became controversial matters in Irish society because they began to be challenged by new norms, leading to debates about contraceptives, divorce, abortion and homosexuality. These issues, due to the social and cultural teachings of the Church, came to be seen as threats to the order of family and society. However, they also reflected two unsettled ways of seeing the state of affairs in Irish society:

One perspective sees these [controversies about contraceptives, divorce, abortion and homosexuality] as reflecting the increasing materialism and secularisation of Irish society and a gradual weakening of those traditional values which hold society together, whereas another perspective sees these as representing the development of more liberal societies with increasing freedom of choice for the individual. (Coward 78)

These controversies, growing materialism, urbanisation and individualism mirrored the decline of traditional values both in rural and urban Ireland. Besides, considering

the abolition of censorship, the legalization of divorce and contraception, and the acceptance of abortion [which were seen as a danger to the unity of the family and society], the Irish Republic faces a situation in which there is no single, unproblematic sense of Irish identity. (H. Kearney, *Ireland* 50)

The Irish identity began to be more inclusive and pluralistic. For example,

[h]omosexuality came to political attention in the late 1980s, but in 1993 it was decriminalised with surprisingly little controversy and quickly moved from centre stage [. . .]. The legal treatment of unmarried mothers and their children was also revolutionised in this period, first by the virtue of the introduction of welfare payments for unmarried mothers in 1973 – a radical symbolic as well as practical departure in its time – and then through the Status of Children Act, 1987, which outlawed discrimination against non-marital children. (Fahey et al. 156)

The attitudes towards family, marriage and sexuality, as well as women and their role in society, evolved by the introduction of modern liberal values. Now Irish society seemed to be less rigid and more tolerant, and more open to new ideas or ways of living because individualism mattered more than the communal type of life.

As Share et al. affirm,

[m]any of the demographic changes now [1990s] taking place reflect the changing position of women in Irish society which has been expressed in legislation, social attitudes, economic activity and sexual behaviour. The number and proportion of births outside marriage has risen considerably. [. . .] It has also been suggested that the relatively high number of non-marital births reflects a changing social climate in which there is much less pressure on pregnant young women to get married. [. . .] The dramatic increase in the number of married women in the workforce has probably contributed to an increase in delayed childbearing, a further decline in completed family size (the process commenced in the 1960s) an overall decrease in fertility in recent years. (159)

Irish people's outlook, especially on their lifestyle entered a new phase with the election of the first woman President of Ireland, Mary Robinson in 1990. By advocating the rights of divorce and abortion, Robinson shattered taboos about sexuality, family and marriage. Previously, abortion had not been allowed. However, the conflicts on the issue of abortion arose after the "X" case in 1992. The attorney Harry Whelehan prevented a fourteen-year-old girl who had been raped from having an abortion in

Britain by law (Brown 365-66) which caused demonstrations and protests by the people who were shocked by the verdict. They mobilised and made a pressure on the jury to reverse the decision. By taking into account that the girl could be inclined to commit suicide, the jury gave her the permission to have an abortion abroad, thus abortion was allowed on condition that the pregnancy threatened the life of the mother like in “X” case. In addition, divorce was also permitted only after the couple’s living separate for at least four years under Family Law (Divorce) Act, 1996 (“Family Law”). In her victory speech after the elections, on 7 November 1990, Robinson particularly remarks “the women of Ireland, Mná na hÉireann, who instead of rocking the cradle, rocked the system” (*RTÉ Archives*) by electing her and thus instigating evolution of the patriarchal Irish society and such taboos in Irish society. The 1990s brought about new perspectives and values into the Irish social and cultural lifestyle as manifested by all the transformations mentioned above.

As an inevitable part of the Irish identity, the long-term problem of Ireland, emigration, reversed at last as a consequence of the economic improvement in the country in the 1970s. This reversal or “[t]he dramatic shift from being a country impaired by chronic unemployment and emigration until the 1980s to being a host-culture for immigration in the 1990s is accordingly welcomed as a sign of growing multiculturalism in which Ireland can at last take leave of its troubled past” (Gibbons 105). It was a huge alteration when considering the whole of Irish history. It gave a new sense of self-confidence to the Irish in that Ireland could take care of herself and make her people stay at home. Besides, the reversed emigration modified the whole structure of the Irish society in that now Ireland was a multicultural society and this led to the redefinition of what Irishness was again. So it can be said that “the reinvented Ireland of the Celtic Tiger is based on the creation of a ‘modern, liberal, progressive, multicultural’ image fashioned according to the need for international acceptance rather than through engagement with Ireland’s past” (Kirby et al. 197).

The Irish perception of religion, too, changed over time, and people began to question the doctrines and principles of Catholicism. As stated above, in the post-independence period, Catholicism became the very symbol of the Irish identity and had a special place

in the Constitution. However, the position of the Church within society weakened since it

is regarded as an obstacle to Ireland's full modernisation not only because of specific doctrinal belief (such as the Church's strong opposition to divorce, contraception or abortion), nor because of recent evidence of institutional corruption or hierarchical complacency in relation to paedophilic priests and religious, but because of the physicality of its liturgical and devotional practices. (Pilkington 137-38)

The strict principles of the Church loosened "as in the hierarchy's removal in 1970 of the ban prohibiting Catholics from sending their children to Trinity College, Dublin, under the pain of excommunication, or the 1972 national referendum which removed the special status of the Church (article 44) from the constitution" (Hachey 227). Besides, as stated earlier, its strict rules in terms of contraceptives, divorce and abortion began to be shattered because modernisation scrapped many of the traditional values and principles of the Catholic Church. As Lawrence Taylor expresses it succinctly, the growth and transformations in society from the 1960s onwards, especially the 1990s with the impact of the Celtic Tiger, "all combined to undermine older structures and patterns of life" (157).

The dominant position of the Church in Irish life and politics declined notably in the 1990s in consequence of the revelation of the child abuse scandals in religious institutions. One of the scandals was the one caused by the Bishop of Galway, Eamon Casey, who had to resign following the instructions from Rome in 1992 in consequence of the press reports that he had a child who was in his teens. Another scandal was that Father Michael Cleary, a priest from the Dublin archdiocese, fathered two children by his housekeeper (Keogh 133-34). These incidents reflected the hypocrisy of the priests because, as seen, how they lived contrasted with what they preached in the matters of sexuality. On account of the deterioration of the prestige of the Church in the 1990s and early 2000s,

[f]ewer people than ever before are willing to accept moral guidance from an institution which has for so long, and with such energy and with such imperviousness to the realities of human life, worked to inculcate such a stringently curtailed vision of sexual identity, while all the time allowing its own agents to operate outside the legal parameters of normal society. (Smyth, "Irish National Identity" 136)

Even though the influence of the Church and people's religious practices such as going Mass or confessions to the priest waned, the Irish still defined themselves as Catholics because Catholicism had cultural connotations rather than just meaning adherence to religious principles or doctrines. It was a powerful component of communal identity; as Mitchell states: “[R]eligion has become entangled with wider communal identifications in these ways when we consider the historical context of a dominant yet embattled Protestant group in a small state that most Catholics deemed illegitimate” (135).

Now the Irish identity became much more modern and secular as a result of the self-confidence and self-reliance the Irish gained with the recent changes. Today, as Christopher Murray puts forward, “human rights, sexual equality, access to information at every level, and the breaking down old hierarchies of power and privilege are the dominant concerns” (246). Besides, with the growth of urbanisation, “[u]nemployment, emigration, drug trafficking, joy-riding, vandalism, organised crime, homelessness, [. . .] random violence” (Curtin et al. 13) and racism stemming from immigration constitute the main problems of contemporary Ireland. Socio-cultural norms and values such as the rural way of life, religion, family and sexuality transformed under the influence of modernisation.

Rural Ireland with its values and norms were modified in the light of socio-cultural and economic developments. Ireland in the 1990s and early 2000s was more urban and modern than before. It was also more inclusive, considering the exclusive definition of Irishness constructed in the early twentieth century as rural, agrarian and Catholic. Since the late twentieth century Ireland, it seems, has embraced plural or diverse sexual, cultural, national and religious identities.

In the light of these discussions, this thesis proposes to explore changing Irishness in Conor McPherson's plays *The Weir* and *Shining City*, as representations of the old and the new way of Irishness. These plays portray the transition from traditional to modern Ireland. In Chapter I, *The Weir* depicts a rural Ireland sustaining most of its traditional pattern but at the same time opening to the socio-cultural impact of modernisation and globalisation. It depicts “the shifting dynamics of rural Ireland on the eve of such fundamental change” (Mathews 155). Chapter II concerns *Shining City* as a play displaying an urban Ireland with its controversial issues such as homosexuality,

abortion, individualism, small family, and decline in faith. The title of the play ironically refers to Dublin as a shining or alluring city, but its dwellers are miserable, lonely and alienated. Considering the social and cultural developments in Ireland in the 1990s onwards, this thesis will point out the re-perception and redefinition of rural and urban, traditional and modern Irishness through the analysis of *The Weir* and *Shining City* as plays representing the old and the new values and norms in Ireland, respectively.

CHAPTER I

IRELAND IN TRANSITION IN *THE WEIR*

“We are a nation of brilliant failures; but
we are the greatest talkers since the Greeks”

--Oscar Wilde, *Epigrams of Oscar Wilde*

“One drink is too many for me
and a thousand not enough”

--Brendan Behan, *Memorable Quotations*

The Weir was written for a commission from London’s Royal Court Theatre which was in expectation of a dialogue play unlike the early plays Conor McPherson had penned. It was first performed at the Royal Court Theatre Upstairs, on 4 July 1997. The play was highly successful, and it received the Evening Standard Award for Outstanding New Playwright and London Critics’ Circle Most Promising Playwright Award (Wood xiv). As a well-known play by McPherson written during the time of the Celtic Tiger, *The Weir* represents a fading rural Ireland trapped by the past but craving the future. It reflects the local colours of rural Ireland together with the penetration of new values into the rural way of life. Modernisation, urbanisation and globalisation lead to changes in the demographic and socio-cultural structures of rural Ireland, and the existing values and norms are challenged. The aim of this chapter is to examine *The Weir* and its representation of this rural Ireland in transition within the context of the traditional and modern values of the Celtic Tiger period.

McPherson was inspired for this play by his visits to his grandfather in Leitrim as he tells in his interview with Tim Adams:

My grandfather was there on his own, [. . .] I was fairly quiet when I was a teenager, and I liked the way you could go down there and sit, you know, and not talk, really, and look at the fire with him. And then he might say something. Or he might not. Sometimes he might tell me a story. But it would always come out of this sense of absolute isolation and silence, and I guess just the atmosphere of that stayed with me, struck me as something important, I suppose. (“So There’s These Three Irishmen”)

This isolated and silent atmosphere in Leitrim and fireside stories resonate through *The Weir*. With its ambience familiar to the Irish in a typical Irish pub, McPherson explores the rural Ireland in transition with the storytelling technique. Utilising traditional storytelling, McPherson helps his characters to articulate what they keep inside, be it hidden or lost. The playwright asserts that

Irish people are more concerned about the inner life ... and the inner response. A monologue gets into what people really think, which is entertaining and exciting because people don't normally tell us what they really think. It is also what they think makes sense. Or what they think sounds rational. But they don't actually express the more primal thing, which is the voice that is in there. ("An Interview" 140)

Even if *The Weir* is an ensemble play, it consists of long monologues. For the playwright, monologue helps recover the minds and hearts of the characters by redeeming them from what they have experienced or regretted in the past and enables them to find out who they are, which is pervasive in McPherson's theatre. As Clare Wallace describes, "[m]onologue theatre in this context is remarkable as a site of narrative contestation and the performance ambivalence. Without substantial onstage action, how characters speak, their vocabularies and the rhetorical devices that they employ constitute their identities" ("The Art of Disclosure" 46). The monologue form enables the characters to discover and recover themselves in that sense.

Before the analysis of the play in detail, it is necessary to give a synopsis of *The Weir*. The play is set in a pub in rural Ireland, Northwest Leitrim or Sligo. It opens with Jack's entering the pub and taking a drink. He pays for his drink without anyone around and makes himself comfortable in the pub. Later Brendan, the publican, comes and they start to talk about the weather, Brendan's sisters wanting to sell off his land, Finbar, a businessman, Valerie who is a Dubliner and a new resident in Finbar's house. They gossip about how it is inappropriate for Finbar as a married man "to have a chance with this one" (16) just because Finbar shows around to Valerie. Jimmy, who has no regular job and is "grand with the few little jobs around here" (21), joins their talk and mentions his sick old mother. Then, Finbar brings Valerie to the pub to "introduce her to the natives" (16). They begin to tell her the history of the place, the construction of the weir, but then the whole telling turns into supernatural stories such as the fairy road on Maura Nealon's old house which Valerie has just bought, scary knocking on the doors,

using the Ouija Board and seeing a woman on the stairs that no one can see, and talking to a ghost in the graveyard.

After these supernatural stories, Valerie reveals her own haunting story about her daughter Niamh who died after hitting her head in the pool. Niamh tried to communicate with her mother after her death through the telephone. The men in the pub try to find rational explanations to console her saying, for instance, she may have had a hallucination or psychological trauma after her death. Following this personal revelation and Jim and Finbar's departure from the pub, Jack tells his own story of loneliness and regret about the girl he loved and had to break up with as she went to Dublin and married someone else there. In a way, the characters find consolation and solidarity in their stories and company in the pub. Brendan, Jack and Valerie lastly mention "the Germans," that is, tourists who are not very welcomed by the locals. But they are not really sure where the tourists are from. The play ends with the characters' exit from the bar turning off the lights.

For a better understanding of the play, it is necessary to comment on the title of the play first. A weir means "[a] low dam built across a river to raise the level of water upstream or regulate its flow" ("Weir"). As Finbar explains in the play, its function "is to regulate the water for generating energy power for the area and for Carrick as well" (32). The play is based on a real historical event in Ireland. The Electricity Supply Board (ESB), established in 1927, was "responsible for operating the power station then being constructed on the River Shannon and providing electrical power throughout the country. [. . .] By the 1970s, nearly all of rural Ireland had been electrified" (Biletz 128). It was a great enterprise for the newly-independent Ireland, and

[n]othing before or since has had such a profound impact on the social and economic development of Ireland, especially in the rural areas and farming communities. [. . .] Modernization was taking place in Ireland, even if the pace sometimes seemed imperceptible. (Hachey 179)

despite the fact that Irishness in the early twentieth century had an anti-modernist stance by associating modernity with the British. The construction of the weir can be considered both as a huge step for Ireland as a re-affirmation of its independence from the British and as an indicator of the modernisation process in the country. As Kevin Kerrane emphasises, "the weir seems to represent the modernization of rural Ireland"

(116). Yet, on the other hand, it is explicit in the play that “the Shannon Scheme as an icon of modernity and progress was being contested by the inscription of a scarred landscape” (Hazucha 74). The weir destroyed the natural landscape and became an obstacle on the migration route of fish. Therefore, it symbolises the overall changes in the land and nature in addition to the socio-cultural structure of Ireland.

Wood states that “the title suggests the benefits of inhibiting the natural flow of emotion and behaviour, including sexuality. [. . .] the restraining of their natural impulses makes possible a more reasonable form of energy, one which serves the order of loving relationship” (50). Or vice versa, unlike Wood’s suggestion, the weir, or rather the opening of its gate to let the water flow may be a reference to getting rid of restrictions, no matter how intensely the water bursts out, and letting the people in need of company to communicate and in this manner heal their inner worlds. In a way, *The Weir* is a play about the disclosure or flow of emotions via the stories the characters tell as McPherson asserts, “[o]n one side it is quite calm, and on the other side water is being squeezed through. Metaphorically, the play is about a breakthrough. Lots under the surface is coming out. It’s resonant of two worlds, the supernatural and our ordinary world past and present” (qtd. in Gussow). On the other hand, Andrew Hazucha thinks that

the weir also stands metaphorically as a place where old world values collide with, and are restrained or diverted by, new world values produced by an Ireland that in the span of little more than a single generation was wrenched from its rural, unelectrified past into a modern nation-state. (70)

In other words, the weir is the symbol of the old and new worlds side by side. Unlike what Nicholas Grene holds about the weir, that is, it “acts as a metaphor for the controlled release of emotion through talk and story-telling among the five characters, [but] not as a symbol of a stage in the modernisation of Ireland” (“Conclusion” 261), the construction of the weir or its presence in the play symbolises the change in society not only economically and culturally but also ecologically. In this context, the weir is a token of the transition in rural Ireland.

Rural Ireland is, as mentioned earlier, associated with the idealised Irish identity constructed in the early twentieth century. Thus, regarded as a traditional Irish colour, the rural setting constitutes the basis of *The Weir*. Rural identity, along with an attachment to the land, is prevalent in Irish society, and it is because “the cultural

nationalism that was a major force behind the movement for independence believed that Ireland's destiny was to be a rural, agrarian society" (Daly 22). As stated above, cultural nationalism has strengthened the land/place identity of the Irish through the association of land with Irishness. McPherson demonstrates this devotion to the land or inscription of Irishness over the land through the character of Brendan who refuses to "sell the top field" (15) in spite of the insistence of his sisters who are only interested in "new cars for the hubbies" (15). He disregards material gains on account of his "attachment to the place" (15). Having spent all his life there in this rural Ireland, Brendan feels integrated with the land, in line with Chris Barker's definition of "identity as regulatory discourses to which we are attached through processes of identification or emotional investment" (245). The Irish, as a result of their historical legacy or sense of continuity, develop an emotional commitment to the land. Besides, Hazucha argues that "[p]art of the reason for is obduracy is that he half-believes the land has been inhabited by fairies since time immemorial, and partly it is because he believes it would be sacrilege to let go of land that has been handed down from generation to generation by his ancestors" (71). The land is a sacred entity for the Irish as evidenced by the tradition of *dinnsheanchas*, "the mythic lore of places" (Bertha 163). Irishness represents a territory-based identity Irish people define and associate themselves with. Graham expresses that the land, for the Irish, "symbolises the particularity of territory and a shared past which helps define communal identity, and plays an active part in the reproduction and transformation of any society in time and space" (5).

However, Brendan's sisters who are "[c]hecking their investments" (15) can be regarded as evocative of the rural Irish identity being gradually replaced by an urban and capitalist identity, as called to attention in the dialogue below:

JACK: They've no attachment to the place, no?

BRENDAN: No they don't. They look around, and it's ... 'Ah yeah ...' you know?

They laugh a little.

It's gas. (15)

In the beginning, "Irish culture [. . .] was defined in terms that insisted on its supposed spiritual superiority to the crass materialism and philistine utilitarianism associated with English industrial modernity" (Cleary, "Estranged States" 67). Yet, during the Celtic

Tiger, modernisation and urbanisation have reached their peak and reshaped the whole society and subsequently “urban residents even more quickly adopted Western materialism at the expense of those values associated with rural life in Ireland” (White, “What Does It Mean to Be Irish?” 142). Thus, the rural myth is eroded by the socio-economic and cultural formations in society. Materialism begins to take over the Irish who consequently cast aside spirituality and rural values. Attachment to the land, too, vanishes. In short, the rural setting in *The Weir* stands for the Irishness established in the first place and now on the wane.

The pub culture, widely accepted as part of Irishness, deserves mention here as a feature of the Irish communal life. As Margaret Scanlan argues,

a lively social institution that offers participants solace, companionship, and entertainment, for some, it becomes almost a family. Traditionally conversation is an Irish art, honed in the pub where storytelling, fiddle-playing, and singing are the main entertainments, rather than televised sports. (101)

As a result of all these traditional practices, the pubs can be regarded “as an important resource for the constitution of Irish collective cultural identity community, solidarity and sociability” (Kuhling et al. 9). It appears to be a place where the Irish can find company and talk with comfort, especially under the effect of alcohol. McPherson says that “the drinking gives them licence. They can say anything – they’re drunk! So you can have these massive mood swings, explore anything you want” (“Conor McPherson Lifts the Veil” 82). Thus, the playwright sets a familiar setting for the Irish to reveal their stories easily with the help of alcohol. The five characters in the play gathering in the pub form a small local community – even though one of them, Valerie, is initially an outsider, she joins them immediately – and tell stories to one another. There is a friendly and warm ambience in the pub as the relevant stage direction suggests: “*There is a fireplace, right. There is a stove built into it. Near this is a low table with some small stools and a bigger, more comfortable chair, nearest the fire*” (13, italics in orig.). So, the pub “functions as a kind of intermediate or ‘third space’ between the public and private which allows a unique kind of meaningful interaction to take place” (Mathews 155). The characters find a communal identity in the pub despite the fact that the Celtic Tiger has started to affect social and cultural spheres leading to individualism. They also find consolation in solidarity, because all these characters are somehow lonely and

alienated from the outside world, and “[a]s these sodden men bond over the drinks that flow between them, alcohol enables them to forget their past, ignore their future and exist wholly for the pleasures of the present (“Exploring Conor McPherson”).

Alcohol is very much in the foreground in McPherson’s plays. The writer’s explanation for this situation is that “[d]rinking is everywhere, it’s like nothing happens without it. Courtships, weddings, funerals, going to the theatre, everything: it’s always alcohol, alcohol, alcohol” (“Human Beings”). In *The Weir*, alcohol acts like a catalyst for the revelation of the stories, and therefore, the pub becomes a very convenient setting for McPherson to discover or expose rural Ireland on the wane. The pub in a rural environment represents a community-based identity which the Irish associates with the rural way of life which, in the play, is in the process of surrendering to capital means. Yet although there has been a change in the socio-cultural structures, as stated by Trench, “[i]n Ireland, the pub has been seen as a social problem and as an expression of national identity, revealing the role that drinking plays in relation to group/community identity” (168).

Considering alcohol and the pub as standing for the Irish communal identity, Grene asserts that “[r]emote and desolate as the pub may be, its homely atmosphere and relaxed story-telling represent an alternative life to the town or the city. The bar-room stands at the edge of the modern world, a last dying vestige of an older community” (“Ireland in Two Minds” 304), because individual values and materialism started to infiltrate into and threaten the communal lifestyle and solidarity as illustrated by Brendan’s sisters’ persistence in selling the lands to have more money or by Valerie who moves from urban to rural Ireland in order to find comfort and peace away from individualism and materialism. This transformation in rural Ireland resulting from socio-cultural and economic circumstances is likely to threaten the solidarity of communal and familial lifestyles and values which have been thus far held as indispensable components of Irish rural life and markers of the Irish cultural identity. Even though all these values are in decline, the pub still functions “as a means to show how identity can be explicated through signs and signifiers, including objects, images, social groupings, codes of behaviours and appearance in the play” (Trench 167). Due to the growing globalisation and, as an inevitable consequence of it, tourism, the Irish pub

is becoming a global entity. It symbolises Irishness, and by becoming global, it turns into a commodification of the Irish identity by drawing the tourists and the capital to the country.

Other than the pub as a representation of Irishness, storytelling or fairy story is held to be a characteristic of the Irish culture. As Richard Kearney puts forward, “the great tales and legends gave not only relief from everyday darkness but also pleasure and enchantment: the power to bring a hush to a room, a catch to the breath, a leap to the curious heart, with the simple words ‘Once upon a time’” (*On Stories* 7). In *The Weir*, the circulation of the fairy stories begins with Jack and later continues with Finbar and Jim in a *seanchaí* tradition which is an Irish local colour. Before passing on to their stories, one may point out the function and purpose of the fairy tales and storytelling tradition in the play. Here the fairy tale “becomes the privileged point of communication between the narrative act and the element of folklore or, more precisely, it is the most important product of the interaction between the two, the most explicit manifestation of the persistence of a tradition, albeit in a framework of continual innovation” (Carrassi 45). This interactive tradition of storytelling, albeit in decline in the recent years, seems to continue with its deployment by Conor McPherson in the 1990s. The playwright adopts it as a means to explore the personal or private experiences of the characters. So, storytelling “provides a means for releasing repressed real emotions, and recuperates the genuine possibility of a humane community even within an economically deprived rural context” (Llewellyn-Jones 98). Besides, as Jordan argues, “[i]dentity is fabricated thus as much out of the narrative structure as it is out of the variable of performance” (“Pastoral Exhibits” 360); therefore, storytelling is not only revelation or redemption for the characters but also it is a way upon which they build their identity. Scott T. Cummings remarks exquisitely: “I have a story, therefore I am. This is the lifeblood and essence of McPherson’s troubled heroes” (303). Only through the stories, the characters can articulate themselves as Clare Wallace affirms: “[T]he characters, in the telling of their stories, in effect talk themselves into existence” (“A Micronarrative Imperative” 5-6).

The first fairy story is told by Jack. It is about Maura Nealon whose house now belongs to Valerie. One day when everyone went out for a dance, Maura and her mother Bridie

stayed at home with “a wind like this one tonight, howling and whistling in off the sea. You hear it under the door and it’s like someone singing. Singing in under the door at you. It was this type of night now” (36). They heard “a soft knocking at the door. Someone. At the front door” (36). Maura’s mother said that someone was just having fun with them, but later at night even “Bridie wouldn’t get up to get more turf for the fire” (37) because she was afraid to go out. Then, Maura learned that the house was built on a fairy road, which means they maybe disturbed the spirits of the beyond. Maura had actually heard one more knocking “in the fifties when the weir was going up. [. . .] And fierce load of dead birds all in the hedge and all this, but that was it. That’s the story” (37). The weir did harm to nature and the land which embodies Irish spiritual beliefs and values, as maintained in the *dinnsheanchas* tradition. Ulf Dantanus explains that “[f]or Irish people in this world the local and the natural are infused with culturally specific material realities that express a culturally specific otherworld of supernatural spirits” (289). So, an ecological disturbance is reflected in this story embedded in a supernatural world as Jordan states: “[S]tory-telling spaces are liminal ones, between the conscious and unconscious, between reality and dream life” (“Pastoral Exhibits” 358). Hence, the play displays how the Irish see the world from their own perspectives: mystical, otherworldly but still worldly, too.

In spite of the fact that Finbar laughs away this story saying, “it’s only old cod, you know? You hear all these around, up and down the country” (37), paradoxically enough, Finbar tells the second fairy story. The story has it that one day his neighbour’s daughter Niamh and her friends “were after doing the . . . Ouija board. And she phoned her mother to come and collect her. They said they were after getting a spirit or this, you know, and she was scared, saying it was after her” (41). When Niamh came back to the house, she saw and got scared of a woman on the stairs looking at her. Later, her brother phoned and told her that the old woman who used to take care of them when they were little was found dead at the bottom of the stairs. Finbar says:

[A]lright, whatever, coincidence. But . . . eh, that night, at home, I was sitting at the fire having a last fag before the sack. [. . .] I had my back to it. To the stairs. And it’s stupid now, but at the time I couldn’t turn around. I couldn’t get up to go to bed. [. . .] I wouldn’t move in case something saw me. You know that way. I wouldn’t even light another fag. Like I was dying

for one, and I wouldn't . . . mad. [. . .] Obviously there was nothing there and everything, but that was the last fag I ever had. [. . .]

VALERIE: And that was when you moved. Down to Carrick.

FINBAR: Yeah. (*Nods slowly*). Maybe that . . . had something to do with it. I don't know. (43-44)

As a result of what he has gone through after Ouija board event, Finbar gave up smoking and left for the city, “[m]oving down into the lights” (44). In a way, he escapes from rural Ireland to urban Ireland, “the lights” where he thinks he can find comfort. Thus, his troubled mind about ghostly appearances alters the course of his life. Jim also has a story about his experience of a ghostly appearance at the secret funeral of a paedophile, which indicates a reference to the 1990s sexual abuse charges involving the priests.

Through these stories, McPherson explores and reflects personal as much as socio-cultural circumstances and events of the 1990s. At a personal or micro level, the stories function as a confession, consolation and redemption for the characters. At a socio-cultural and economic level, the playwright presents and comments on the 1990s through the stories of his characters. So, the characters in *The Weir* are

performatively creating identities through the collaborative process of storytelling to an audience. [. . .] they use language not only to construct a micronarrative but also to offer micronarrative to a community of others for consumption, endorsement, rebuke, modification, and so on. (Maley 4)

They create and recreate their identity out of the narratives. As Bauman asserts,

[t]he ‘era of identity’ is full of sound and fury. The search for identity divides and separates; yet the precariousness of the solitary identity-building prompts the identity-builders to seek pegs on which they can hang together their individually experienced fears and anxieties and perform the exorcism rites in the company of others, similarly afraid and anxious individuals. (10)

Through this exorcism, they construct a communal as well as personal identity as Jack, Finbar and Jim do to be followed by Valerie. Jack reflects the waning of identity based on nature/land. Finbar leaves rural Ireland for urban Ireland to have better opportunities. Jim and Valerie’s stories – which will be discussed later – about the child abuse scandals of the 1990s display the corruption in society and the religious institutions. Therefore, it is not only confession but also an exorcism for these characters to

construct who they are in line with all these happenings. It can be contented that McPherson here combines the Irish tradition of storytelling and supernatural narratives by means of socio-cultural and personal narratives to examine the changing Ireland within the familiar context of Irishness.

The ghost, which is part of storytelling and fairy tales, is a highly functional element in McPherson's theatre. Molly Elizabeth Ferguson discusses that "[t]he ghost story is a repetitive processing of recurring loss through the trauma-driven process of mourning" (15). Similarly, Margaret Llewellyn-Jones defines the ghosts as "unconscious echoes of their repressed emotions" (98). Similarly, McPherson points out in his interview with Caroline McGinn that

[s]ome people might look at my work and say it's ghost stories. [. . .] But I think we live within a mystery. We don't understand what's beyond the known limits of what we perceive. I'm motivated by an existential longing to understand what the fuck is going on in life, really. What is all this? ("Interview: Conor McPherson")

For McPherson, the ghost is a means of making sense of the world. It expresses and defines what people lack, want or miss. It is an exploration of the other dimension the Irish psyche is very interested in due to its religious and mythological background. The writer also discloses that

I can't escape our superstitions. I even have a slightly scientific explanation for it. For thousands of years Ireland was the most westerly point in Europe. So Irish people lived with the sense of the beyond. And we internalised that. So it became part of our mythology and it's still very strong. (*Close to the Next Moment*)

For McPherson, Ireland is "the place right beside the beyond" ("UCD Connections"). It has been isolated from the rest of the world for such a long time that its alienation gives Ireland this peculiarity of insularity and spirituality. The ghost is an expression of the beyond for the playwright, a manifestation of the past in the present and of the loss or the guilt, which comes back either to disturb or to redeem the characters.

In *The Weir*, as told in Jack's story, Maura heard some knockings because their house had been built on a fairy road. Later she heard another when the weir was being set up. This implicates that nature the Irish spiritualise is telling something. Maybe these sounds or knockings are the psychological reactions of the Irish psyche denoted by

nature or the land. As regards Valerie's story about her daughter Niamh, it underlines that people cannot get over their loss immediately. Her story is different from and more personal than those of the others. It is about how her daughter died and communicated with her through the telephone: "The line was very faint. It was like a crossed line. There were voices, but I couldn't hear what they are saying. And then I heard Niamh. She said, 'Mammy?'" (59). She could not come to terms with the fact that she was dead. Chambers et al. explain this saying,

the ghost stories and the personal narratives suggest a persistent haunting, a past that cannot be let go of, as memories retard momentum in to the present, and alongside this, grief, fear, stubbornness, cussedness, or other forebodings impact on the choices in the lives of the plays' characters. (Introduction 13)

Haunting/being haunted represents the past not overcome in the present and the loss that cannot be left behind because there is something unfulfilled and uncompleted which unsettles the present and disturbs nature as well. Consequently, the Irish belief in spirituality and mysticism enhances these ghostly encounters as a response to incipient events.

With regard to what constitutes Irishness, the family or marriage pattern occupies a special place in the Irish context due to the Catholic Church and State policy. The family is regarded as the basis of society and therefore protected by both the Church and the State. Yet celibacy and bachelorhood/spinsterhood become Irish local colours in rural Ireland since the Great Famine with which the marriage pattern changed – because of the ensuing emigration and the avoidance of subdivision of the land among the sons – as mentioned above in the introduction of this thesis. McPherson's *The Weir* portrays bachelorhood as a typical motif of rural Ireland through his three "single fellas" (16), that is Jack in his fifties, Jim in his forties and Brendan, as the youngest, in his thirties. Timothy W. Guinnane affirms that "Ireland's most distinctive demographic trait was its very high level of permanent celibacy. [. . .] By 1911 nearly one-quarter of both males and females in their late forties or early fifties had never married and were unlikely ever to do so" (21). Celibate life and sexual restrictions in rural Ireland were also mostly an inevitable outcome of Catholicism because, as Foster writes, "traditional Irish preoccupations with obligations to family and kin militated against irregular sexual

connections, and social disapproval of illegitimacy was marked in remote rural areas” (341).

Bachelorhood remains dominant in rural Ireland as is reflected through the three male characters in the pub in *The Weir*. They find solidarity in their loneliness as Jack says: “Me and Brendan are the fellas on our own. Jim has the mammy to look after, but we’re, you know, you can come in here in the evenings. [. . .] You know, there’s company all around. Bit of a community all spread around the place, like” (44). Especially Jack articulates his solitude and yearns for company: “I do be telling this fella to be on the lookout. A youngfella (*sic*) like him. Not to end up like me” (66). He says this to Brendan and does not want Brendan to be like him in the end, that is single and having no one to rely on. He also regrets having let his girlfriend go as he confesses: “Stops you thinking about what might have been and what you should have done. It’s like looking away. Like I did at that reception. You should only catch someone’s eye for the right reason. And I’ll tell you – there’s not one morning I don’t wake up with her name in the room” (69). The Irish men in rural Ireland are single mostly because of unequal sex ratios due to emigration, especially of the females or of having no land to supply the family or of having the elders to look after. According to Arensberg et al., “[t]he country people are the ones among whom marriage is latest in Ireland, bachelorhood and spinsterhood most common, fecundity greatest” (195). Bachelorhood/spinsterhood and celibacy are long-standing features of rural Ireland, and they become, in fact, an inevitable part of Irishness. Yet there was a shift in the attitude towards sexuality. Sex was treated as a taboo beforehand. However, starting from the 1960s, with the debates about contraceptives, abortion and divorce, and especially in the 1990s, issues of family and sexuality became more flexible ones in Irish society. These controversial matters were opened for discussion in the light of inchoate social and cultural factors. People’s attitude towards family and sexuality modified to a great extent. As Patrick O’Mahony and Gerard Delanty state, formerly

[p]eoples’ relationship to religious authority and values was the primary determinant of their experience of social organisation and personal freedom in most areas of everyday experience. After independence, when the power of the state was harnessed to support and expand the existing institutional power of the Church, Irish society was organised to a very substantial extent on theocratic principles of social integration. (138)

So, especially with the weakening of the strict Catholic norms of sexuality and family values, even if remaining non-married, the Irish started to have sexual freedom regardless of the traditional Catholic teachings on sexuality. In *The Weir*, McPherson reflects these changing circumstances in Irish society from the early twentieth century on, indicating in particular the critical 1990s which brought new perspectives and horizons to the Irish with the impact of the Celtic Tiger economy. Jack who is still a bachelor in his fifties, had a girlfriend once, but she left for Dublin in search of a better life as mentioned above. They continued their relationship for a while as Jack explains:

I went up a few times like. But ... I was going up for ... you know ... she had a room. A freezing, damp place. I was a terrible fella. It became that that was the only thing I was going for. I couldn't stand being away. I don't know why. Ah, I'd be all excited about going up for the physical ... the freedom of it. But after a day and a night, and I'd had my fill, we'd be walking in the park and I'd be all catty and bored, and moochy. (67)

Although he and Jim are “the last representatives of a once-vibrant rural community” (Mathews 157), Jack enjoyed sexual freedom out of wedlock, which points out the dynamic social and cultural mobility. Jack and/or his real life counterparts seem to be much freer now as the restrictions on sexual activities and birth control practices have been relaxed, and contraceptives are made available to everyone. As Pringle reflects, “[t]here has been a very marked trend towards secularisation since the late 1960s, as reflected by a relaxation of the laws governing censorship and contraception” (43). The relaxation of these strict norms manifests that *The Weir* is rather a transition play showing the shift from the old to the new Irish values because what was considered Irishness so far is challenged by the new world values. Martine Pelletier affirms that “[e]conomic success, the so-called ‘Celtic Tiger’ phenomenon, and its attendant socio-political consequences, has given the country a new confidence whilst challenging or eroding the old markers of Irish identity” (98). This new confidence originating in their economic success leads the Irish to redefine themselves and their position in the world.

Alongside the issues of family, marriage and sexuality, emigration is an irrefutably significant part or experience of Irish society, representing yet another element of local colour. Emigration from rural to urban areas, regarded as an Irish phenomenon, was obligatory for many Irish from the years of the Famine to the 1960s. In the 1960s, there was a movement in reverse for a short period, yet it all started again in the 1980s and

lasted until the 1990s. McPherson represents this very peculiar Irish situation in *The Weir* through Jack's girlfriend who moved to Dublin from rural Ireland. Her emigration coincides with the economic improvement of the 1960s after the abandonment of de Valera's protectionist economic policy. Then, "[i]ncreased industrialisation exacerbated the flight from the land. Many people moved to the cities and, in particular, to Dublin" (Keogh 111). Jack narrates the story about his girlfriend as follows:

We were courting for three, years, and em ... 1963 to '66. But she wanted to go up to Dublin, you know. She would have felt that's what we should have done. And I don't know why it was a thing with me that I ... an irrational fear, I suppose, that, kept me here. And I couldn't understand why she wanted to be running off up to Dublin, you know? And she did in the end, anyway, like. (67)

Rural Ireland is thought to have nothing to offer to the young because "since the 1960s it has been urban culture that has increasingly established itself as the expression of the real (modern) Ireland, while the rural has been labelled backward and traditional" (Share et al. 358). O'Toole also explains that "[t]he center of economy began to shift from the kind of rural peasant society that the Revival had concentrated on, toward a new, uncertain urban world" ("Shadows"). Unlike Jack who prefers to remain where he is with a commitment to the land and rural way of life because of "an irrational fear" (67), his girlfriend chooses a life in urban Dublin, cutting her ties with the soil and therefore with the communal and spiritual solidarity. Mervyn Horgan evaluates this situation in terms of the rural versus urban or country versus city conflict by pointing out that "rural migrants to Dublin inevitably became sort of internal exiles, guilty of both renouncing their past, and threatening the future of their nation" (41). This is a refutation of the definition of Irishness and Ireland as a rural idyll and "the Catholic *insula sacra*: a unique spiritual haven of traditional folk simplicity, free from all the evils of modernity – a secular literature, alcoholism, sexual immorality, socialist agitations and materialist ideals" (Hutchinson 140, italics in orig.).

Other than Jack's girlfriend, Brendan's sisters, too, are city-dwellers who have no connection to rural Ireland anymore. They just see it as an investment like Finbar who also "went to the town to seek my fortune. And they [Jack, Jim and Brendan] all stayed out here on the bog picking their holes" (26). He talks about "these country fellas" (26) with contempt and takes them as local colours. Disdain for the country seems to be a

characteristic of city life which symbolises progress, opportunity and the modern way of life. As Hachey asserts, “[w]ith so substantial a number of them living in urban areas, these youths have tended to drift away from the traditional emphasis on hearth and home. More open to differing lifestyles, they find the lack of ‘progress’ in traditional Ireland frustrating and backward” (257). Because of broad opportunities that the urban life presents, people like Brendan’s sisters, Finbar and Jack’s ex-girlfriend are inclined to go to urban areas.

As stated, in the 1990s, emigration was reversed by the impact of the Celtic Tiger, and people began to return to Ireland or to “[r]eal Ireland, community, [which] is somewhere else, in the country, in the inner city” (Varenne 107). Conor McPherson expresses this change in the pattern of emigration with such words as “[w]hen the Celtic Tiger started to crank up, you could see people starting to come back. This was unheard of. That people were moving back from America! When we grew up emigration was the only show in town. That was my generation’s mindset” (*Close to the Next Moment*). Not only Irish emigrants began to return to Ireland because of the economic boom in Ireland but also immigration pattern accelerated to a great extent which brought new problems. Growing urbanisation in the Celtic Tiger period also caused a movement from urban to rural areas as city dwellers wanted to find peace away from the crowd and noise of the city, leading to the suburbanisation or repopulation of rural places. As cities became more crowded and cosmopolitan, infrastructural difficulties due to dense housing, problems like the traffic and other issues like racism arose. So the traditional pattern of rural-to-urban emigration changed because of the population growth in cities, especially in Dublin.

Therefore, as Elliott and Lemert state, “[i]n a metropolitan, urban world – under the pressures of the city crowd and the alienating structures of economic exchange – individual identities are necessarily egoistic, calculating and blasé” (39). This can be what Valerie went through in Dublin after her daughter’s death. She needed someone who would share in her pain. She believed that her daughter had tried to communicate with her even if she was dead as she still believes it and now she wants to find peace of mind:

JACK: Have you got any plans or that, for ... here?

VALERIE: Not really, I'm just going to try and have some ...

JACK: Peace and quiet.

VALERIE: Mm.

JACK: Jaysus, you're in the right place, so, ha? (44-45)

Individualistic and overcrowded life in the city prevents Valerie from finding consolation or comfort after her daughter's death. Even her husband does not share in her grief. She tells about his attitude as follows: "[He] became very busy in his work. Just keeping himself ... em. [. . .] felt that I ... needed to face up to what happened to me [. . .] [and] was insisting I get some treatment, and then ... everything would be okay" (59-60). As a result, left lonely, Valerie cannot cope with the death of her daughter.

The city life in the Ireland of *The Weir* seems to mean the decadence of traditional values, as mentioned above. In the play, "the west is a space of sanctuary and re-integration, fundamentally opposed to the city, which is aligned with decay, loss and dysfunction" (Chambers et al. 6) for Valerie. Consequently, she comes to the rural part of Ireland to find the tranquillity she lacked in Dublin. Rural Ireland is based on such values as sharing and helping. In other words, "rural landscape and community were [. . .] represented [. . .] as places of communal solidarity and neighbourliness, with all their comforts of kinship, the local and the familiar" (Duffy 70). Again rural Ireland is accepted as the real Ireland and the symbol of Irishness, which renders the urban an unfamiliar and foreign entity. Community, solidarity, neighbourliness and kinship collectively represent what Irishness is and how the rural Irish perceive themselves in relation to their community and the land. What Valerie seeks in the countryside is idyllic peace away from the noise and turbulence of the metropolis.

Furthermore, the Celtic Tiger period exhibited what was happening under the surface. In the 1990s, the media was shaken rigorously with the news about child sexual abuse dating back to the 1950s. As Paul F. State asserts, "[i]n the late 1990s television programs began to air allegations of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse at state-funded orphanages and industrial schools run by religious orders that dated back to the 1940s and 1950s" (353). These were enough to unsettle the Catholics and to diminish their trust in the Catholic Church. Worse still, it was discovered that religious authorities knew what was going on, but they tried to cover it by sending the

paedophilic priests from one post to another. Brown states that “credibility [of the church] was profoundly challenged as the decade wore on: a spate of clerical child abuse and other sexual scandals set the church in the dock of public opinion in a way that would have been unimaginable in the recent past” (367).

Conor McPherson marks these cases of sexual abuse in *The Weir* in order to mirror the changing Ireland and the debunking of the old values in terms of not only morality and family but also of religion, all of which are preached by the Catholic Church. These are explored through the characters’ stories unveiling their fears, disgust and helplessness. Jim’s story reflects these events in Ireland in a realistic manner, thereby showing how the Irish psyche is unsettled by these crises. He narrates that a priest from Glen looked for some people to bury a middle-aged man, “[w]hich was an odd thing anyway. Like what was he doing coming all the way over just to get a couple of young fellas?” (48-49). It was a secret funeral, and there were just two people, the dead man’s parents, attending it, which makes Jim utter the words, “to have no one there, and for a man who’s not an old man, it was funny, you know?” (50). At that time of the funeral Jim was so sick with the flu. After he and his friend Declan Donnelly dug a grave for the deceased, “Declan went off to get a taro to stretch over ... the ... grave” (50). While Jim was waiting for his friend, a man came out of the Church and told Jim that they had dug a wrong grave, also saying, “[c]ome on, I’ll show you” (50). Jim followed the man to a grave “[l]ike a new enough one. A white one with a picture of a little girl on it” (50). Later “he ... sort of touched the gravestone and he went off, back into the church” (50-51). No one saw him other than Jim. Then, a few days later, while resting at home, Jim realised who the man was through the paper his mother brought him. He says:

[. . .] on the obituaries, there was a picture of your man whose grave we’d dug. And you know what I’m going to say. It was the spit of your man I’d met in the graveyard. [. . .] the fella who’d died had had a bit of a reputation for em ... being a pervert. And Jesus, when I heard that, you know? If it was him. And he wanted to gown in the grave with the ... little girl. Even after they were gone. It didn’t bear ... thinking about. (51)

Jim’s story about the paedophile is a reference to the scandalous occurrences in the 1990s, or rather the priests’ wrongdoings and hypocrisy about sexuality, which is ironic for the reason that “the creed that the Church, since it is not a human institution at all but a divine one, can do no wrong” (O’Leary 238).

Catholicism, due to its historical legacy and continuity, is inevitably a significant part of the Irish identity. Evaluated from this perspective, Catholicism, for the Irish, is a factor adding to or completing who they are. Religion, at the beginning of the construction process of the Irish identity, was the way of “a cultural mobilisation in the sense of a social group or groups envisaging a new ethical code consistent with their cultural identity” (O’Mahony et al. 26). However, the charges of child sexual abuse in the 1990s were markers of a corrupt society and religion which the Irish promoted above anything else until then. McPherson portrays a contemporary Ireland in which such stories become prevalent, thereby needing a redefinition of what Irishness encompasses. Another reference to sexual abuse is in Valerie’s story about her deceased daughter Niamh. As she narrates, Niamh was always scared of the dark and had sleep problems. Valerie asked her

‘what’s wrong, when you go to bed?’ But in the daytime, you know, she wouldn’t care. Night-time was a million miles away. And she wouldn’t ... think about it. But at night ... there were people at the window, there were people at the attic, there was someone coming up the stairs. There were children knocking, in the wall. And there was always a man standing across the road who she’d see. (57)

After her death, Niamh phoned Valerie and reiterated her fears saying again that “the man was standing across the road, and he was looking up and he was going to cross the road” (60). The chaotic atmosphere of the 1990s created by the sexual abuse scandals is obvious in this narrative. When considering the 1990s, the man across the street “means harm to the child, and that harm is likely to involve sexual abuse” (Fitzpatrick 62). These scandals disturb the Irish psyche so much that a mother cannot help but think her daughter may be sexually assaulted by any man even if she is dead.

Sexual repression built up over the years because of the attitude of the Church and the covering of the abuses indicate the hypocrisy of society, too, which “preferred to live through permanent contradiction rather than openly face its problems” (O’Mahony et al. 159). For many years, Catholicism and Irishness were treated as the same due to the historical continuity between them. Yet in the current circumstances of the 1990s, adherence to religious activities was weakened, though not dissolving completely. As a matter of fact, according to Inglis, “religious identity continues to play a significant role in the cultural heritage of many Irish people, whether it manifests itself privately as a

latent sense of denominational affiliation or more publicly in times of personal trauma, social celebration or communal conflict” (“The Religious Field” 133). It is still acknowledged as a constituent of Irishness because, as O’Toole specifies, “Catholicism in Ireland has been a matter of public identity more than of private faith” (*The Lie* 65). This clearly points out that the identification process is not stable but changeable under changing conditions. For this reason, this process requires a perpetual need for a constant redefinition of Irishness under inchoate contingencies. As Hall defines,

[i]dentity is not as transparent or unproblematic as we think. Perhaps instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact, which the new cultural practices then represent, we should think, instead, of identity as a ‘production’, which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation. (“Cultural Identity” 222)

The Weir depicts such an identification process by juxtaposing the old and the new to reconstruct the Irish identity pursuant to the new formations and alterations in Ireland.

Especially globalisation in the 1990s opened debates about what Irishness was because Irishness was promoted as archaic, rural and traditional for tourism whereas there was a developing modern and urban Irishness at the same time. As Patrick Lonergan evaluates, “due to globalisation, identity and meaning are being reconstructed as tokens in a chain of commodity exchanges: the Irish mind, the Irish, the Irish workforce – all are up for sale, with essentialised qualities given an economic value in the global marketplace” (“Irish Theatre” 189). So, Irishness seems to be on sale for tourists or global consumption. Such commodification of Ireland arises many controversies because “[e]ither tourism is seen as a ‘Good Thing’ which brings in money, creates jobs and facilitates regional development or it is seen as intrusive, exploitative and uniquely destructive in its commodification of peoples and their cultures” (Cronin et al. 3). Thus, everything taken for granted as Irishness is promoted through the advertisements designed to attract more and more people to the island as a rural, mystical and spiritual country because, as Clancy argues, “[i]t continues to appeal to urban tourists who seek relatively unspoiled countryside. It also harkens up themes of discovery, invasion and colonialism in a manner complementary to tourism” (92). So tourists are not only discoverers but also invaders (Clancy 93) of the Irish landscape which recalls the colonial “penetration” into and domination of the land and its natural sources. The tourist gaze fixes the image of an archaic Ireland that is, in a sense, being sold to tourists

under the name of a cultural tourism which is, Deane writes, “a profitable means of converting culture into economics, although it requires the cultural stereotype of the community to remain fixed within prescribed limits, and adhere to a particular ‘character’” (148). Thus, tourism essentialises Irishness as rural and archaic, thus undisturbed by modernisation, despite the fact that Irishness is becoming urban and modern as well as global.

McPherson reflects in *The Weir* how tourists tread rural Ireland to discover and invade the land. The locals like Jim, Jack and Brendan deem tourists outsiders and intruders. They always call tourists “the Germans” (22) even though they may be from Denmark or Norway. To illustrate, Brendan says: “[a]h I don’t know where the fuck they’re from” (74). He also makes it explicit that he is irritated by them: “[t]he two of yous [Jim and Jack] leaving me standing behind that bar with my arms folded, picking my hole and not knowing what the hell is going on. And them playing all old sixties songs on their guitars. And they don’t even know the words” (72-73). Moreover, Jim and Jack do not go to Brendan’s pub for a few weeks when tourists come. Jack “thinks they’re too noisy. [. . .] Him and Jimmy be sitting there at the bar with big sour pusses on them. Giving out like a couple of old grannies” (72). The two leave Brendan there with tourists until they are gone. Also the lands are cleared for tourists’ campsites and caravans. Therefore, the tourist gaze of the land, the locals and their cultural practices disrupt the familiar environment of the Irish while it brings financial gain to Ireland. As Grene states, “[c]omic complicity with this mild xenophobia is encouraged in the audience as part of the play’s underlying resistance to modernity” (“Ireland in Two Minds” 304). Tourism, from the Irish point of view, is a threat to the Irish culture as a result of the clash between the modern and traditional norms as seen in *The Weir*. The setting of the play is a traditional rural Ireland advertised for the tourist gaze, yet it also discloses a changing Ireland which “celebrates the gentle and the unspoken civilities of local life at a time when these attributes are perceived, in wider Irish society, to be under threat by the brash, consumerist ethos of the Celtic Tiger” (Mathews 156).

Especially the Irish pub, which becomes an Irish local colour across the world, is something attractive for tourists because, as Michael Cronin and Barbara O’Connor explain,

[t]here is the association of the Irish pub with a social centre creating opportunities for the tourist to have the ‘craic’ which may be seen as a combination of easy conviviality, sociability, witty conversation and music. Authentic folk music, an atmosphere of easy conviviality, the sense of a collective, communal existence and a supposed ethnically-specific verbal dexterity and conversational skill emerge as ‘key motifs defining the objects of tourist consumption that can readily be accessed through the pub.’ (8)

Thus, the Irish pub is promoted globally “as a key marketing motif” (McGovern 83). Tourists imagine and construct Ireland as a country untouched by materialism and modernity, a country where they can find peace and comfort in nature, which is in verity about to be destroyed as a result of the gentrification of the cities where it has recently become difficult to see the colour green. It is not only for natural or environmental reasons that tourists come. They also find something magical about Ireland. Finbar tells Valerie how “the Germans” admire the landscape here in the rural part of Ireland:

FINBAR: You get all the Germans trekking up here in the summer, Valerie.
Up from the campsite.
[. . .]
They do come up. This’d be the scenic pat of all around here, you know?
Em. There’s what’s? There was stories all, fairies be up there in that field.
Isn’t there a fort up there?
[. . .]
The Germans do love all this. (33)

The fairies or supernatural aspects of the Irish culture integrated into the storytelling tradition and inscribed on the land draw the outsiders’ attention. For them, as Clancy expresses it, “Ireland remained locked in time, unspoiled by modernity” (84). Unlike Brendan, Jim and Jack, Finbar sees the visitors to their country as money incarnate, and he does not feel disturbed by their presence. Hazucha describes Finbar as “the voice of the New Ireland: unwaveringly self-confident, full of capitalist bravado, and a staunch advocate for land development and tourism” (75). He is the representative of the changing approaches in the Celtic Tiger Ireland with his materialistic purposes. Dilek İnan also puts forward that “Finbar represents the successful cosmopolitan businessman who can adapt with (*sic*) the global world economy while other characters are stuck in their inner lives in this secluded part of Ireland” (67). Finbar is absolutely comparable to the investors of the modern period, following individual success and material gains. Hall asserts that “the modern age gave rise to a new and decisive form of individualism, at the centre of which stood a new conception of the individual subject and its identity”

(“The Question” 602). Finbar stands for this new kind of individualism that emerged from the economic progress in the Celtic Tiger period.

When evaluated overall, *The Weir* is a representation of Ireland in transition from the old to the new Ireland, and from rural to urban Irish identity. It depicts a rural Ireland with its peculiar local colours like the rural setting, storytelling tradition, bachelorhood, emigration and religion, all acknowledged as parts of traditional Irishness. Yet, the play also displays the collision between the traditional and modern values. As Hill puts it: “*The Weir* begins a movement away from discord about the Celtic Tiger, and towards acceptance of it and of the resulting reconfigurations of Irishness” (70). P. J. Mathews also affirms that “*The Weir* now stands as an astute analysis of that transition in its exploration of a society caught between impulses of heroic isolation and willing submission to the forces of globalization” (153). Due to the dichotomies between the local and global, rural and urban, and traditional and modern, the play reflects a hybridised Irishness: on the one hand, the Irish try to preserve their traditional characteristics but, on the other hand, they try to conform or to resist what they consider modern, global and individualistic. The characters’ outburst of feelings and regrets in their isolation in an alienated pub away from the modern world and full of spirituality culminate in solidarity among the characters despite everything they have gone through. Thus, via their stories, Conor McPherson’s characters reconstruct Ireland in the light of the events of the 1990s, particularly through the island’s economic boom, the Celtic Tiger period.

CHAPTER II

NEW IRELAND IN *SHINING CITY*

“Memories are killing. So you must not think of certain things,
of those that are dear to you, or rather you must think of them,
for if you don’t there is the danger of finding them,
in your mind, little by little.”

--Samuel Beckett “The Expelled”

“It isn’t about being or not being dead,
it’s about what you leave behind”

--Martin McDonagh, *The Pillowman*

“If Ireland is to become a new Ireland
she must first become European”

-James Joyce, *Exiles*

Shining City, after *The Weir* and *Dublin Carol*, is the third ensemble play written by Conor McPherson. It was first premiered at the Royal Court Theatre, London, on 4 June 2004, and directed by McPherson himself. In comparison to *The Weir*, an exploration of Ireland in a process of change, *Shining City* focuses on the new Ireland only and displays the modern and urban problems experienced in Ireland during the 2000s when the country was still under the influence of the Celtic Tiger economy. So, this chapter purposes to examine the new Irishness in contemporary Ireland which sets forward new perceptions and perspectives in terms of family, marriage, sexuality and religion, and which is more modern and urban in comparison to the traditional rural Irish identity.

Shining City consists of five scenes with two months elapses, as indicated in the stage direction. The first scene begins with Ian, a therapist in his forties coming out of the toilet. With a loud buzzing noise, his first patient, John, in his fifties, is about to arrive. He is directed to Ian by Dr Casey. At first he does not know how to or what to talk, but then he decides to begin with his wife’s death in a car accident. He also talks about his brother Jim who he says was very supportive despite the fact that they were out of contact for a long time. But they did not have much to talk about. Later on, when he

arrived home, John saw the ghost of his wife “standing there behind the door looking at me” (11). He first left the house; however, later on, thinking that he made up the ghost in his mind because of grief, he turned back. Two days later, when he was in the bath, “she was knocking on the door and going [...] ‘John! John!’” (13). Now John can no longer stay at his house. Then he asks Ian if he believes him, out of helplessness. Ian says he believes in his experience, though not in ghosts.

In the second scene, Ian talks with Neasa, his ex-girlfriend and mother of his child, about their relationship. He wants to end it, which Neasa resists because she has always been there for him from the beginning and does not think that they will break up, though she feels lonely in this relationship. Neasa makes the confession that she slept with another man once. In this scene, it is also revealed that Ian is an ex-priest.

In the third scene, John reappears for their séance. He is feeling much better, and he tells Ian that he and his wife Mari could not have children, which affected him deeply. Afterwards he begins to talk about Vivien whom he and Mari met before at a party. John describes this woman as the only one caring for him in the world. He tells that he and Vivien started texting each other after the party. Out of guilt, he bought his wife a red coat which she would be wearing in the accident. One day Vivien called him, and he told her that he wanted to see her. They arranged to meet and go to a hotel but ended up with regret although nothing happened between them. The frustration Ian feels distances him from Mari solidly because he cannot tell anything to her while she is trying to be of help. He subsequently went to a brothel only to be hit by a man because he demanded his money back after a long waiting in the brothel. When he came back home, he treated Mari badly and violently.

In the fourth scene, Ian is with a male prostitute, Laurence, in his office. He feels a little awkward about this because he had no such an experience before. Laurence has a child, like Ian, yet the children are staying with their mothers, because both men have no proper place to stay. They are both displaced characters. In this scene, Ian and Laurence spend the night together.

In the last scene, Ian is seen packing his office. John comes for a visit to thank him. He brings him a lamp as a gift for his help. John is much better off now, not seeing the

ghost anymore. Ian seems to move on as well. He is moving with his fiancé Neasa to Limerick and having an interview for a post there. Still for Ian, something is missing in his life. He is looking for some meaning. The scene ends with the appearance of Mari's ghost on the stage. Ian feels her presence, and he is about to turn just as the lights are turned off on the stage.

Like in *The Weir*, Conor McPherson chooses for this play, too, a title laden with connotative meanings and setting the scene for the reader/audience. It is an ironic title basically pointing to two meanings. It is firstly a reference to the city of Dublin where the action takes place. The "shining city" can also be evaluated from a religious perspective and taken as a biblical allusion to a search for meaning. In Matthew 5:14-16, Jesus gives a sermon to his disciples on a mountainside saying,

[y]ou are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven. (*New International Version*)

Shining, as indicated in the quotation above, refers to a spiritual searching for meaning, to something fulfilling and satisfying in religious terms. However, this is contradicted in contemporary Ireland where the Irish feel isolated, unfulfilled, and deficient. In Kevin Wallace's view, "[w]hat this play attempts to do is contrast a profound Christian idea of community, openness and connection with a contemporary sense of isolation, alienation and ambivalence towards the Catholic Church in Ireland" (93). So, the Irish have a paradoxical attitude towards the Church which advocates the community spirit, when considering the alienation of these people from every level of the society. Maybe this religious void felt by the Irish results from the hypocritical behaviours of the Church revealed in the 1990s. On the other side, it can also be an outcome of increasing individualism which ignores the dogmatic side of religion but leads to a more individualistic and rationalised faith as a consequence of the modernisation process. So, although religion has long been an integral part of Irishness, the Irish have a dichotomous relationship with religion now. In that sense, the word "shining" in the title evokes its very opposite, that is "dimming."

The “shining city” refers to Dublin and city life besides its religious connotation. It implies a city of prosperity bright with extensive opportunities thanks to the Celtic Tiger. As Nick Smith states in his review of *Shining City*,

Dublin is a boomtown with cranes stretching across the skyline, an unmistakable sign that the city’s enjoying vast economic growth. Aside from construction and gentrification, there are new financial centers, legal firms, and computer manufacturers. Ireland as a whole has enjoyed an East Asia-sized upturn. (“Shining Moments”)

Nonetheless, it is ironic in that “shining” – in the secular sense of the word, too – indicates negative overtones like deprivation, loss, gloom, alienation, frustration and so on. The essence of the “shining” city is, as Brantley puts forward, about “urban lives rubbing against one another while never making contact. [Because] [t]o exist is to be alone in Mr. McPherson’s Dublin, but it is also to be painfully aware of the countless other lives that touch upon yours” (“Shining City”). Therefore, the materialistic brightness surrounding the city, which demonstrates that Dublin is a capital centre, cancels out the inner light and prosperity of McPherson’s characters even though the Celtic Tiger economic boom has boosted the national confidence of the Irish. In an interview with Noelia Ruiz, McPherson states that “the Celtic Tiger [. . .] was a massive explosion of change and of confidence in Ireland [. . .] [Playwrights] dramatized what it felt like to be so alienated from what was going on, and that’s why I think there were so many monologues at that time” (“Interview with Conor McPherson” 287). As indicated in the quotation, monologue functions as a revelation of personal stories against the background of contemporary Ireland. Transformation and confidence are disclosed through the monologues not only as a confession but also as a repercussion of the growing individualism in modern Ireland.

In *Shining City*, unlike in *The Weir*, the playwright adopts an urban setting to show an altogether transformed Ireland. Dublin, as stated above, is a shining or rich city. In former times, it was a capital of the British Empire which enabled the city to flourish economically and to become industrialised and urbanised contrary to the rest of Ireland which remained rural. That is why the Irish set their identity against the urban and industrial aspects they associated with the British. Patrick J. Duffy asserts that the “rejection of the city, its secularism and its bourgeois compromises on cultural nationalism, is implicit in the construction of the rural idyll in Ireland. Historically the

headquarters of British authority in Ireland, Dublin was suspect on the national issue in the early twentieth century” (74).

To put it differently, in terms of the nationalist discourse, Dublin had no “shining” appeal to the Irish because it was accepted as part of the British colonial base. The rural idyll, as authentic and pure, constituted their conception of Irishness for a long time. However, the entire situation became subject to change over time when Ireland began to adjust to the capitalist and globalised world. This was when they began to redefine their identity in the light of the growing circumstances across the world, by abandoning the exclusive interpretation of Irishness and Ireland as a rural and agrarian country. Now Ireland is more urbanised than ever. Conor McPherson in *Shining City* reflects this urban Ireland with its newly-established values.

McPherson describes the Dublin setting in *Shining City* as below:

The play is set in Ian’s office in Dublin, around Phibsboro maybe, or Berkeley Road, an old part of the city which, while retains a sense of history, is not a salubrious area. It has a Victorian feel, lots of redbrick terraced houses dominated by the Mater hospital, Mountjoy Prison, and the church spires of Phibsboro Church and the church at Berkeley Road. It doesn’t feel like a suburb, if anything it feels like a less commercial part of the city centre, which is only a short walk away. (5)

It is, by the look of this description, the city centre and at the same time within the periphery implying people’s “peripheral position to the wider city culture” (Keating 39). The city in the Irish context, as mentioned in the introduction part of this thesis, has a dichotomous meaning in that in that the Irish cannot help finding it repulsive, but they still move to the city. The city is defined “as a place of modernity and, as such, of corruption and immorality” (Kiberd, “The City” 220) on account of its association with the British and as a place “where chronic unemployment, drug addiction, domestic violence and environmental degradation flourish” (Duffy 77) as a result of urbanisation and modernisation. Whereas the city means better opportunities for the Irish, it also connotes materialism and individualism which bring the corruption of traditional values unlike the countryside. *Shining City* posits such a central yet peripheral setting to exhibit the Irish conundrum in terms of the construction of identity. As Ulf Dantanus puts forward, “[j]udging by McPherson’s plays, however, most of which are set in contemporary Dublin, this clearcut identification of the rural with the spiritual and the

urban with the corporeal becomes diffuse” (275). The association of urban with corporeality or materialism will be discussed here within the analysis of *Shining City*.

As an indispensable part of the Irish identity, the emigration from rural to urban areas caused the growth of population in the cities of Ireland, which influenced and modified the communal way of living peculiar to rural Ireland. Besides, “[t]he technicisation of everyday life through the car, home entertainment and domestic technologies has been a major contributory factor to the erosion of solitary communities based on non-familial interaction networks” (O’Mahony et al. 178). Solidarity and the community-based identity were replaced by a more individualistic way of life because people were now self-enclosed in their houses in the cities. Chae-bong Ham explains this situation as follows: “[I]ndividualism is also modernity’s most ambiguous achievement. While providing hitherto unimagined opportunities for political freedom, economic prosperity, and self-expression, it has also been responsible for modern man’s isolation, alienation, and loneliness” (127). Ham sees individualism as an inevitable corollary of modernisation. Similarly, McPherson, in *Shining City*, depicts how the characters suffer from loneliness and alienation that modernity and urbanisation curse them with.

Shining City is a portrayal of Dubliners whose lives are not that bright because “Dublin in the 2000s [is] shining with commercial light but darkened by the loneliness and disconnection of its inhabitants” (K. Wallace 93). The characters in the play are looking for someone to listen to them. They are so scattered that no one sees what is happening to the other. They are disconnected as much as displaced. When John begins to talk about his wife Mari and their marriage to Ian, it is understood that they were both lonely, not communicating with each other or with anyone around them in a real sense. Their familial bonds are loosened as John tells Ian: “you know, we ... my brother, you know, we don’t, we haven’t ... eh ... I don’t see him. You know, to a certain degree, we’ve been out of contact” (10). John did not see his brother until he came to support him at Mari’s funeral. Later they met one evening for a drink, yet they did not have much to say to each other. John describes this situation saying, “I mean, I could feel ... that ... it’s was a sympathy vote, like ... we’d ... very little to ... to say to each other. And I mean, he’s very quiet anyway, you know?” (11).

Coming to his house after seeing his brother, John heard some music,

the tune of an ice-cream van. The music, you know? But there couldn't have been because they don't go round at night. But, I heard it when I got in the door. And I ... didn't think about it or ... But eh ... I was, I was just going into the living room and I out the lights on, and ... when I turned around I could see that she was standing there behind the door looking at me. (11)

This is a scene evincing that John was haunted by his wife. He was extremely terrified and got out of the house that night to stay at B&B. He had no one around to comfort him. He says: “[w]here I live is just a quiet cul-de-sac. There wasn't anyone around even that I could ... even the neighbours, I've never, you know, those people ... I just sat there, looking at the house, just so ...” (12).

The city life engenders individualism in contrast to the rural life that drives people to have a communal sense of identity and attachment to one another. John finds no one around. He has no one to confide in or to find consolation in. Familial and communal values such as kinship and neighbourliness once almost worshipped as indispensable values of Irishness seem to be stripped of their meanings in the city where people keep their distance due to the insecurity of the outside or due to the fact that they live in suburban areas considered an ideal place for starting a family by isolating themselves from the community or crowded city life. Following the socio-economic changes, everything begins to appeal more to individuals, which deprives them of the sense of comfort possible to find in human company and make them feel alienated. While individualism as well as materialism for self-fulfilment is becoming more predominant, values such as friendship, family and neighbourliness turn into hollow concepts over time, because people tend to be more hedonistic and egoistic and put a distance between one another. That is the reason why John has to come and speak to a therapist. He craves communication because he cannot establish it with his wife, friends, neighbours, or even with his brother. John is in need of someone to understand him. As Patrick Maley expresses it, “[e]schewing the solidarity conventions of soliloquy, McPherson's characters ponder in public, speaking to others, continuing their journey towards self-understanding along paths already populated by indispensable others” (2).

Like John, in the second scene Neasa, Ian's ex-girlfriend, expresses that she feels the pressure of loneliness and having no one to talk to around. In this scene, Ian tells her that he does not want to be with Neasa anymore though he will still look after her and the baby. Neasa thinks it is because of what happened between her and Mark Whelan,

yet, Ian actually has no idea that she cheated on him. According to Neasa, she betrayed him because she “was just always on my own! [. . .] I just . . . I didn’t have anyone even that I could just have a normal talk to” (22). She is staying with their baby in the house of Ian’s brother where she is not welcomed because the brother and his wife think that Neasa has “ruined your [Ian’s] life” (16). Neasa is also very uncomfortable because the wife of Ian’s brother treats her as if “I’m going to rob something” (18). At the time, Ian was working non-stop, and Neasa had no one around. So on her break with Ian, she went to Mark Whelan’s flat because she just did not want to go to the house of Ian’s brother and because, she says, “Mark just, would always ask me if I was alright, and how I was getting on . . . [. . .] I just believed him, when he asked” (22-23). She tried to fill the emotional void she was in and recover from the sense of loneliness with Mark Whelan, a friend. Yet, the nature of their relationship turned into something else, Neasa and Mark “both felt terrible after it” (23). As Robert Falls, a director, comments on the play, it concerns “[h]ow communication is extremely difficult for all of us and essential. It’s a play, for me, they’re reaching out to make connections in a sort of . . . very modern, hectic, complex world, where it’s just as easy to become isolated and alone as to reach out to another human being” (8-9). Lack of communication is the key driver leading the characters like John and Nease to isolation and alienation from family, friends and the community. These traditional structures existing in rural Ireland are shattered by the urban way of living because people’s priorities change as familial and communal norms are undermined as an outcome of urbanisation and modernisation. Giles et al. state that

[i]n the face of these global movements people may feel detached from the older identities that defined previous generations and may [. . .] see themselves as ‘creatures of the planet’. This may express a sense of alienation and detachment or it may involve resistance to the socio-cultural effects of global capitalism through the assertion of a new ethics based on a sense of global citizenship and responsibility. (47)

Thus, “the ways in which we are able to act, respond and see ourselves may be shaped by the material and economic circumstances of our environment” (37) and lead to the emergence of multiple identities which are inclusive rather than exclusive, when the exclusive definition of Irishness at the beginning of the nation-building period in the early twentieth century is taken into account. Hence, in *Shining City*, Irishness is

defined as a more globalised and Europeanised identity in the light of the new economic and socio-cultural circumstances.

The characters' growing isolation and individualism is unveiled by means of the monologues and supernatural elements indispensable to McPherson's theatre. Peter Marks expresses that "[t]he special McPherson touch is an ability to endow characters with the gift of lyrical confession and his stories with audience-pleasing whiffs of the supernatural. Ghosts always seem to be hovering in the wings of his plays, and death is a lively preoccupation" ("Quite the Head Turner"). McPherson communicates through confessions, stories and ghosts in his plays. Here in *Shining City* he employs storytelling in the form of therapy séance between a therapist and his patient, unlike the setting of *The Weir*, a traditional pub in rural Ireland. The setting is important in that it reminds one more of a confession between a priest and a person considering the confidential atmosphere of the therapy room. It therefore seems to have a religious overtone. In that sense, the therapist, Ian, and the patient, John, assume the roles of a priest and a confessor respectively. Nevertheless, these roles are not fixed. Sometimes there is a reversal of roles between the patient and therapist or the storyteller and listener. Normally the priest directs the confessor to penance and then to absolution, but here it is seen that John helps Ian achieve an awareness of the meaning of his life. As mentioned earlier in the introduction, the monologue form adopted in the 1990s refers to the people deciding and speaking up for themselves. It no longer evokes the Church deciding and speaking in the name of people, which is manifested through the reversed roles of John and Ian.

Besides, according to Ariel Watson, "[t]his is a fundamentally diegetic play, an exploration of storytelling and identity-construction. As such, it takes place in a quintessentially contemporary space, a space where the individual reveals him – or herself to a complete stranger, a space of unidirectional intimacy" (204). Consequently, for McPherson's characters, narrative is very important because they all crave to tell their stories so as to both discover and understand themselves not only in rural Ireland but also in urban Ireland. Narrative "can be plea for sympathy, an act of expiation, an affirmation of sanity, an effort to conquer or seduce, or a confession" (Cummings 311) in McPherson's plays. John's therapy sessions after seeing the ghost of his wife are a

form of looking for sanity, of confession of his betrayal or of consolation and sympathy. It is the same for Neasa who has no one to talk with and to listen to her. They are so disconnected that there is nothing they can do but seek a connection to someone. In his interview with Wood, Conor McPherson explains his characters' need for communication which is explored through the storytelling in the form of monologue:

Irish people are more concerned about the inner life ... and the inner response. A monologue gets into what people really think, which is entertaining and exciting because people don't normally tell us what they really think. It is also what they think makes sense. Or what they think sounds rational. But they don't actually express the more primal thing, which is the voice that is in there. ("An Interview" 140)

McPherson's monologue/storytelling mainly goes along with the supernatural, namely the ghost of John's wife Mari. After meeting his brother, John tells Ian that when he came to the house, he saw his deceased wife in front of him and that he "could only see half of her, behind the door, looking out at me. Eh ... but I could see that ... her hair was soaking wet, and all plastered to her face. And I, I fucking jumped, you know?" (11). He thought it was because of "the fucking grief I suppose" (13). Yet the next day, after having a bath, he says,

I was lying there and I thought I, I thought I heard something, you know? Like ... someone in the house. Just not even a noise, just a feeling. You can just feel, you know, don't you? When someone is there. But I, I just turned off the radio, just to see if ... and then I heard her, she was knocking on the door and going ... [. . .] 'John! John!' (13)

Since then, he has not gone to the house, and now he is planning to sell the house. He asks Ian if he believes him because he needs the affirmation that he is not crazy. Conor McPherson explains that

Shining City (*sic*) is about a ghost. It's a ghost story but what is a ghost in a play except a metaphor for unfinished business, the stuff people are haunted by. This usually revolves around the idea of what you should and shouldn't have done. The weight of that and the regrets and guilt that come with it. ("Conor McPherson Interview")

The ghost is a demonstration of something unfulfilled, unfinished or regretted in the past. It "appears where there is a space left by loss, inhabiting the absence until it is properly grieved and understood" (Ferguson 6).

In the third scene, John again comes to see Ian for his therapy séance. He begins to tell that he and Mari were invited to a party in which they both desperately wanted to meet new people. At this party, John met Vivien who is a wealthy married woman with four children. They started a relationship after the party, and John felt like “[t]here’s someone in the world who actually cares about how I’m getting on, you know?” (31) similar to Neasa feeling the same about Mark Whelan. But, at the same time, he had feelings of guilt towards Mari whom he bought a red coat which she was wearing when the accident happened. One day, he and Vivien went to the Killiney Court Hotel together but could not go further than a kiss. This meeting affected John deeply. He could not talk to his wife and as a result “felt so isolated and cut off and like there was nothing in my life to look forward” (35). Having seen the advertisement of a brothel, he went there “hoping that whatever was going to happen was going to give me some relief, you know? Not a sexual thing, I don’t ... [think]” (36). There, he made a payment and began to wait, but no one came for him and he decided to go leave taking back his money. However, let alone returning his money, a man there hit him in the stomach making John numb with pain. Yet the attacker consoled him by saying, “[y]ou’ll be alright, you’ll be alright ...” (38) which causes John to be grateful to the man. Later, going back to the house frustrated, he exploded to Mari and “grabbed her by shoulders and I shook her. I shook her so hard. I could feel how small and helpless she was. [. . .] she curled herself up into a little ball there down beside the bin. And the sobs just came out of her, you know?” (38). Nevertheless, what he did to Mari eventually weighs on his heart, and John cannot come to terms with this feeling. He thinks he killed his wife metaphorically, and he is unsure about whether she as a ghostly presence is to hurt him or to save him. This feeling of guilt and his not coming over it cause him to be haunted by his deceased wife.

Roche explains that “[t]he simultaneity underscores the extent to which onstage ghosts have been a feature of plays in the 1990s. In one sense, they are a dramatic means of dramatising the persistence of the past in the present, a particularly if not exclusively Irish obsession” (*Contemporary Irish* 250). The ghost as a “persistence of the past in the present” represents the Irish psyche which mourns the past and is entrapped in it. This compulsive commitment to the past implies uncompleted or unachieved accomplishments or events. The ghosts in the Irish context are, according to Cousin,

remnants of the unsettled past because the Irish have difficulty in reconciling with the past (30) as in the case of John's experience. Ferguson explains this situation in her dissertation entitled "The Ghost in the Irish Psyche: Ghost Stories in Contemporary Irish Literature":

[The] writers in Ireland were finding no outlet in the culture for expressing anxieties about sexual abuse and family breakdowns that were festering beneath the glittering economic miracle. It is the artist's responsibility to create new narratives suited to address the gap between the supposed brightness of the country and the unspeakable darkness of its secrets. (8-9)

Despite the illusion of "shining" Ireland, Irish people had their ups and downs— mostly downs – which are reflected through the narratives full of ghostly appearances in the 1990s and the early 2000s Irish drama. McPherson makes it clear that "*Shining City* is about what it means to be haunted. By the past, by our regrets, by our wishes for the future, by the stupid things we do, by our own unfinished business" ("Conor McPherson – Interviews"). So, it can be said that *Shining City* is perhaps an attempt to heal this haunted psyche through micro-narratives like the ones told during Ian's séances.

Through these narratives, Conor McPherson also explores familial and sexual relationships among the characters, holding a mirror to the debates and controversies of contemporary Ireland and Irishness. The traditional rural way of life living in Ireland was characterised by large families that could meet the necessities of working on the farm. Yet emigration to urban areas modified the structure of family in addition to the balance of population. In the urban part, families shrank in size and turned into nuclear families or the smallest units of society because they did not need to have many children to help on the land anymore. The change in the family size and structure was also due to the fact that Irish women began to attend the workforce, leading to the redefinition of their roles as mothers and carers described in the 1937 Constitution of De Valera. As Fahey et al. state, "the stabilisation in birth rates after 1995 was driven by an upsurge in new family formation rather than by any reversion to larger family sizes: many more women had a first child, in most cases soon followed by a second, but fewer women had the five- or six-child families of the past" (165). In other words, urbanisation and modernisation transformed the demographic features of Ireland. Irish families are presently much smaller because "[t]he rationalist economic discourse of modernity tends to focus very much on the individual as worker and as consumer, and perhaps as

citizen. There is much focus on individual rights and actions in ‘the market’ and the family is seen within this context as somewhat anachronistic” (Share et al. 255). Therefore, the traditional family life with a larger population is on the wane in Ireland. Furthermore, the marriage pattern is altered. Before, they generally started the family, which was and is still preached as an important institution by the Church, with marriage. Now marriage is not seen as a necessity. Single parents bringing up children and children out of wedlock are becoming more common day by day. This indicates that the Irish socio-cultural as well as religious norms are loosened to a great extent. Whereas they still have normative structures, they are more like formalities in the eye of many in contemporary Ireland. This situation shows clearly that what was defined as a traditional Irish family by the Church and the Constitution is undermined in contemporary times.

In *Shining City*, John and Mari’s marriage was not a happy one because John thinks there was something missing in their lives, which they could not name, and they did not have a healthy communication. When Mari died in a car accident, John did not know where Mari was going or coming from at that time, because they had no idea what the other was doing. Lack of communication distanced them from each other. John believes that this resulted from having no children. Even their house was too big for them, as John states, “if there had been kids, okay, but, you know, that didn’t happen” (51). He thinks that “we’d been slightly left behind, a little bit, you know? All our ... all our friends, they, you know, they had families. And, that ... that ... bound them together, you know?” (27). So, in *Shining City*, a family with the children is apparently proposed to be a remedy for the spouses’ loneliness and lack of communication. However, on the other hand, Ian and Neasa’s unsuccessful relationship with the baby Aisling shows that having children does not necessarily bring happiness. Ian does not want to continue with Neasa even if despite the fact that they have a child together:

IAN: But this is not about the baby!

NEASA: What are you talk... How can it not be about the baby?!

IAN (*Shouts*): Because it’s not about that! Because it’s about that *I* can’t continue with *you*! With you and me! (17)

The disconnection between the couples leads them to adulterous affairs as a result of their desire for a connection with someone as illustrated by Neasa's affair with Mark Whelan who helps her ease her burdens as a friend for a while and John's relationship with Vivien who makes him feel like or think that he is being taken seriously and that there is someone caring for him in the whole world. Unable to get along well with their own partners, these characters resort to adultery as an escape, yet it all ends up in failure, regret and frustration. Generally speaking, the relationships in the play, in or out of marriage, are dysfunctional. Even if couples are together, they are still alienated from each other. The family, promoted by the Church and as the basic unit of the State, is not only changing but also dissolving. The large and close-knit family type in rural Ireland is reversed into small and fragmented kind of family. Weeks expresses the disintegration of the family in his "Sexuality, Intimacy and Politics":

On the one hand there are many who bemoan the decline of 'the traditional family' and all that was associated with that. On the other, for the many who do not live in a conventional relationship, the ideology of the family still dominates to the extent that there is no real alternative legitimation to that of the family itself, no other way for expressing our need for relationships. The traditional connection between marriage, the family and sexuality has been in part severed; but in its place we have no obvious single alternative – rather a plurality of forms. (101)

The ideal family unit, concerning both the State and the Church to a high degree, is broken down. As seen in *Shining City*, the family is now decentred. It can now consist of many alternatives like non-married couples or single parents or small families rather than large ones. In the play, Ian and Neasa have a baby out of wedlock. John and Mari establish a two-people family without any children. Therefore, it means that what constitutes Irishness requires a new definition contrary to what the early twentieth-century Ireland constructed as the Irish identity. Obviously enough, Irishness is not exclusive, but it embodies a plurality of identities as witnessed in most of modern societies.

Besides the decentred Irish family, abortion and divorce are also among the main controversies in the urban life of Irish society which reflects the dichotomous attitudes of the Irish. The reason for this dichotomy is that the Irish, on the one hand, have a strong religious background and, on the other, they defy the strict restrictions the Catholic Church imposes on them. As a matter of fact, it seems that today religious

belief in Ireland is to a large extent individualised and rationalised. In *Shining City*, Ian has a traditional perspective on abortion in that he thinks it is wrong maybe due to his past as a priest. When Neasa gets pregnant she says to Ian: “I even said then we should leave it and we should wait until we have some more money – I said, ‘This is too soon.’ YOU SAID, ‘NO’, YOU SAID, ‘NO, NOT TO DO THAT!’ Because you thought it was ‘wrong’! Now look!” (19). Ian defends himself saying they were not expecting this pregnancy: “[b]ecause I was shocked when you got pregnant, we both were. I thought we both were” (22). The Irish, in fact, engaged in debates about abortion, contraceptives, divorce and homosexuality in the 1960s, which transformed the general pattern of their society in terms of sexual and familial issues. As can be understood from the dialogue between Ian and Neasa, they use contraceptives and have sex out of wedlock. However, Ian still thinks that abortion is wrong, following the rules of the Church, which seems to be a perfect example of the conflicting approaches in Irish society. According to Allen,

a different sexual morality has developed to challenge the deeply held beliefs of Irish Catholicism. The core of that new morality revolves around a notion of choice and right of people to control their own bodies. It asserts that neither the state nor the bishops should dictate how people conduct their sex lives. (163)

These words reflect the new outlook Ireland in the 2000s as well as the definition of Irishness. Regardless of the Catholic teachings dominant since the late nineteenth century, the Irish tend to adopt an individualised way of believing or not to believe at all in terms of issues like family, sexuality and marriage. The modern way of life brings along new perspectives to Irish society enabling them to live much freer without the constraints of the Church.

From the 1990s onwards, as Weeks states, Irish “[p]eople are generally more accepting of birth control, abortion, divorce, pre-marital sex, cohabitation of non-married partners and divorce, and of homosexuality” (96). The new face of Ireland is not a homogeneous but a heterogeneous one. It promotes plurality and diversity even though there is rising racism in society as a result of immigration. Hence, in *Shining City*, the playwright depicts different layers of familial and sexual relationships. The affair he has with a male prostitute, firstly makes Ian feel awkward which he discloses saying, “Yeah ... Yeah ... (Pause.) I’ve never eh ... I’ve never gone up there, before, you know? I’ve

never ... this is the ... I mean ... Do you, do ... I, do you, do I pay you now, or do I ...?" (43). Never being with a man before, Ian is sexually confused. Yet through his relationship with Laurence, he discovers his repressed desires. To consider Ian's situation in more detail, he tries to adapt to the socially-constructed role of a male. He has a girlfriend and is a father. It is expected from him to establish a family in compliance with the received norms. He behaves like a heterosexual man by denying his sexuality or part of his sexuality. As Kevin Wallace indicates, Neasa is there for him "to reinforce norms for gender and society; norms of fatherhood, heterosexual relationships and career success, norms for masculinity" (95). Maybe this is one of the reasons why Ian abandoned the priesthood which defies homosexuality. In Ireland, homosexuality and other sexual orientations except for heterosexuality have "challenged dominant discourses of national and cultural identity" (Share et al. 275).

In terms of sexual and familial dilemmas, although Ian is a therapist, he cannot find any solution to his own problems. However, his séances with John help Ian analyse himself alongside his patient. He also tries to come to terms with the sense of guilt he feels for leaving everything behind, the church, his girlfriend and daughter as well as his sexual tendencies (Hill 104). Giddens states that "many men are unable to construct a narrative of self that allows them to come to terms with an increasingly democratised and reordered sphere of personal life" (*The Transformation* 117). So, therapy becomes a sort of revelation for them to narrate themselves as Ian describes it to Laurence: "[w]here maybe they get a bit stuck. And maybe I can just invite them to consider something that maybe they didn't think was that important before, but, you know, maybe it was ... and ... [...] It's ... about perceiving reality, I suppose" (45). Ian himself is somewhat "stuck" and needs to understand that reality. His confusion about his sexuality and his escapist approach makes the situation more complicated for him since if he does not acknowledge who he is, he will be unsettled for the rest of his life. Kathryn Conrad makes the assertion that

[L]ike gender, sexuality does not confine itself within the borders. Any identity category potentially troubles the national border, but homosexuality in particular threatens the stability of the narrative of Nation: the very instability and specific historical contingency of the definition of homosexuality makes the category more fluid than most, and thus brings into question the fixity and coherence of all identity categories. (125)

The fluidity of identity refutes this normativeness about sexuality or gender. Thus, Ian resists normative heterogeneity imposed on him by having an affair with Laurence. This homosexual affair is also a result of the individualist approach brought by the modernisation of society because “[i]ndividualization is a social process which dis-embeds the individual from the weight but also from the protection of traditional structures. New opportunities but also new uncertainties are the inevitable result” (Weeks 96).

Religion has a distinct role in the definition of Irishness. Influencing many aspects of their society, Catholicism becomes a remarkable and indispensable entity for the Irish. Yet, as O’Toole sets forth, “[a]s Ireland has moved in recent decades from a largely rural and traditional society to a largely modern and urban one, the relationship of its people to power has changed” (*The Lie* 110). The Church is no longer the power-holder. Instead, individuals have the power to talk now in contemporary Ireland. As Timothy J. White asserts, “the privatization of religiosity accompanies the secularization of the society. Tolerance of differing religions and patterns of belief become the norm and a more pluralistic and ecumenical society is the result” (“The Impact” 9). However, religion continues to be regarded as an inevitable mark of the Irish cultural identity even if religious practices are not carried out. Conor McPherson acknowledges the place religion holds in the lives of the Irish in between the lines in *Shining City*. During his talk with Neasa, Ian reveals that he actually took a huge step by abandoning priesthood:

I ... I’ll always ... I mean, you have been ... you were the only ... when ... when it was all so hard for me ... And I had to make that big decision – and it was a *huge* thing for me – (*As though he has accomplished something completely unthinkable.*) to turn my back on the church?! – that was a *huge* thing for me. You were there for me, and I couldn’t have some through it without you. (20)

Considering the upheavals of the 1990s resulting from the scandals created by the Church, Ian’s abandonment of priesthood can be seen as unavoidable due to the decrease of trust in and respect for the Church. Yet, in the play, there is no overt manifestation of the scandals. The reason for Ian’s forsaking of religion is probably the individualisation of religion and of the crises about his familial and sexual identity like fatherhood, husbandhood or homosexuality or about Neasa’s demand for an abortion which are the most oversensitive and critical issues for the Catholic Church in Ireland.

As for abortion, Ian does not approve of abortion regardless of the circumstances, following his instinctual religious learning. Yet he has a homosexual experience, which is against the Catholic norms. McPherson explains this dilemma of Ian in his interview with Caroline McGinn: “It’s what you’re battling against. The belief you’re inculcated with as a young person is difficult to shake, which is why prejudice is so endemic in the world” (“Interview: Conor McPherson”). In other words, the religious norms with which one was brought up affects one’s whole life. Consequently, Catholicism, even if it not practised as vehemently as before, is seen as a main component of Irishness in the play.

However, in Ireland modernisation brings not only new perspectives on these controversial issues, but also doubt in everything. Giddens expresses that “[d]oubt, a pervasive feature of modern critical reason, permeates into everyday life as well as philosophical consciousness, and forms a general existential dimension of the contemporary social world” (*Modernity* 4). For instance, Ian believes that people “know nothing really” (55). He really wants to go through John’s experience to make sense of the world. Ian is, in fact, an agnostic. He wants “besides all the ... you know ... the pain and the confusion. Just something that gave everything ... *some* meaning, you know? I’m talking about God, really, you know?” (54, italics in orig.). Ian experiences a crisis of faith and represents an ambivalent approach to religion with the conflicts he finds himself in. The exclusive definition of Irishness as rural, agrarian and Catholic, thus, begins to be shattered by emerging identities in terms of sexuality and religion. In his interview with Patrick Brennan, McPherson states that

I’m not one hundred per cent sure what God means to most people. He could be their father. It could be that personal. I personally am like a lot of people as well who are caught in the middle of this human condition. We’ve no idea that there’s any salvation or meaning but the brave thing we is we admit we’ve no idea and it’s within this confusion that we try to operate as human beings. (“Conor McPherson Interview”)

The end of the play is a real twist in the action. In the last scene, John comes to visit Ian. It seems they are both moving on. John no longer sees his wife’s ghost; he has even met a woman. Ian also is going to Limerick with Neasa, now his fiancé, with the intention to start a new life there. Ian then, as quoted above too, articulates his desire to have John’s

experience to believe that there is “*some meaning*” (54). Following that, McPherson closes the play with a shockingly macabre end. The direction reads:

We hear the outer door slam shut. In the distance we hear the faint sound of an ice-cream van’s music. [. . .]

In the darkening gloom of the afternoon, we see that MARI’s ghost has appeared behind the door. She is looking at IAN, just as JOHN described her; she wears her red coat, which is filthy, her hair is wet. She looks beaten up. She looks terrifying.

IAN has his back to her at his desk, going through some old post. But he seems to sense something and turns.

Lights down. (55-56)

The appearance of the ghost for Ian on the stage can be regarded as an optimistic end because it means that Ian will go through the same experience as John and will reconcile with himself and his problems. Now Ian has what he desired. The ghost’s appearance at the end “underlines his [Ian’s] inability to reflect on his own life and to be true to his own desires rather than the social pressures he feels” (K. Wallace 91). He will remain haunted until he articulates his feelings and yearnings like John who gets rid of being haunted, because John absolves himself from his past and feeling of guilt with the help of Ian who functions like a priest hearing confessions. Patrick Maley contends that “John had exorcised the demon through linguistic self-analysis, and Ian’s avoidance of such engagement brings haunting upon him. *Shining City* condemns Ian for never giving an account of himself” (13) in the end. On the other hand, in the last part of the play, John gives Ian an antique lamp as a gift to thank him for helping him go through his own traumatic experience. As mentioned earlier, the word “shining” in the title points to an irony, to the discrepancy between the material attraction of the city and its spiritual dimness. It is also metaphorical for the redemption of the characters. As Dantanus states, “[i]t [shining] is part of the pattern of seeing/not seeing (light and darkness) in the play” (282). Taking the lamp and seeing the ghost of Mari in the end may imply Ian’s salvation, his going into the light. Yet, he is still supposed to utter his repressed desires or real tendencies, as John has done.

To further dwell on the religious dimension of *Shining City*, the play displays such a dichotomous sense of religious identity through the character of Ian who has doubts

about this identity but who still embodies it culturally. Religion manifests its power especially on the issues of sexuality and family. Abortion and divorce are seen as threats to the integrity of the family which is promoted above everything else by the Church. Heterosexuality is urged for the continuity of the integrity of the family. So, homosexuality and other sexual orientations are seen as dangerous and shameful from the point of view of the already-defined Irishness. Starting from the 1990s, for all these issues, the Irish have become more flexible despite the preaching of the Church because, as O'Mahony and Delanty affirm, "[a] civil society controlled by the Church was not able to organise itself in a modern way. The society could not go forward because it had difficulty in critically examining its own orientation due to its institutionalisation of a 'timeless' model of national identity" (158). Since identity is something mutable and inconstant, Irishness was redefined under the incipient circumstances of the 1990s and the early 2000s. The conceptions of religion, sexuality, and family which had used to dominate Ireland evolved to be more inclusive in contemporary Ireland.

Overall, *Shining City* is a representation of the urban Irish identity constructed as a result of modernisation and urbanisation that developed in Ireland from the 1990s to the early 2000s. The play depicts dysfunctional and disconnected families or couples struggling with their loneliness and desire for communication. Individualism, as an outcome of city life and modernisation, affects the structure of their relationships. In the play, therapy functions as a way of storytelling that enables the distressed city dwellers to express themselves. As monologues, which allow internal and more personal revelations, the séances or storytelling sessions become personal statements about their selves. Thus, the play explores and represents the contemporary approaches of the Irish to sexuality, family and religion which are modified as a result of rather individualised and modern tendencies and events. Finally, the new Ireland, as seen in *Shining City*, has an inclusive identity in contrast to what Irishness previously meant. Ireland is no longer rural or traditional but urban and modern now.

CONCLUSION

“Identity then is never a static location,
it contains traces of its past and what it is to become.

It is contingent, a provisional full stop
in the play of differences and the narrative of our own lives”

--Jonathan Rutherford, “A Place Called Home”

The Irish identity was deconstructed and reconstructed again and again under the changing conditions of Ireland and across the world. Firstly, it was defined as Gaelic, Catholic and rural as a result of the national reclamation against the British colonial ascendancy of many decades. Secondly, even if the urban Irish identity began to be represented after the 1920s, especially by O’Casey, the essentialised Irish identity was challenged in the 1960s. Unquestionable issues like sexuality, contraceptives, abortion, divorce and homosexuality – all of which were and are still resisted by the Catholic Church whose influence on the Irish politics was undeniable – started to be called into question. This was the first step of a change in Irish society, yet an uncompleted one. Then thirdly, the initial description of Irishness was defied in the 1990s as a result of the huge economic growth in Ireland called the Celtic Tiger era. The controversial issues in Irish society being questioned but shunned since the 1960s led to the redefinition of Irishness. In the 1990s, Irishness became much more inclusive than before, and as a result of globalisation and urbanisation, the Irish identity became more urban, plural and modern rather than rural, isolationist, conservative and religion-based.

Conor McPherson, even though he claims that he does not write his plays deliberately on the basis of Irishness and Ireland, does reflect his changing country. This thesis has put forward that McPherson’s plays *The Weir* and *Shining City* represent the changing Irish identity from rural to urban. In *The Weir*, rural Ireland with its local colours is portrayed as the old Ireland on the eve of a change. It is therefore evaluated as a transition play to *Shining City*. *Shining City*, depicts urban Ireland with its “shining” city life which brings along individualism leading to Dubliners’ isolation and alienation

from one another because values such as family, community and neighbourliness preached previously as part of Irishness lose their meaning in the city. There, a new sense of Irishness that is urban, modern, less Catholic yet religious, racially and sexually heterogeneous, Europeanised and globalised is presented. It seems therefore important to point out the conclusions one can draw from a comparative analysis of these two plays.

The Weir and *Shining City* introduce the dichotomy between rural and urban Ireland and Irishness. *The Weir* presents traditional Irishness in its rural context through communal ties and an attachment to the land as important elements of Irishness. The land is very important for the traditional Irishness as both a way of living and an outcome of the historical legacy of British colonialism. As a matter of fact, the Irish have a sense of place identity which is revealed through the tradition of *dinnsheanchas*. So the land is regarded as “part of a unifying repository of community knowledge” (Nash 51). Brendan in the play possesses a sense of territorial identity as manifested in his resistance to sell his land even if he does not use it. This is because he associates his identity with the land and attributes a sacred meaning to the land. On the other hand, in *Shining City*, urban Ireland is portrayed to challenge traditional Irishness throughout the play. Dublin is described as an attractive city with all its potentialities, yet the characters are unfulfilled in many ways. As stated before, the city is abominable in the Irish context due to its colonial implications as well as decay of morality and values as a result of modernisation. City life does not promote an attachment to the land because the land is now stripped of its “survival” meaning, considering the transformation from rural to urban way of living. So in the play, the characters seem to be so displaced that they do not have any commitment to any place but are always on the move. John, for instance, does not stay at his house because of his wife’s ghost; Ian uses his place as both a house and an office. Ian’s girlfriend Neasa is staying at Ian’s brother’s house. They are dislocated and do not have any sense of belonging. Thus, *Shining City* displays “a specific type of urban environment from which the idea of belonging is constantly denied” (Keating 33).

Displacement is also suggested by the absence or fewness of women characters in these two plays. In fact, *The Weir* is an exception with the first female character of

McPherson's theatre. She tells a story of her own, and she is also visible on the stage rather than being the subject of a male-told story or playing a supportive role to men. Even though McPherson's plays are male-dominated and he deals with the crisis of masculinity mostly, in *The Weir* and *Shining City* the playwright gives a chance to women characters, like Valerie and Neasa, too, to express themselves. In these plays, female figures are the lost ones like Valerie's daughter Niamh and John's wife Mari. These women return from death as the ghosts haunting the present lives of the rest which implies that they are displaced on earth. As mentioned in the chapters, these female figures stand for the Irish psyche, its "inability to get beyond the haunting memories of the past" (Ferguson 36). The supernatural narrative discloses an obsession with or entrapment within the past for the Irish, which has often been explored in Irish literature since the 1990s. In McPherson's plays, the sense of guilt and loss surface through the ghost on the stage.

On the other hand, considering the nationalist policy in the early twentieth century, the woman figure was associated with Ireland as a representation of the nation, which was invaded and exploited by the British coloniser but which was always ready to sacrifice herself for her children as seen in Yeats's *Cathleen ni Houlihan* (1902). Thus, feminisation of Ireland in contrast to the male coloniser symbolises purity and ideal motherhood for the nationalist polity. By taking into account Irishness which is in transition from rural to urban, ghostly figures of women in these plays mirror the fading of the traditional imagery of Mother Ireland (Adanur). *The Weir* depicts the fading traditional Irishness and changing Ireland during the Celtic Tiger period. On the other hand, *Shining City* reflects an urban and modern Ireland and Irishness in a contemporary world. The ghosts of women represent not only the disconnection from the land or rural Ireland but also the disruption of traditional values such as familial, communal and religious identity alongside the national identity attributed to the image of Mother Ireland. Consequently, the ghosts of women in *The Weir* and *Shining City* like the one staring on the stairs, or Valerie's daughter, and the ghost of Mari respectively represent not only the unfinished business of the past and guilty conscience showing itself in the present but also the weakening of traditional Irishness constructed in the early twentieth century.

Rural Ireland poses a communal type of identity whereas urban Ireland presents individualism, since lifestyles vary with the existing circumstances. In *The Weir*, McPherson presents a communal identity in rural Ireland. Characters like Brendan, Jim and Jack gather in an Irish pub where they find solace and company together by drinking, gossiping and chatting despite their monotonous lives. The play depicts the old Ireland reminiscent of an atmosphere in which a *seanchaí* tells some fairy stories to the Irish community by the fireside. They share their loneliness through the stories. As Mathews states, “McPherson seems to foreground a particular form of social relations which values mutual concern over individualism and self-regard” (155). Yet this environment is about to be disrupted by outsiders. Valerie comes from Dublin to this small community to find some peace from the city life and gets integrated into the pub community immediately as a threat to the soothing atmosphere the others accomplished to create there. In fact, the function of Valerie is to manifest the change in rural Ireland. She is an outsider and a Dubliner, both of which can be acknowledged as elements of xenophobia in the Irish context. Besides, the tourists, ‘the Germans’ are about to arrive, which is seen as a menace to the cultural unity. The influence of the Celtic Tiger economy and the changing Ireland are reflected by the tourists’ flow to the countryside hassling the locals and by the interference of Valerie in this rural community. *The Weir* displays gradual shifts in attitudes and perception within Irish society whereas *Shining City* reproduces modern values and norms.

Unlike the communal spirit of *The Weir*, *Shining City* exhibits individualism and the decline of communal values. When John sees his wife’s ghost, he has no one to go and talk about it, not even a neighbour or a family member. He has not communicated even with his brother for a very long time until the funeral. Ian, it seems, has no friends around to talk to, and his relationship with his family sounds superficial. City life weakens relationships which are more inclined to be individualistic. Alienation and isolation are pervasive and the characters in *Shining City* do not have any company to share their loneliness unlike those in *The Weir* frequenting the pub because individualism precedes communal solidarity and care in the modern and global world. This individualism has engendered various beliefs and identities “going beyond a diversity of sexual activities to a wide range of patterns of relationships reflecting generational, cultural, ethnic, communal and political difference” (Weeks 93).

One may without reservation claim that Conor McPherson is an accomplished storyteller. In both plays, he employs the storytelling technique in a remarkable manner, integrating it into various contexts. As a reflection of traditional and modern contexts, the playwright adopts in *The Weir* a rural Irish pub and in *Shining City* a therapy séance. Nevertheless, both of them employ storytelling/monologue via either a storyteller and a listener, or a therapist and a patient. Storytelling in these plays functions as a confession and a revelation of the past, of feelings such as guilt and loneliness, and in the end as a redemption for the characters. Maybe this last outcome implies a religious overtone as McPherson states in his interview with Wood: “[T]here is something very beautiful about it [Catholicism]. The idea of forgiveness and redemption. I guess it is kind of the culture of the hangover, you know” (“An Interview” 139). Storytelling/monologue is a way for the Irish to express themselves in personal and private terms. Before the 1990s, Irishness was all about national narratives to affirm its independent existence as a legacy of British colonialism. However, Ireland was changing in the 1990s and so was Irishness. The traditional Irishness was replaced by the modern and urban Irish identity in the Celtic Tiger era.

Both *The Weir* and *Shining City* deal with marriage, family and sexuality, which are always protected and preached by the State and the Church. The former play describes them in the rural and traditional Irish context while the latter depicts the changed patterns and new understandings of family and sexuality in an urban framework. *The Weir* illustrates celibate lives and sex out of wedlock with its bachelor characters and pattern of emigration to urban areas, especially to Dublin, all regarded as Irish local colours. Brendan, Jack and Jim are lonely bachelors spending most of their time together in Brendan’s pub chatting and drinking. Jack who is in his fifties is the oldest of them all, and he let his girlfriend go to Dublin in the 1960s when there were better opportunities for the young in urban places like Dublin as a result of the economic progress of the time. Rural economy does not provide any economic advancement; therefore, people in general seek their fortune in the urban cities. Finbar, as a case in point, moves to the city and becomes a rich businessman or investor there. However, during the Celtic Tiger years, emigration pattern reverses from urban to rural as well as from abroad to Ireland. This is because city life renders people alienated with its complexity and crowd. The Irish, like Valerie in the play, escape into the rural parts of

the country to find peace. As can be seen, *The Weir* handles the changing Ireland in the light of the economic improvement achieved during the Celtic Tiger years despite the resistance of Brendan, Jack and Jim who define themselves on the basis of the rural and communal sense of belonging. According to Mathews, “the play can be read as an exposé of a disintegrating rural community in which youthful ambition is stunted by a pathological attachment to place” (156).

On the other hand, *Shining City* calls attention to fragmented families or couples and homosexuality in urban Ireland. Ian and Neasa have a daughter out of wedlock, and at the beginning of the play they are about to break up because Ian is confused, most probably about his sexuality. Or even though John and Mari are married, it is an unhappy marriage. Still more, lack of communication and the monotony in their marriage lead John to an adulterous attempt, which makes him feel guilty about his dead wife and begin to see her ghost. Disintegrated couples and families, sexuality out of wedlock and different sexual orientations are all against what the Irish identity was defined in the beginning. However, *Shining City* shows that the Irish become more tolerant and open to new identities and values, which leads to the redefinition of Irishness as a modern and inclusive one. It now encompasses individualism which is described by Bauman as “the emancipation of the individual from the ascribed, inherited and inborn determination of his or her social character: a departure rightly seen as a most conspicuous and seminal feature of the modern condition” (4). It evinces that modern Ireland in *Shining City* leaves behind the essentialised approach of traditional Irishness. This follows the crises of identities in the modern context as underwent by such characters as Ian or John.

As Ferguson states, during the Celtic Tiger period and onwards, “the climate of rapid change and economic growth in Ireland produces a crisis of masculinity for men who are unwilling or unable to adapt to a new global marketplace in which they are no longer integral” (115). Both Ian and John fail in their duty as “men” in such their patriarchal society as they are homosexual and not conventional husbands or fathers. So *Shining City* “illustrates how both [Ian and John] are haunted by their desires and their failed human relationships, and both men are haunted by their deviation from the social roles that they believe they should be playing as men” (K. Wallace 89-90). Unlike *The*

Weir, Shining City portrays decentred and fragmented males who are in the middle of the crisis about who they are in the modern world. Denial of socially ascribed roles opens the ways for alternative definitions for their identity. The plurality of modern Ireland results from this resistance to traditional roles and norms, as in other modern societies.

Regarding Irishness, religion has been the most controversial issue in Ireland because of its power over the politics since the independence. Before that, too, it was always influential enough to regulate familial and sexual issues in Irish society. As a representation of rural Ireland, *The Weir* signals a shift in the religious approach of the Irish, especially in accordance with the circumstances during the Celtic Tiger era. The revelation of paedophile priests in the 1990s turned everything upside down for the Irish and destroyed the trust in and respect for the Catholic Church. Jim's story of a paedophile in the graveyard and Valerie's story about her daughter who is always terrified of seeing a man standing across the road are references to the sex-abuse scandals of the Celtic Tiger period. So, the norms preached by the Church were stripped of their actual meanings due to the hypocrisy of the Church as implicated in the play. The implied divorce of Valerie and Jack's sexual freedom with his girlfriend also depict the changing norms. *The Weir*, in a way, reflects the Irish psyche and trauma after the sexual scandals shattering the position of the Church in the Irish cultural lifestyle. In short, *The Weir* reflects a shift in people's approach to sexuality, family and religion which were always under the control of the Church, and shows the change in Ireland by putting the old and the new side by side.

On the other hand, *Shining City* displays a religious void which drives the characters to seek some meaning and make sense of what they are going through. The play also deals with other controversial issues like abortion, contraceptives and homosexuality seen, in particular by the Church, as threats to the heterosexual family in Irish society. Ian is known as an ex-priest, and he has an agnostic and dichotomous approach to religion. His girlfriend Neasa wants to have an abortion, which he does not accept thinking it is wrong probably owing to his background as a priest. Furthermore, it is understood through his affair with a male prostitute that Ian is unsettled by his sexual tendencies. These mean that the changed circumstances in the Ireland of the 2000s following the

economic boom transformed the existing norms and lifestyle and so did the Irish identity. As a result, unlike *The Weir*, *Shining City* demonstrates a more inclusive, urban and modern Irish society.

The Celtic Tiger era brought a globalised economy to Ireland, which shows itself clearly with the capital growth, prosperity, the advent of new modern values and the increase in the number of the tourists coming to the country. Differently from *Shining City*, *The Weir* depicts this process of change and the impact of globalisation on rural Ireland. The local people in *The Weir* feel disturbed by the arrival of the tourists, “the Germans,” even though they bring in capital improving the Irish economy because what is regarded as Irishness is reduced to a product for tourist consumption. For the Irish, tourists are both explorers and invaders of their own territory which “continues to be a significant part of how people organise and give meaning to their lives and create a sense of identity, of who they are and want to become” (Thorns 99). Globalisation and its entry into the rural way of life in Ireland lead to the weakening and clash of cultural values now seen as products for a consumerist market. Some people, like Finbar, profit from consumerist culture whereas others feel nostalgic about the waning traditional values as in the case of Jack and Jim. Even though tourism is profitable for rural Ireland, it is seen disturbing due to its impact on the decadence as well as commodification of the traditional values and identity. Therefore, as Mathew asserts, “it is possible to regard the frosty reception accorded by the locals to ‘the Germans’ as an act of resistance against an encroaching vapid, globalized Irishness, synonymous with faux cultural exuberance and ostentatious conviviality” (158).

However, *Shining City* pictures and embraces the new Ireland which integrates modern and urban, and globalised identities. The play addresses personal and universal issues reflecting the conflicts of identity within the national and global context. Unlike the past, it presents an inclusive and plural sense of identity, an especially heterogeneous society, freedom of sexuality and sexual preferences, and a variety of family structures such as single parents and families out of wedlock. Ireland no longer has a single or one-dimensional definition of Irishness. Irishness now implies various meanings because “Irish society and the Irish theatre underwent a significant transition, [and]

those concerns shifted from national identity, faith and cultural values to economics, sex, gender and demographics” (Morse 1-2).

To sum up, from *The Weir* to *Shining City*, Conor McPherson reflects rural Ireland embodying elements of Irish local colour going through a change under the economic circumstances of the 1990s. These circumstances modified the socio-cultural features or patterns of Ireland and gave way to new values and norms antithetical to the laws of the State and the teachings of the Church. *The Weir* has been examined as a transition play from rural to the urban and modern Irish society described in *Shining City*. Rural Ireland manifesting a territory-based and communal identity in *The Weir* is contrasted with urban Ireland exhibiting individualism and plurality of identity resulting from the urbanised and modern way of living in the city in *Shining City*. As Thorns affirms, in contemporary Ireland,

[t]he greater differentiation that has emerged with a loosening of the moral and social values associated with modernity and the increased emphasis upon individualism and neo-liberalism in the last decades of the previous century [1990s and early 2000s] has created, in many of our cities, a social world based around multiple identities. (98)

Thus, socio-cultural and political environment and developments affect the formation of identities because identity “is seen not as a reflection of a fixed, natural, state of being but as a process of becoming. [. . .] Cultural identity is not an essence but a continually shifting set of subject positions” (Barker 231) as clearly shown through the transitions in Irishness in McPherson’s two plays.

Consequently, the Celtic Tiger period in which the dramatist began to write his plays was influential on his works through its economic and socio-cultural impacts on Irish society. Hill asserts that “as a result of the Celtic Tiger, there has been a dynamic movement away from the agrarian roots of Irish culture, and towards an urban and modern Ireland” (4), which is revealed in *The Weir* and *Shining City* respectively. It is the era of the emergence of individualism, of the fading of traditional values, and of multiple identities. McPherson clearly reflects in these two plays that Ireland is currently more urban, modern and inclusive than it has ever been, being no longer restrained by an exclusive national identity. Ireland is now into the exploration of various possibilities and identities. Consequently, as O’Toole asserts for the Irish

playwrights of the 1990s, “[t]here’s a kind of simple confidence in their work that comes from being able to take for granted the idea that ‘Irish’ is an adjective that covers a multitude of differences” (“Shadows”).

WORKS CITED

PRIMARY SOURCES:

McPherson, Conor. *The Weir. Conor McPherson Plays: Two*. London: Nick Hern, 2004. 11-74. Print.

---. *Shining City. Conor McPherson Plays: Three*. London: Nick Hern, 2013. 1-56. Print.

SECONDARY SOURCES:

Adanur, Evrim Doğan. Personal Interview. 17 Jun. 2016.

Allen, Kieran. *The Celtic Tiger: The Myth of Social Partnership in Ireland*. Manchester and New York: Manchester UP, 2000. *Google Books*. 20 Dec. 2015.

Arensberg, Conrad M. and Solon T. Kimball, eds. *Family and Community in Ireland*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1968. Print.

Barker, Chris. *Cultural Studies Theory and Practice*. London: Sage, 2003. Print.

Bauman, Zygmunt. "Identity in the Globalizing World." *Identity in Question*. Eds. Anthony Elliott and Paul du Gay. London: Sage, 2009. 1-12. Print.

Beck, Ulrich and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim. "Losing the Traditional: Individualization and 'Precarious Freedoms.'" *Identity in Question*. Eds. Anthony Elliott and Paul du Gay. London: Sage, 2009. 13-36. Print.

Beckett, Samuel. "The Expelled." London: Penguin Books, 2011. Print.

Berchild, Christopher Lowell. "Staging Dublin: Urban Representation in Contemporary Irish Drama." Diss. U of California, 2003. *ProQuest*. Web. 19 Mar. 2016.

Bertha, Csilla. "Brian Friel as Postcolonial Playwright." *The Cambridge Companion to Brian Friel*. Ed. Anthony Roche. New York: Cambridge UP, 2006. 154-65. *Bookfi*. Web. 21 Dec. 2013.

- Biletz, Frank A. *Historical Dictionary of Ireland*. Plymouth: Scarecrow, 2014. *Google Books*. Web. 25 Apr. 2016.
- Boyce, D. George. *Nationalism in Ireland*. 2nd ed. London and New York: Routledge, 1991. Print.
- Brantley, Ben. "'Shining City': Conor McPherson's Study of Loneliness in a Crowd." *The New York Times*. 10 May 2006. Web. 11 Mar. 2016
- . "A Most Dramatic Drama Critic." *The New York Times*. 18 Mar. 1998. Web. 20 Feb. 2016.
- Breen, Richard, Damian F. Hannan, David B. Rottman, and Christopher T. Whelan. *Understanding Contemporary Ireland: State, Class and Development in the Republic of Ireland*. London: Gill and Macmillan, 1990. Print.
- Brennan, Paul. "Ireland's Rural Population." *Rural Ireland Real Ireland?* Ed. Jacqueline Genet. Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1996. 31-51. Print.
- Brown, Terence. *Ireland: A Social and Cultural History 1922-2002*. London: Harper Perennial, 2004. Print.
- Carrassi, Vito. "The Precursor of Yeats in the Recovery of the Narrative Tradition." *The Irish Fairy Tale: A Narrative Tradition from the Middle Ages to Yeats and Stephens*. Lanham: John Cabot UP, 2012. 43-58. *Google Books*. Web. 30 Feb. 2016.
- Chambers, Lilian, and Jordan, Eamonn, eds. Introduction. *Theatre of Conor McPherson: Right Beside the Beyond*. Dublin: Carysfort, 2012. 1-19. Print.
- Clancy, Michael. *New Directions in Tourism Analysis: Brand New Ireland? Tourism, Development and National Identity in the Irish Republic*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2016. *Ebrary*. Web. 25 Dec. 2015.
- Clark, Dennis. *The Irish Relations: Trials of an Immigrant Tradition*. London: Associated UP, 1982. *Google Books*. Web. 30 Jan. 2016.

- Clear, Caitriona. *Social Change and Everyday Life in Ireland, 1850-1922*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 2007. *Ebrary*. Web. 2 Feb. 2015.
- Cleary, Joe. "Estranged States: National Literatures, Modernity and Tradition, and the Elaboration of Partitionist Identities." *Literature, Partition and the Nation-State: Culture and Conflict in Ireland, Israel and Palestine*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004. 51-94. Print.
- . "Postcolonial Ireland." *Ireland and British Empire*. Ed. Kevin Kenny. New York: Oxford UP, 2004. 251-88. *Bookfi*. Web. 20 May 2015.
- Connolly, Barry. *The Good Thief*. Bloomington: iUniverse, 2010. *Google Books*. Web. 20 Jun. 2016.
- Conrad, Kathryn. "Queer Treasons: Homosexuality and Irish National Identity." *Cultural Studies* 15.1 (2001): 124-37. *Google Scholar*. 21 Oct. 2010. Web. 28 May 2014.
- Cousin, Geraldine. "Enter the Revenant." *Playing for Time: Stories of Lost Children, Ghosts and the Endangered Present in Contemporary Theatre*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 2007. 28-54. *Google Books*. 9 Apr. 2013. Web. 11 Mar. 2016.
- Coward, John. "Irish Population Problems." *Ireland: Contemporary Perspectives on a Land and its People*. Eds. R. W. G. Carter, and A. J. Parker. London and New York: Routledge, 1989. 55-86. Print.
- Cronin, Michael, and Barbara O'Connor, eds. Introduction. *Irish Tourism: Image, Culture, and Identity*. Clevedon: Channel View, 2003. 1-18. *Ebrary*. Web. 25 Dec. 2015.
- Cronin, Mike. *A History of Ireland*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001. Print.
- Cummings, Scott T. "Homo Fabulator: The Narrative Imperative in Conor McPherson's Plays." Ed. Eamonn Jordan. *Theatre Stuff: Critical Essays on Contemporary Irish Theatre*. Dublin: Carysfort, 2009. 303-12. Print.

- Curtin, Chris, Hastings Donnan and Thomas M. Wilson. "Anthropology and Irish Urban Settings." *Irish Urban Cultures*. Eds. Chris Curtin, Hastings Donnan and Thomas M. Wilson. Belfast: The Queen U of Belfast, 1993. 1-22. Print.
- Çapan, Cevat. *İrlanda Tiyatrosunda Gerçekçilik*. İstanbul: Sözcükler Yayınları, 2014. Print.
- Daly, Mary E. *History of Ireland and the Irish Diaspora: Slow Failure: Population Decline and Independent Ireland, 1920-1973*. Wisconsin: The U of Wisconsin P, 2006.
- Dantanus, Ulf. "The Inner Life of the Nation: Religion, the Otherworld and Death in Con-temporary Irish Drama." *Redefinitions of Irish Identity: A Postnationalist Approach*. Eds. Irene Gilsenan Nordin and Carmen Zamorano Llena. Oxford: Peter Lang, 2010. 267-92. *Ebrary*. Web. 25 Dec. 2015.
- "Dindshenchas." *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Encyclopædia Britannica Online. 2016. Web. 10 May 2016.
- Dingle, Carol A., ed. "Brendan Behan." *Memorable Quotations: Irish Writers of the Past*. New York: Writers Club, 2001. *Google Books*. Web. 10 May 2016.
- De Valera, Eamon. "The Ireland That We Dreamed of." *Speeches and Statements by Eamon De Valera: 1917-73*. Ed. Maurice Moynihan. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1980. *Google Search*. Web. 12 Nov. 2015. PDF file.
- Deane, Seamus. *Strange Country: Modernity and Nationhood in Irish Writing since 1790*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1997. Print.
- Duffy, Patrick J. "Writing Ireland: Literature and art in the Representation of Irish Place." *In Search of Ireland: A Cultural Geography*. Ed. Brian Graham. London and New York: Routledge, 1997. 64-83. Print.
- Elliott, Anthony and Charles Lemert. "The Global New Individualist Debate: Three Theories of Individualism and Beyond." *Identity in Question*. Eds. Anthony Elliott and Paul du Gay. London: Sage, 2009. 37-64. Print.

- “Exploring Conor McPherson.” *Steppenwolf Theatre Company*. Web. 30 Jan. 2016.
- Fagan, G. Honor. “Globalization and Culture: Placing Ireland.” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 581.1 (2002): 133-43. *JSTOR*. Web. 11 Mar. 2016.
- Fahey, Tony and Richard Layte. “Family and Sexuality.” *Best of Times? The Social Impact of the Celtic Tiger*. Eds. Tony Fahey, Helen Russell, and Christopher T. Whelan. Dublin: IPA, 2007. 155-74. *Google Books*. Web. 20 Dec. 2015.
- Falls, Robert. “Shining City: Take Two A Conversation with Robert Falls.” Interview by Willa J. Taylor. *Goodman Theatre Study Guide: Shining City*. 8-10. *Google Search*. Web. 11 Mar. 2016. PDF file.
- “Family Law (Divorce) Act, 1996.” *Irish Statute Book*. Government of Ireland. Web. 6 Jun. 2016.
- Ferguson, Molly Elizabeth. “The Ghost in the Irish Psyche: Ghost Stories in Contemporary Irish Literature.” Diss. U of Connecticut, 2010. *ProQuest*. Web. 15 May 2014.
- Fitzpatrick, Lisa. “Representing Sexual Violence in Early Plays of Conor McPherson.” *Theatre of Conor McPherson: Right Beside the Beyond*. Eds. Lillian Chambers and Eamon Jordan. Dublin: Carysfort, 2012. 61-76. Print.
- Foster, R. F. *Modern Ireland 1600-1972*. London: The Penguin, 1988. Print.
- Gibbons, Luke. “The Global Cure? History, Therapy and the Celtic Tiger.” *Reinventing Ireland: Culture, Society and the Global Economy*. Eds. Peadar Kirby, Luke Gibbons and Michael Cronin. London: Pluto, 2002. 87-106. Print.
- Giddens, Anthony. *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*. Cambridge: Polity, 1991. *Google Books*. Web. 16 Mar. 2016.
- . *The Consequences of Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity, 1990. Print.
- . *The Transformation of Intimacy Sexuality, Love and Eroticism in Modern Societies*. Cambridge: Polity, 1992. Print.

- Giles, Judy and Tim Middleton. *Studying Culture: A Practical Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1999. Print.
- Graham, Brian. "Ireland and Irishness: Place, Culture and Identity." *In Search of Ireland: A Cultural Geography*. Ed. Brian Graham. London and New York: Routledge, 1997. 1-15. Print.
- Greene, Nicholas. "Conclusion: A World Elsewhere." *The Politics of Irish Drama: Plays in Context from Boucicault to Friel*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004. 261-68. Print.
- . "Ireland in Two Minds: Martin McDonagh and Conor McPherson." *The Yearbook of English Studies* 35 (2005): 298-311. *JSTOR*. Web. 29 Dec. 2013.
- Grossberg, Lawrence. "Identity and Cultural Studies – Is That All There Is?" *Questions of Cultural Identity*. Eds. Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay. London: Sage, 2007. 87-107. Print.
- Guinnane, Timothy W. *The Vanishing Irish Households, Migration, and the Rural Economy in Ireland, 1850-1914*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1997. *Google Books*. Web. 13 Dec. 2012.
- Gussow, Mel. "From Dublin to Broadway, Spinning Tales of Irish Wool." *The New York Times*. 1 Apr. 1999. Web. 24 Feb. 2016.
- Gutman, Les. "This Lime Tree Bower." *CurtainUp*. 20 May 1999. Web. 26 Jan. 2016.
- Hachey, Thomas E. "From Free State to Republic, 1922-1996." *The Irish Experience: A Concise History*. Thomas E Hachey, Joseph M. Herson, Jr., and Lawrence J. McCaffrey. Rev. ed. New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1996. 167-267. Print.
- Hall, Stuart. "Cultural Identity and Diaspora." *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*. Ed. Jonathan Rutherford. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990. 222-37. Print.
- . "Introduction- 'Who Needs Identity'?" *Questions of Cultural Identity*. Eds. Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay. London: Sage, 2007. 87-107. Print.

- . "The Question of Cultural Identity." *Modernity: An introduction to Modern Societies*. Eds. Stuart Hall, David Held, Don Hubert, and Kenneth Thompson. Oxford: Blackwell, 1996. 596–632. Print.
- . "Who Needs 'Identity.'" *Identity: A Reader*. Eds. Paul Du Gay, Jessica Evans, and Peter Redman. London: Sage, 2000. 15-30. Print.
- Ham, Chae-bong "The Cultural Challenge to Individualism." *Journal of Democracy* 11.1 (2000): 127-34. *JSTOR*. Web 18 Mar.2016.
- Harlow, Ilana. "Creating Situations: Practical Jokes and the Revival of the Dead in Irish Tradition." *The Journal of American Folklore* 110.436 (1997): 140-68. *JSTOR*. Web. 12 Dec. 2015.
- Hazucha, Andrew. "The Shannon Scheme, Rural Electrification, and Veiled History in Conor McPherson's *The Weir*." *New Hibernia Review* 17.1 (2013): 67-80. *Ebsco*. Web. 2 Mar. 2014.
- Hill, Christopher Austin. "'But It Was Changing,' 'And Now I Can't Go Back': Reflections of a Changing Ireland in the Work of Conor McPherson." Diss. Ohio State U, 2010. *OhioLINK*. Web. 23 Mar. 2014.
- Hirsch, Edward. "The Imaginary Irish Peasant." *PMLA* 106.5 (1991): 1116-1133. *JSTOR*. Web. 12 Dec. 2015.
- Horgan, Mervyn. "Anti-Urbanism as a Way of Life: Disdain for Dublin in the Nationalist Imaginary." *The Canadian Journal of Irish Studies* (2004): 38-47. *Google Scholar*. Web. 12 Dec. 2015.
- Hutchinson, John. *The Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism: The Gaelic Revival and the Creation of the Irish Nation State*. London: Allen and Unwin, 1987. Print.
- Inglis, Tom. "Origins and legacies of Irish Prudery: Sexuality and Social Control in Modern Ireland." *Eire-Ireland* 40.3 (2005): 9-37. *Google Scholar*. Web. 12 Nov. 2015.

- . "The Religious Field in Contemporary Ireland: Identity, Being Religious and Symbolic Domination." *Ireland Beyond Boundaries: Mapping Irish Studies in the Twenty-First Century*. Eds. Liam Harte and Yvonne Whelan. London: Pluto, 2007. 111-34. Print.
- İnan, Dilek. "Conor Mcpherson's The Weir: New Master of Irish Storytelling." *Tiyatro Araştırmaları Dergisi* 36.2 (2013): 61-73. *Google Scholar*. Web. 30 Feb. 2016.
- Johnson, Nuala C. "Making Space: Gaeltacht Policy and the Politics of Identity." *In Search of Ireland: A Cultural Geography*. Ed. Brian Graham. London and New York: Routledge, 1997. 174-91. Print.
- Jordan, Eamonn. "Menace and Play Dissipating and Emerging Dramaturgies in Irish Theatre in the 1990s." *The AnaChronisT* 13 (2007–2008): 157–80. *Ebsco*. Web. 2 Feb. 2014.
- . "Pastoral Exhibits: Narrating Authenticities in Conor McPherson's 'The Weir.'" *Irish University Review* 34.2 (2004): 351–68. *JSTOR*. Web. 3 Feb. 2016.
- Joyce, James. *Exiles*. New York: Dover, 2002. *Google Books*. Web. 16 Mar. 2016.
- Kearney, Hugh. *Ireland: Contested Ideas of Nationalism and History*. New York: New York UP, 2007. *Ebrary*. Web. 30 Dec. 2014.
- Kearney, Richard. *On Stories*. London: Routledge, 2002. Print.
- . *Postnationalist Ireland: Politics, Culture, Philosophy*. London: Routledge, 1997. Print.
- Keating, Sarah. "The Geography of Conor McPherson's Plays: The City as Salvation or Hell?" *Theatre of Conor McPherson: Right Beside the Beyond*. Eds. Lillian Chambers and Eamon Jordan. Dublin: Carysfort, 2012. 31-41. Print.
- Keogh, Dermot. "The Catholic Church in Ireland since the 1950s." *Church Confronts Modernity: Catholicism since 1950 in the United States, Ireland, and Quebec*. Ed. Leslie Woodcock Tentler. Washington: The Catholic U of America P, 2007. 93-149. *Ebrary*. Web. 19 Jan. 2016.

- Kerrane, Kevin. "The Structural Elegance of Conor McPherson's *The Weir*." *New Hibernia Review* 10.4 (2006): 105-21. *Project Muse*. Web. 29 Dec. 2013.
- Kiberd, Declan. "The City in Irish Culture." *City* 6.2 (2002): 219-28. *Taylor and Francis*. 1 Jul. 2010. Web. 25 Dec. 2014.
- Kirby, Peadar, Luke Gibbons and Michael Cronin. "Conclusions and Transformations." *Reinventing Ireland: Culture, Society and the Global Economy*. Eds. Peadar Kirby, Luke Gibbons and Michael Cronin. London: Pluto, 2002. 196-208. Print.
- Kuhling, Carmen, and Kieran Keohane. *Cosmopolitan Ireland: Globalisation and Quality of Life*. London: Pluto, 2007. *Ebrary*. Web. 25 Dec. 2014.
- Linehan, Denis, and Caitríona Ní Laoire. "Overlapping Territories: Social and Cultural Geography in Ireland." *Social and Cultural Geography* 7.1 (2006): 127-40. *Taylor and Francis*. Web. 12 Dec. 2015.
- Llewellyn-Jones, Margaret. "Myth and Masculinity." *Contemporary Irish Drama and Cultural Identity*. Bristol: Intellect, 2002. 93-117. Print.
- Lobdell, Jared. "Shebeens." *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Alcohol: Social, Cultural, and Historical Perspectives*. Ed. Scott C. Martin. Vol. 18 Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2015. 1149-51. *Google Books*. Web. 30 Jan. 2016.
- Lonergan, Patrick. *Theatre and Globalization: Irish Drama in the Celtic Tiger Era*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010. Print.
- . "Irish Theatre and Globalisation: Faustian Pact?" *Cultural Perspectives on Globalisation and Ireland*. Ed. Eamon Maher. Bruxelles: Peter Lang, 2009. 177-90. *Ebrary*. Web. 30 Feb. 2016.
- Lyons, F. S. L. *Ireland Since the Famine*. Glasgow: Fontana/Collins, 1976. Print.
- Lysaght, Patricia. "Hospitality at Wakes and Funerals in Ireland from the Seventeenth to the Nineteenth Century: Some Evidence from the Written Record." *Folklore* 114.3 (2003): 403-26. *Taylor and Francis*. Web. 12 Dec. 2015.

- . "Traditional Storytelling in Ireland in the Twentieth Century." *Traditional Storytelling Today: An International Sourcebook*. Ed. Margaret Read MacDonald. New York: Routledge, 1999. 263-72. *Google Books*. Web. 19 January 2016.
- Maher, Eamon. "Crisis, What Crisis? The Catholic Church during the Celtic Tiger Years." *From Prosperity to Austerity: A Socio-Cultural Critique of the Celtic Tiger and its Aftermath*. Eds. Eamon Maher and Eugene O'Brien. Manchester: Manchester UP, 2014. 19-31. *Google Books*. Web. 19 January 2016.
- Maley, Patrick. "'The Play is Set in the Theatre': Conor McPherson and the Late-Modern Humanism of the Theatrical Event." *Irish Studies Review* (2014):1-17. *Taylor and Francis*. Web. 26 Apr. 2014.
- Marks, Peter. "Conor McPherson: Quite the Head Turner." *Washington Post*. 11 Apr. 2010. *Ebsco*. Web. 20 Feb 2016.
- Martin, Angela K. "The Practice of Identity and an Irish Sense of Place." *Gender, Place and Culture* 4.1 (1997): 89-119. *Taylor and Francis*. Web. 12 Dec. 2015.
- Mathews, P. J. "The 'Sweet Smell' of the Celtic Tiger: Elegy and Critique in Conor McPherson's *The Weir*." *Theatre of Conor McPherson: Right Beside the Beyond*. Eds. Lillian Chambers and Eamon Jordan. Dublin: Carysfort, 2012. 151-63. Print.
- McCoy, Narella. "The Quick and the Dead: Sexuality and the Irish Merry Wake." *Continuum: Journal of Media and Cultural Studies* 26.4 (2012): 615-24. *Taylor and Francis*. Web. 12 Dec. 2015.
- McDonagh, Martin. *The Pillowman*. London: Faber, 2003. Print.
- McGovern, Mark. "'The Cracked Pint Glass of the Servant': the Irish Pub, Irish Identity and the Tourist Eye." *Irish Tourism: Image, Culture, and Identity*. Eds. Michael Cronin and Barbara O'Connor. Clevedon: Channel View, 2003. 83-103. *Ebrary*. Web. 25 Dec. 2015.
- McPherson, Conor. "An Interview with Conor McPherson." Interview by Gerald C. Wood. *Conor McPherson: Imagining Mischief*. Dublin: The Liffey, 2003. Print.

- . "Conor McPherson – Interviews." Interview by Paul Andrew. *Paul Andrews Interviews*. 15 Aug. 2010. Web. 11 Mar. 2016.
- . "Conor McPherson Interview." Interview by Patrick Brennan. *Patrick Brennan's Culture and Ireland*. Web. 25 Jan. 2016.
- . "Conor McPherson Lifts the Veil: His Characters Peer through Drunkenness (Which He's Left Behind) and Existential Dread (Which He Hasn't) for Glimpses of Truth." Interview by Cassandra Csencsitz. *American Theatre* 24.10 (2007): 36-38. *Ebsco*. Web. 2 Mar. 2014.
- . "Conor McPherson." Interview by Jody Allen Randolph. *Close to the Next Moment: Changing Ireland*. Manchester: Carcanet, 2010. 79-88. *Google Books*. Web. 22 Feb. 2016.
- . "Conor McPherson: Unrivaled Storyteller." Interview by Bobby Kennedy. *Writers Theatre*. Web. 29 Jan. 2016.
- . "Fighting Demons." Interview by Donald Clarke. *The Irish Times*. 10 May 2003. Web. 25 Jan. 2016.
- . "Human Beings are Animals." Interview by Maddy Costa. *The Guardian*. 13 Sep. 2006. Web. 22 Feb. 2016.
- . "If You're a Young Irish Playwright, Come to London. If You can Put up with Being Defined by Your Nationality, the Opportunities are Huge." *New Statesman* 127.4373 (1998): 40-42. *Ebsco*. Web. 17 Feb. 2014.
- . "Interview with Conor McPherson." Interview by Noelia Ruiz. *Theatre of Conor McPherson: Right Beside the Beyond*. Eds. Lillian Chambers and Eamon Jordan. Dublin: Carysfort, 2012. 275-96. Print.
- . "Interview: Conor McPherson." Interview by Caroline McGinn. *Time Out London*. 26 Sept. 2011. Web. 24 Feb. 2016.
- . "Original Sin." *The Guardian*. 7 Feb. 2001. Web. 25 Jan. 2016.

- . "So There's these Three Irishmen..." Interview with Tim Adams. *The Observer*. 4 Feb. 2001. *The Guardian*. Web. 25 Jan. 2016.
- . "The Devil Went Down to Broadway." Interview by Matthew Gurewitsch. *The New York Times*. 11 Nov. 2007. Web. 29 Jan. 2016.
- . "The Haunted Stage: Conor McPherson on His Plays." Interview by Ronald K. Fried. *The Daily Beast*. 20 Jan. 2014. Web. 29 Jan. 2016.
- . "UCD Connections Conor McPherson Interview Part 6." Interview by Dave Fanning. *Youtube*. Web. 22 Feb. 2016.
- . "We are Masters of Illusion." *The Irish Times*. 23 May 2000. Web. 25 Jan. 2016.
- Meche, Jude R. "Re-Staging the Past: Contemporary Irish Drama and the Question of History." Diss of Texas A and M U, 2002. *ProQuest*. Web. 15 May 2014.
- Merriman, Victor. *Because We Are Poor: Irish Theatre in the 1990s*. Dublin: Carysfort, 2011. *Ebrary*. Web. 1 February 2016.
- Miller, David. *On Nationality*. New York: Oxford UP, 1995. Print.
- Mitchell, Claire. *Religion, Identity and Politics in Northern Ireland Boundaries of Belonging and Belief*. Abingdon: Ashgate, 2006. *Bookfi*. Web. 3 April 2014.
- "Modernization." *The Oxford English Dictionary*. 2nd ed. Vol. IX. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1989. Print.
- Morse, Donald E. "Introduction: The Irish Theatre in Transition." *Irish Theatre in Transition: From the Late Nineteenth to the Early Twenty-First Century*. Ed. Donald E. Morse. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015. 1-9. *Google Books*. Web. 11 Mar. 2016.
- Murray, Christopher. *Twentieth-Century Irish Drama: Mirror Up to Nation*. Manchester and New York: Manchester UP, 1997. Print.

- Nash, Catherine. "Remapping and Renaming: New Cartographies of Identity, Gender and Landscape in Ireland." *Feminist Review* 44 (1993): 39-57. *JSTOR*. Web. 12 Dec. 2015.
- New International Version*. Matthew 5:14-16. *Bible Gateway*. Web. 15 Mar. 2016.
- O'Leary, Joseph S. "Religion, Ireland: in Mutation" *Across the Frontiers: Ireland in the 1990s*. Ed. Richard Kearney. Dublin: Wolfhound, 1988. 231-41. Print.
- O'Mahony, Patrick, and Gerard Delanty. *Rethinking Irish History: Nationalism, Identity and Ideology*. London: Macmillan, 1998. Print.
- O'Neill, T. P. "Rural Life." *Social Life in Ireland 1800-45*. Ed. McDowell, R. B. Dublin: Colm O Lochlainn, 1957. 43-56. Print.
- O'Toole, Fintan. "Irish Theatre: The State of the Art." *Theatre Stuff: Critical Essays on Contemporary Irish Theatre*. Ed. Eamonn Jordan. Dublin: Carysfort, 2009. 47-58. Print.
- . "Shadows over Ireland." *American Theatre* 15.6 (1998). *Ebsco*. Web. 17 Feb. 2014.
- . *The Lie of the Land: Irish Identities*. London: Verso, 1997. Print.
- Orel, Gwen. "Conor McPherson's Port Authority." *Celtic Cafe.com*. Web. 29 Jan. 2016.
- Pelletier, Martine. "New Articulations of Irishness and otherness on the Contemporary Irish Stage." *Irish Literature Since 1990: Diverse Voices*. Eds. Scott Brewster and Michael Parker. Manchester: Manchester UP, 2009. 98-117. Print.
- Pilkington, Lionel. "Religion and the Celtic Tiger: The Cultural Legacies of Anti-Catholicism in Ireland." *Reinventing Ireland: Culture, Society and the Global Economy*. Eds. Peadar Kirby, Luke Gibbons and Michael Cronin. London: Pluto, 2002. 124-39. Print.
- Price, Alan. *Synge and Anglo-Irish Drama*. London: Methuen, 1961. Print.


- Pringle, Dennis. "Partition, Politics and Social Conflict." *Ireland: Contemporary Perspectives on a Land and its People*. Eds. R. W. G. Carter, and A. J. Parker. London and New York: Routledge, 1989. 23-54. Print.
- Ranelagh, John. *A Short History of Ireland*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999. Print.
- Renner, Pamela. "Haunts of the Very Irish." *American Theatre* 15.6 (1998): 20. *Ebsco*. Web. 17 Feb. 2014.
- Robinson, Mary. "From Rocking the Cradle to Rocking the System 1990." *RTE Archives*. 9 Nov. 1990. Web. 11 Mar. 2016.
- Roche, Anthony. "The Early Years." *Theatre of Conor McPherson: Right Beside the Beyond*. Eds. Lillian Chambers and Eamon Jordan. Dublin: Carysfort, 2012. 21-31. Print.
- . *Contemporary Irish Drama*. 2nd ed. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. Print.
- Rutherford, Jonathan. "A Place Called Home: Identity and the Cultural Politics of Difference." *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*. Ed. Jonathan Rutherford. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990. 9-27. Print.
- Said, Edward W. *Culture and Imperialism*. London: Vintage, 1993. Print.
- Scally, Robert James. *The End of Hidden Ireland: Rebellion, Famine, and Emigration*. New York: Oxford UP, 1995. Print.
- Scanlan, Margaret. *Culture and Customs of Ireland*. London: Greenwood, 2006. *Google Books*. Web. 30 Jan. 2016.
- Share, Perry, Hilary Tovey, and Mary P. Corcoran. *A Sociology of Ireland*. 3rd ed. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 2007. Print.
- Shirlow, Peter. "Class, Materialism and the Fracturing of Traditional Alignments." *In Search of Ireland: A Cultural Geography*. Ed. Brian Graham. London and New York: Routledge, 1997. 87-107. Print.

- Smith, Nick. "Shining Moments: Pure's Subtle Slice of Irish Theatre Electrifies." *Charleston City Paper*. 5 Sep. 2007. Web. 11 Mar. 2016.
- State, Paul F. *A Brief History of Ireland*. New York: Infobase, 2009.
- Smyth, Gerry. "Irish National Identity after the Celtic Tiger." *Estudios Irlandeses* 7 (2012): 132-37. *Google Scholar*. Web. 12 Dec. 2015.
- . *Space and the Irish Cultural Imagination*. New York: Palgrave, 2001. Print.
- Taylor, Lawrence. "Crisis of Faith or Collapse of Empire?" *Church Confronts Modernity: Catholicism since 1950 in the United States, Ireland, and Quebec*. Ed. Leslie Woodcock Tentler. Washington: The Catholic U of America P, 2007. 150-173. *Ebrary*. Web. 19 Jan. 2016.
- "The Pint of No Return." *The Village Voice*. 15 Oct. 2002. Web. 26 Jan. 2016.
- Thorns, David C. *The Transformation of Cities: Urban Theory and Urban Life*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002. Print.
- Thuente, Mary Helen. "The Folklore of Irish Nationalism." *Perspectives on Irish Nationalism* (1990): 50-52. *Google Scholar*. Web. 12 Dec. 2015.
- Trench, Rhona. "The Measure of a Pub Spirit in Conor McPherson's *The Weir*." *Theatre of Conor McPherson: Right Beside the Beyond*. Eds. Lillian Chambers and Eamon Jordan. Dublin: Carysfort, 2012. 165-82. Print.
- Trotter, Mary. *Modern Irish Theatre*. Cambridge: Polity, 2008. Print.
- Vall, Robert. *The Good Thief: A Tale of Mercy*. Bloomington: WestBow, 2012. *Google Books*. Web. 20 Jun. 2016.
- Varenne, Hervé. "Dublin 16: Accounts of Suburban Lives." *Irish Urban Cultures*. Eds. Chris Curtin, Hastings Donnan and Thomas M. Wilson. Belfast: The Queen U of Belfast, 1993. 99-122. Print.

- Wallace, Clare. "A Micronarrative Imperative: Conor McPherson's Monologue Dramas." *Irish Studies Review* 14.1 (2006): 1-10. 19 Aug. 2006. *Taylor and Francis*. Web. 26 Jan. 2016.
- . "Conor McPherson." *The Methuen Drama Guide to Contemporary Irish Playwrights*. Eds. Martin Middeke and Peter Paul Schnierer. London: Methuen, 2010. Print.
- . "Irish Theatre Criticism: De-Territorialisation and Integration." *Modern Drama* 47.4 (2004): 659-70. *Project Muse*. Web. 1 Feb. 2016.
- . "The Art of Disclosure, the Ethics of Monologue in Conor McPherson's Drama: *St Nicholas, This Lime Tree Bower and Port Authority*." *Theatre of Conor McPherson: Right Beside the Beyond*. Eds. Lillian Chambers and Eamon Jordan. Dublin: Carysfort, 2012. 43-59. Print.
- Wallace, Kevin. "'Shame Shame Shame': Masculinity, Intimacy and Narrative in Conor McPherson's *Shining City*." *Theatre of Conor McPherson: Right Beside the Beyond*. Eds. Lillian Chambers and Eamon Jordan. Dublin: Carysfort, 2012. 89-102. Print.
- Walsh, Fintan. "Rum and Vodka." *Irish Times Magazine*. 7 April 2011. Web. 26 Jan. 2016.
- Waters, Malcolm. *Globalization*. London: Routledge, 1995. Print.
- Watson, Ariel. "Cries of Fire: Psychotherapy in Contemporary British and Irish Drama." *Modern Drama* 51.2 (2008): 188-210. *Google Scholar*. Web. 25 Dec. 2014.
- Weeks, Jeffrey. "Sexuality, Intimacy and Politics." *Sexuality*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge, 2003. 91-116. Print.
- "Weir." *Oxford Dictionaries*. Oxford University Press. Web. 26 Apr. 2016

- Whelan, Kevin. "Between Filiation and Affiliation: The Politics of Postcolonial Memory." *Ireland and Postcolonial Theory*. Eds. Clare Carroll and Patricia King. Notre Dame: U of Notre Dame P, 2003. 92-108. Print.
- White, Timothy J. "The Impact of British Colonialism on Irish Catholicism and National Identity: Repression, Reemergence, and Divergence." *Études irlandaises* 35-1 (2010): 21-37. *Google Scholar*. Web. 12 Nov. 2015.
- . "What Does It Mean to Be Irish? The Transformation of Political Identity in Ireland." *Southeastern Political Review* 24.1 (1996): 137-57. *Wiley Online Library*. Web. 12 Dec. 2015.
- . "The Changing Social Bases of Political Identity in Ireland." *Representing Ireland: Gender, Class, Nationality*. Ed. Susan Shaw Sailer. Gainesville: UP of Florida, 1997. 113-29. Print.
- Wilde, Oscar. *Epigrams of Oscar Wilde*. Hertfordshire: Wordsworth, 2007. *Google Books*. Web. 12 Mar. 2016.
- Williams, Leslie. "Irish Identity and the Illustrated London News, 1846-1851: Famine to Depopulation." *Representing Ireland: Gender, Class, Nationality*. Ed. Susan Shaw Sailer. Gainesville: UP of Florida, 1997. 59-93. Print.
- Wood, Gerald C. *Conor McPherson: Imagining Mischief*. Dublin: The Liffey, 2003. Print.

APPENDIX 1: ORIGINALITY REPORTS

 <p>HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ YÜKSEK LİSANS/DOKTORA TEZ ÇALIŞMASI ORJİNALLİK RAPORU</p>
<p>HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM ANABİLİM DALI BAŞKANLIĞI'NA</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Tarih: 20/07/2016</p> <p>Tez Başlığı / Konusu: Conor McPherson'ın <i>The Weir</i> ve <i>Shining City</i> Adlı Oyunlarında İrlandalılığın Geçirdiği Değişimler</p> <p>Yukarıda başlığı/konusu gösterilen tez çalışmamın a) Kapak sayfası, b) Giriş, c) Ana bölümler ve d) Sonuç kısımlarından oluşan toplam 89 sayfalık kısmına ilişkin, 20/07/2016 tarihinde şahsım/tez danışmanım tarafından Turnitin adlı intihal tespit programından aşağıda belirtilen filtrelemeler uygulanarak alınmış olan orijinallik raporuna göre, tezimin benzerlik oranı % 3 'tür.</p> <p>Uygulanan filtrelemeler:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- Kabul/Onay ve Bildirim sayfaları hariç, 2- Kaynakça hariç 3- Alıntılar hariç/dâhil 4- 5 kelimedenden daha az örtüşme içeren metin kısımları hariç <p>Hacettepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Tez Çalışması Orijinallik Raporu Alınması ve Kullanılması Uygulama Esasları'nı inceledim ve bu Uygulama Esasları'nda belirtilen azami benzerlik oranlarına göre tez çalışmamın herhangi bir intihal içermediğini; aksinin tespit edileceği muhtemel durumda doğabilecek her türlü hukuki sorumluluğu kabul ettiğimi ve yukarıda vermiş olduğum bilgilerin doğru olduğunu beyan ederim.</p> <p>Gereğini saygılarımla arz ederim.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">  20/07/2016 </p> <p> Adı Soyadı: Tuğba ŞİMŞEK Öğrenci No: N12224092 Anabilim Dalı: İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Programı: İngiliz Kültür Araştırmaları Statüsü: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Y.Lisans <input type="checkbox"/> Doktora <input type="checkbox"/> Bütünleşik Dr. </p>
<p><u>DANIŞMAN ONAYI</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">UYGUNDUR.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">  Yrd. Doç. Dr. Şebnem KAYA </p>



**HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
THESIS/DISSERTATION ORIGINALITY REPORT**

**HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE**

Date: 20/07/2016

Thesis Title / Topic: Transitions in Irishness: Conor McPherson's *The Weir* and *Shining City*

According to the originality report obtained by myself/my thesis advisor by using the Turnitin plagiarism detection software and by applying the filtering options stated below on 20/07/2016 for the total of 89 pages including the a) Title Page, b) Introduction, c) Main Chapters, and d) Conclusion sections of my thesis entitled as above, the similarity index of my thesis is 3 %.

Filtering options applied:

1. Approval and Declaration sections excluded
2. Bibliography/Works Cited excluded
3. Quotes excluded
4. Match size up to 5 words excluded

I declare that I have carefully read Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences Guidelines for Obtaining and Using Thesis Originality Reports; that according to the maximum similarity index values specified in the Guidelines, my thesis does not include any form of plagiarism; that in any future detection of possible infringement of the regulations I accept all legal responsibility; and that all the information I have provided is correct to the best of my knowledge.

I respectfully submit this for approval.


20/07/2016

Name Surname: Tuğba ŞİMŞEK
Student No: N12224092
Department: English Language and Literature
Program: British Cultural Studies
Status: Masters Ph.D. Integrated Ph.D.




ADVISOR APPROVAL

APPROVED.



Assist. Prof. Dr. Şebnem KAYA

APPENDIX 2: ETHICS BOARD WAIVER FORMS FOR THESIS WORK

 <p>HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ TEZ ÇALIŞMASI ETİK KURUL İZİN MUAFİYETİ FORMU</p>
<p>HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI BAŞKANLIĞI'NA</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Tarih: 20/07/2016</p> <p>Tez Başlığı / Konusu: Conor McPherson'ın <i>The Weir</i> ve <i>Shining City</i> Adlı Oyunlarında İrlandalılığın Geçirdiği Değişimler</p> <p>Yukarıda başlığı/konusu gösterilen tez çalışmam:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. İnsan ve hayvan üzerinde deney niteliği taşımamaktadır. 2. Biyolojik materyal (kan, idrar vb. biyolojik sıvılar ve numuneler) kullanılmasını gerektirmemektedir. 3. Beden bütünlüğüne müdahale içermemektedir. 4. Gözlemsel ve betimsel araştırma (anket, ölçek/skala çalışmaları, dosya taramaları, veri kaynakları taraması, sistem-model geliştirme çalışmaları) niteliğinde değildir. <p>Hacettepe Üniversitesi Etik Kurullar ve Komisyonlarının Yönergelerini inceledim ve bunlara göre tez çalışmamın yürütülebilmesi için herhangi bir Etik Kuruldan izin alınmasına gerek olmadığını; aksi durumda doğabilecek her türlü hukuki sorumluluğu kabul ettiğimi ve yukarıda vermiş olduğum bilgilerin doğru olduğunu beyan ederim.</p> <p>Gereğini saygılarımla arz ederim.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">  20/07/2016 </p> <p> Adı Soyadı: Tuğba ŞİMŞEK Öğrenci No: N12224092 Anabilim Dalı: İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Programı: İngiliz Kültür Araştırmaları Statüsü: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Y.Lisans <input type="checkbox"/> Doktora <input type="checkbox"/> Bütünleşik Dr. </p>
<p><u>DANIŞMAN GÖRÜŞÜ VE ONAYI</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">  <hr/> Yrd. Doç. Dr. Şebnem KAYA </p> <p> Detaylı Bilgi: http://www.sosyalbilimler.hacettepe.edu.tr Telefon: 0-312-2976860 Faks: 0-3122992147 E-posta: sosyalbilimler@hacettepe.edu.tr </p>



**HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
ETHICS BOARD WAIVER FORM FOR THESIS WORK**

**HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE TO THE DEPARTMENT PRESIDENCY**

Date: 20/07/2016


Thesis Title / Topic: Transitions in Irishness: Conor McPherson's *The Weir* and *Shining City*

My thesis work related to the title/topic above:

1. Does not perform experimentation on animals or people.
2. Does not necessitate the use of biological material (blood, urine, biological fluids and samples, etc.).
3. Does not involve any interference of the body's integrity.
4. Is not based on observational and descriptive research (survey, measures/scales, data scanning, system-model development).

I declare, I have carefully read Hacettepe University's Ethics Regulations and the Commission's Guidelines, and in order to proceed with my thesis according to these regulations I do not have to get permission from the Ethics Board for anything; in any infringement of the regulations I accept all legal responsibility and I declare that all the information I have provided is true.

I respectfully submit this for approval.


20/07/2016

Name Surname: Tuğba ŞİMŞEK
Student No: N12224092
Department: English Language and Literature
Program: British Cultural Studies
Status: Masters Ph.D. Integrated Ph.D.

ADVISER COMMENTS AND APPROVAL



Assist. Prof. Dr. Şebnem KAYA