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## **European Postcolonial Studies and Ireland: Towards a Conversation amongst the Colonized of Europe**

In the 1970s and 1980s, the island of Ireland experienced a series of acute crises. These crises, which included military stalemate in Northern Ireland and economic stagnation in the Irish Republic, elicited various – sometimes conflicting – mainstream responses. South of the border, proponents of the anti-nationalist critique that has come to be termed ‘revisionism’ espoused a policy of non-intervention in northern affairs. Constitutional nationalists continued to maintain a sentimental attachment to the concept of a united Ireland, but paid little attention to the structural foundations of Northern Ireland. Informed by modernization theory, influential economists argued that the Irish Republic needed to ‘catch up’ with more advanced capitalist nations. In a more modern Ireland, they asserted, both sectarian violence and economic inefficiency would be consigned to the past. By the early 1980s, key Irish Studies scholars, questioning the value of these responses, proffered an analytical framework that pointed to the systematic connections between the varied problems that beset the island as a whole. These scholars, largely comprised of intellectuals and cultural practitioners associated with the Field Day project, proposed that Irish culture, politics and economics, both past and present, are most usefully viewed in the context of imperialism, colonialism and anti-colonial nationalism.<sup>1</sup> In support of this proposition, they drew attention to Ireland’s experience, under British rule, of land confiscation, population displacement, destruction of the Gaelic polity, religious persecution, famine, mass emigration, cultural deprivation, racial ‘othering’ and language loss. They also pointed to Ireland’s more recent history – following the War of Independence (1919–1921) – of civil war, partition, ethno-religious conflict and slow economic growth.

The result of this intervention is an Irish postcolonial studies which, over the past 35 years, has produced an influential body of scholarship premised on the idea that Ireland is a colony/former colony of the British Empire. *Ireland and Postcolonial Studies*, a 2003 collection of essays edited by Clare Carroll and Patricia King, is an example of such

scholarship.<sup>2</sup> It brings together the writings of Seamus Deane, a founding member of Field Day, with the work of more recent scholars like Joseph Lennon whose first monograph, on the parallels between Orientalism and Celticism, was published under the title *Irish Orientalism* in 2004.<sup>3</sup> Notwithstanding its origins in Field Day, contemporary Irish postcolonial studies is no more uniform than postcolonial scholarship as a whole. The differing approaches and ideological positions adopted by Irish postcolonial scholars are discussed in Colin Graham's 'Liminal Spaces' (1994), Joe Cleary's 'Misplaced Ideas?' (2002) and Eoin Flannery's *Ireland and Postcolonial Studies* (2009).<sup>4</sup> As a reading of these metacritical analyses indicate, the effects of the colonial past are far from over in the island of Ireland, even colouring debates and disagreements within postcolonial scholarship itself. Thus, in 'Liminal Spaces', Colin Graham, born and raised in Northern Ireland, aligns himself with the Indian subaltern studies scholars who share with Irish revisionist historians a concern with the limitations of nationalism, while in 'Misplaced Ideas', Joe Cleary, who is from a southern nationalist background, suggests that a postcolonial reading of Irish nationalism as a complex response to imperialism is a useful corrective to the revisionist dismissal of it as a mere reactionary mindset. In this article, I draw principally on Marxist-inflected strands of Irish postcolonial studies. However, less materialist approaches – such as Declan Kiberd's analysis of Irish cultural nationalism in *Inventing Ireland* – have been equally important in shaping the field.<sup>5</sup> A feminist variant of postcolonial studies has been slow to emerge in Ireland. Some feminist scholars are hostile to Irish postcolonial studies, accusing it of prioritizing 'the national question' over issues of gender. For example, Linda Connolly charges Irish postcolonial scholars with ignoring versions of Irish feminism that do not 'fit' a 'nationalist or post-colonial reading of Ireland'.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, as a number of Irish feminists have noted, many of the leading Irish postcolonial scholars are male. One of the exceptions to this is Emer Nolan, who has persuasively argued that

far from confining Irish feminism in a narrow, nationally focused research agenda, a rethinking of the question of feminism and nationalism in a wider imperial frame [. . .] may in fact help Irish feminists to forge connections

between the experiences and priorities of Irish women and those of women in other societies – especially women elsewhere in the postcolonial world.<sup>7</sup>

It is certainly the case that Irish postcolonial studies has facilitated the emergence of a more outward-looking body of scholarship on Ireland that has attracted the attention of scholars based elsewhere. Writings on the workings of colonialism in Ireland have appeared in such notable international publications as the *Oxford Literary Review* and *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*. In 1991 the *Oxford Literary Review* included a number of essays on Ireland in its special issue on colonialism,<sup>8</sup> while in 2008 *Interventions* devoted an entire issue to James Connolly, arguably Ireland's first theorist of imperialism, who was executed in 1916 for his role in the Easter Rebellion against British rule.<sup>9</sup> Renowned scholars from outside of Ireland, including Edward Said and Frederic Jameson, have written about the country in the context of imperialism and decolonization,<sup>10</sup> while such leading Irish academics as David Lloyd and Joe Cleary have contributed to the development of the postcolonial critique internationally. Indeed, David Lloyd's 'Outside History' (1996) was the first essay published in the journal *Subaltern Studies* to have as its central focus a non-South Asian colony.<sup>11</sup>

Notwithstanding its considerable impact, both nationally and internationally, Irish postcolonial studies has not been without its detractors, with the country's geographical location forming the basis for one of the most persistent objections to the application of a colonial/postcolonial framework to Ireland. In the words of Liam Kennedy,

an understanding of twentieth-century Ireland is only weakly aided by reference to [a postcolonial] perspective. [. . .] A much more fruitful comparative perspective – illuminating issues of industrialization, urbanization, demography, sectarian and ethnic tensions, and secessionist politics – may be derived from the experiences of Ireland's European neighbours.<sup>12</sup>

More pithily, Edna Longley has accused those who she claims 'throw [postcolonial] theory at Ireland, hoping that bits of it will stick' of 'deny[ing] Ireland's European past'.<sup>13</sup> As summarized by Cleary, the Irish historical experience is viewed by such

scholars as ‘much more usefully compared to other Western European societies, especially to other small peripheral societies dominated by more powerful neighbours, than it is to colonized societies in more distant quarters of the globe’. In response to the claim that a colonial framework that originated in Africa, the Caribbean, Latin America and Asia is not applicable to an Irish society with strong European connections, Cleary points out that while Irish cultural and political life under colonialism was ‘obviously shaped and textured by wider European developments’, it was ‘at the same time overdetermined by the country’s dependent socio-economic composition’.<sup>14</sup> An analysis of the afterlife of this composition in the period following formal independence, Cleary reminds us, can be found in Raymond Crotty’s *Ireland in Crisis: A Study in Capitalist Underdevelopment* (1986) and John Kurt Jacobson’s *Chasing Progress in the Irish Republic: Ideology, Democracy and Development* (1994). As pointed out by Cleary, both of these publications indicate that while post-Independence economic development in the Republic of Ireland might appear out of kilter with the economic trends of its nearest neighbours, suggestive overlaps exist between southern Ireland’s economy and that of former colonies further afield. In *Ireland in Crisis*, for example, Crotty places emphasis on the ‘role of capitalist colonialism’ in ‘economic underdevelopment’ in former colonies, claiming that, in the post-Independence period, ‘Ireland’s failure to provide a livelihood for its people is best understood as part of a much more widespread failure. It is to be seen as part of the Third World’s failure to develop.’<sup>15</sup>

Bearing in mind the key role assigned to geography in the postcolonial debate in Ireland, this article explores the implications for Ireland of an emerging postcolonial critique centred on Europe. Thus far, European postcolonial studies has been primarily concerned with the legacies of imperialism in former ‘mother’ countries. Such legacies include the post-Second World War migrations and dislocations in population, often from ex-colonies to former ‘mother’ countries following the formal break-up of European empires, and the processes of racialization, racial discrimination, social exclusion, economic exploitation and cultural innovation that have accompanied these movements of people. Ireland, in line with other European countries, is a destination for transnational migrants, though in the Irish context substantive inward migration commenced at a later juncture and was not connected with the decline of classical

imperialism. Some level of inward migration has always co-existed in Ireland with emigration, but in recent decades Ireland has changed from a country that in the post-Famine period and during its many subsequent economic crises experienced significant emigration, to a country to which immigrants now travel in considerable numbers. In the words of Michael Cronin, ‘a country with the highest net emigration rate in the European Union in the 1980s found itself with the highest net immigration rate by the start of the new century.’<sup>16</sup> While Ireland was always multi-ethnic, during the ‘Celtic Tiger’ period and afterwards the Irish Republic, in particular, was transformed by transnational migration into a more visibly heterogeneous society. Though the dynamic of inward migration to Ireland, a former colony, is subtly different to the dynamic of inward migration to a former ‘mother’ country in that none of those who migrate to Ireland are ex-colonial subjects or the descendents of colonial subjects, this transformation has involved some of the same processes that accompanied the post-Second World War demographic shifts in other European countries. Moreover, Ireland’s first experience of substantial inward migration has coincided with a more restrictive migration climate internationally. In keeping with a Fortress Europe mentality, the Irish Republic has adopted regressive policies and practices regarding asylum and immigration control. Commenting on the Irish state’s approach to asylum, Ronit Lentin points out that in a relatively short period of time the focus has shifted from ‘identifying persons in need of protection, towards techniques devised to screen out as many applications as possible.’<sup>17</sup> A 2004 citizenship referendum, in which the Irish electorate voted four to one to deprive birth-right citizenship from the children of migrants, cemented the process of Othering that both underpins such a shift in approach and is reinforced by it.<sup>18</sup> By forming a distinction between the ‘Irish’ born in the Irish Republic and ‘others’ born in the Irish Republic, this referendum defines Irishness in predominantly racial terms. Such exclusionary tactics are in line with the current global migration regime, but in Ireland this process has involved ascribing whiteness to a national identity that was consistently depicted in British imperial discourse as racially ambiguous. Thus those who are opposed to the Othering of migrants in present-day Ireland sometimes form connections between the current racialization of these migrants and the racialization of the Irish under British imperialism.

The branch of postcolonial studies that focuses on Europe has also involved the categorization of some European societies as colonies or former colonies based on their history of uneven power relations with neighbouring societies. The concept of internal colonization has been applied to Western European countries like Italy and Great Britain that experience marked regional socio-economic inequalities.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, postcolonial theory has been employed in an analysis of the region of Eastern and Central Europe, also known as the ‘Second World’, and its relationship with Russia – whether in the form of Tsarist Russia, the Soviet Union or Putin’s Russia – and Western Europe. As this article is concerned with both the role that Europe plays in the postcolonial debate in Ireland and the role that Ireland plays in the postcolonial debate in Europe, it pays particular attention to Poland. Not only is the Polish postcolonial debate especially animated, as is evidenced by the journals *Teksky Drugie* [Second Texts] and *Postcolonial Europe*, it also frequently references Ireland. In its overview of an emerging Polish postcolonial studies, this essay discusses the claim made by Clare Cavanagh and others that the exclusion of Central and Eastern European countries from mainstream studies of colonialism is directly attributable to the dominance of a Marxist strand within postcolonial scholarship. In response to this claim, I both draw attention to the sometimes uneasy relationship between Marxism and certain strands of postcolonial studies, and assert the importance of a Marxist-inflected approach for postcolonial critics who are concerned with examining the afterlife of imperialism in present-day Ireland.

Irish scholars, when making a case in the 1980s for the relevance of postcolonial studies to Ireland, were, whether advertently or inadvertently, demanding an expansion of postcolonial studies to include amongst the ranks of the colonized/ex-colonized a population that was European and predominantly white Christian. Those who argue for the broadening of postcolonial research to include Central and Eastern Europe are making a similar demand. Such scholars claim, however, that this expansion would not only enhance scholarship on the ‘Second World’, but would bring about a necessary revision of a postcolonial critique that has hitherto been too narrowly focused on Western Europe and its overseas colonies. Janusz Korek, one of the editors of the online journal *Postcolonial Europe*, points out that Edward Said, considered by many to be the founder of postcolonial studies, recognized that Tsarist Russia possessed imperial territories that it

acquired through adjacence.<sup>20</sup> Nonetheless, Said's writings and the writings of those who came after him, Korek reminds us, rarely refer to the Russian Empire. Moreover, why should distinctions be formed, Korek asks, between the acquisition of neighbouring territory by an earlier Russia and 'the imperialist procedures of the Soviet Union (or Russia today), whose expansion was/is governed by similar mechanisms?'<sup>21</sup>

An article written by the Irish-born Clare Cavanagh has been assigned a key role in the writings of those who welcome such a broadening of postcolonial studies. The article, published initially in *Teksty Drugie* in 2003 under the title 'Postkolonialna Polska: Biała Plama na Mapia Współczesnej Teorii' [Postcolonial Poland: An Empty Space on the Map of Current Theory], was republished in 2004 in an English-language abbreviated version simply titled 'Postcolonial Poland'. My interest in Cavanagh's essay stems not only from the canonical status that it has been assigned in Polish postcolonial studies, but also from the significance that it places on Ireland. In this article, Cavanagh asserts that

Poland, which for almost two hundred years was continuously dominated by the three neighbouring powers and, at the beginning of the Second World War, was ruthlessly carved up by Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, has earned the right to participate fully in the debate surrounding the issues related to postcolonial cultural dependency.<sup>22</sup>

Its exclusion hitherto from this debate, Cavanagh claims, is the result of a 'strategic forgetfulness' on the part of postcolonial scholars reminiscent of that which caused the elisions in imperial discourse that such scholars supposedly seek to challenge and rectify. The master plot of postcolonial studies, like the master plot of imperialism itself, she argues, is both biased and incomplete. Notwithstanding the fact that 'intellectuals of the Second World view their present in postcolonial terms', mainstream postcolonial studies, following the path set out by Edward Said in *Culture and Imperialism*, has focused almost exclusively on 'the rise of the great bourgeois capitalist empires of the nineteenth century – chiefly those of Great Britain and France – and then follows their further fates by way of their latter-day inheritor, the United States'.<sup>23</sup> Neglecting to mention that it is in fact the poststructuralist strand of postcolonial studies that is now dominant and that



Marxist scholars – including Benita Parry, E. San Juan Jr., Aijaz Ahmad and Neil Lazarus – have put forward some of the most trenchant critiques of this scholarly field in its current form,<sup>24</sup> Cavanagh posits that the omission of Central and Eastern Europe from the postcolonial narrative is a direct result of the Marxist orientation of contemporary postcolonial scholarship. It is only to be expected, according to Cavanagh, that a body of writing embedded in Marxist philosophy would be reluctant to engage with ‘Second World’ intellectuals whose anti-colonial stance takes the form of a critique of the Soviet version of that philosophy and whose explorations of the legacies of imperialism include an analysis of the ‘seductive hold of communism’ on former Russian-controlled territories.<sup>25</sup> In response to Cavanagh’s claim that Marxist theorists are responsible for the omission of Poland from postcolonial studies, it should be pointed out that Polish postcolonial studies is even less likely to find favour with a postcolonial studies embedded in poststructuralism. The most notable feature of the poststructuralist strand of postcolonial studies is its critique of essentialist thinking, whether employed in imperialist discourse or nationalist rhetoric. There is clearly very little common-ground between this body of scholarship and the Polish postcolonial writings that defend ‘traditional, Catholic values and a “primordialist” understanding of nation’.<sup>26</sup>

References to Ireland in Polish postcolonial studies range from brief speculations as to what Polish critics could learn from Irish postcolonial scholars to more detailed analyses of Ireland’s success, notwithstanding its European location, in inserting itself in mainstream postcolonial studies. In ‘It is Colonialism After All’, Ewa Thompson states that while ‘the crossing of the narrow stretch of water separating Ireland and England’ could hardly be categorized as ‘an overseas invasion [. . .] that Ireland was colonized is beyond dispute and its situation slightly resembles what Poland went through’.<sup>27</sup>

Myroslav Shkandrij, in *Russia and Ukraine: Literature and the Discourse of Empire from Napoleonic to Postcolonial Times*, proclaims that ‘postcolonial studies now includes within its scope the experiences of Ireland’, suggesting that postcolonial scholars interested in the ‘Second World’ look to Irish culture as it ‘can illuminate many aspects of Eastern European literatures’.<sup>28</sup> In his references to Ireland in ‘Is the Post- in Postcolonial the Post- in Post-Soviet’, David Chioni Moore focuses on the expansion of postcolonial studies referred to by Shkandrij, pointing out that Ireland’s admission into

the ranks of the colonized has been facilitated by the fact that ‘the colonial hegemon is still England, the familiar villain in places such as Africa and India’.<sup>29</sup> Dariusz Skórczewski, in ‘Post-colonial Poland – (Im)possible Project’, is similarly interested in Ireland’s acceptance into the postcolonial framework, asking why ‘Ireland is recognized as a postcolonial country, while Poland is not’. In response to his own question, Skórczewski points to the Russo-centric nature of Slavic studies in the United States, a key location in defining the parameters and subject-matter of postcolonial studies. In contrast to their Polish equivalents, he says, Irish postcolonial scholars, such as David Lloyd, have made a considerable impact on American university circles, successfully ‘legitimizing’ the postcolonial status of Irish culture ‘in the discourse of Western humanities’. Claiming, however, that Irish academics concentrate their energies on proving ‘that Irish literature does not constitute an anomaly, as compared to existing models of postcolonialism’, Skórczewski accuses such scholars of making it ‘much harder to fight for the place of Poland and other countries in Central and Eastern Europe in postcolonial discourse’.<sup>30</sup> For Skórczewski, therefore, the inclusion of Ireland in what Clare Cavanagh refers to as the master plot of postcolonial studies has impeded rather than facilitated ‘Second World’ postcolonial studies. Cavanagh similarly draws attention to the international impact of Irish postcolonial scholarship, pointing out, in ‘Postcolonial Poland’, that Ireland is the only European country to have ‘generated a sizable literature in critical theory on its troubled colonial past and semipostcolonial present’.<sup>31</sup> Her knowledge of this literature and of its origins in the Field Day project are signalled by references to Seamus Deane and to Frederic Jameson’s *Modernism and Imperialism*, originally published as a Field Day pamphlet in 1988.<sup>32</sup> Notwithstanding Ireland’s claim to be a European colony/former colony, however, Irish postcolonial scholars, in Cavanagh’s view, have been as ‘wilfully blind’ as those elsewhere, enthusiastically participating in the ‘strategic forgetfulness’ that facilitates the omission of Central and Eastern Europe from mainstream postcolonial studies.<sup>33</sup> In the case of Ireland, this omission, she appears to suggest, has the added bonus of protecting the Irish people’s unique status as the colonized of Europe.<sup>34</sup>

Skórczewski and Cavanagh present post-1980s Irish postcolonial critics as strategically adhering to a Marxist-inflected master plot of postcolonial studies which

focuses on the empire-building projects of capitalist nations. This master plot, they claim, allows for Ireland's inclusion in the postcolonial metanarrative at the expense of other Europeans, particularly those living in Central and Eastern Europe. However, the relationship between imperialism and capitalism, which both claim has been over-emphasized by leftist postcolonial scholars, has long been the bedrock of debates about the workings of colonialism in Ireland. Nearly eighty years before Edward Said wrote *Culture and Imperialism*, the Irish national-Marxist thinker and activist, James Connolly, presented the national struggle in Ireland as against the English imperialist-capitalist project: 'The cause of labour is the cause of Ireland, the cause of Ireland is the cause of labour. They cannot be dissevered'.<sup>35</sup> Hence, Connolly saw no contradiction between his involvement in anti-colonial nationalist resistance and his commitment to international socialism. As stated by Robert Young,

Connolly was the first leader in a colonized nation to argue for the compatibility of socialism and nationalism, in doing so producing a position which would not only inspire Lenin and through him lead to the Third International, but which would subsequently become the defining characteristic of the triumphant tricontinental Marxism of the national liberation movements, including that of Fanon, but also that of Mao, Cabral and Guevara.<sup>36</sup>

The emphasis placed on capitalist modernity in an Irish postcolonial studies that emerged in the 1980s but draws some of its inspiration from Connolly's early writings has ensured that analyses of Ireland's colonial past and semi-colonial present are rarely reduced to discussions of straightforward power imbalances between a small peripheral society and its more affluent neighbour. This emphasis has instead allowed for an exploration of the complex blend of factors – economic, political, ideological and cultural – that have shaped present-day Ireland and its relationship not only with Britain, but with the wider world.

Ireland was a mixed settlement colony; its indigenous peoples were not annihilated, but the country did experience a pronounced reshaping of its population due to the plantation of British settlers in the Tudor, Cromwellian and Williamite conquests. The

most notable of these settlements, the Plantation of Ulster, resulted in the partition of the country with Northern Ireland remaining part of the United Kingdom following the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922 and the Republic of Ireland in 1949. Resistance to partition, most notably the reigniting of the Northern 'Troubles' in the late 1960s, provided impetus for the Good Friday Agreement of 1998 which implemented the current system of devolved government in Northern Ireland. This Agreement states that the north of Ireland will remain part of the United Kingdom until a majority of the people from both parts of the island of Ireland choose to unify the country. The Border and the long-standing ethno-religious conflict that it has given rise to, while the most obvious consequence of colonialism in present-day Ireland, is not, however, its only legacy. Joe Cleary states that in the early modern period Ireland 'underwent an exceptionally violent and accelerated process of colonial modernization in which every aspect of the indigenous society was almost wholly transformed in a very short period'.<sup>37</sup> While Cleary could be accused of underestimating what David Lloyd refers to as 'the intrinsic resistance of Irish ways to modernization',<sup>38</sup> it is certainly the case that in Ireland, as in other mixed settlement colonies, ideas and structures associated with the colonial regime quite quickly became the official ones. The policy of 'Surrender and Regrant', for example, which, from the 1540s to the early seventeenth century required those Irish chiefs who had not yet been displaced to give up their rights and lands as defined by Gaelic custom and receive them back from the crown in a form of absolute ownership more compatible with English property law constituted an aggressive attack not only on the Gaelic polity, but also on the non-modern system of succession and landholding that underpinned it.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, as further outlined by Cleary, early-modern Ireland, like the West Indies and the American colonies of the same period, was 'commercially reoriented' to service the 'expanding English mercantilist state' and facilitate integration into 'the world of North Atlantic trade'. An imperial mercantilist policy 'designed to prevent the colonies from developing independent trading links with each other' ensured that trade was 'channelled through [. . .] imperial centres'. This inhibited 'independent economic development and diversification within the colonies over the longer term', thereby establishing 'the structures that would condition future economic dependence'.<sup>40</sup>

Another important legacy of imperialism in Ireland, therefore, is a post-independence economic policy of dependent development that most overtly manifests itself in the courting of multinationals with the offer of both low corporation taxes and stable wages.<sup>41</sup> Indeed, Ireland's 'dependence on foreign resources' since formal independence, as Raymond Crotty provocatively states, has been as 'complete' as that on the potato in pre-Famine times. Writing over twenty years before the commencement of the country's most recent fiscal difficulties, Crotty pointed to the dangers of such over-reliance on a single economic source: 'Then mass famine ensued; now utter economic, political and social collapse will be the consequence'.<sup>42</sup> This policy of dependent development contributed to the market-pandering decision-making that resulted in both the Celtic Tiger and its spectacular demise, and, since that demise, has continued to shape the Irish government's response to EU/IMF-imposed economic targets. Dependent development in Ireland has been underpinned by a particularly potent variant of modernization discourse that forms a link between economic protectionism and sexual repression, and between free trade and sexual liberation. The further integration of Ireland into global capitalism is thus legitimized by aligning it with a greater sexual freedom that has brought in its stead such important and necessary measures as the legalization of contraception, the decriminalization of gay sex, and, more recently, the ratification of same-sex marriage. That this long overdue sexual liberation was hard fought for by Irish activists and has been accompanied by the increasing subjection of nearly every aspect of Irish society, including women's bodies, to the logic of market forces is rarely alluded to in public discourse.

A Marxist-inflected strand of Irish postcolonial studies that draws on Connolly's early contributions to political and economic debate in Ireland can most effectively challenge the dominance of modernization discourse by both disentangling it from the key social measures that it is so keen to take credit for and revealing the roots of this discourse in the imperial embrace of Progress. In his speeches and writings, Connolly pointed to the ideological function served by the developmental progressivism that informed both English imperialism and Irish bourgeois nationalism. In an early pamphlet, *Erin's Hope* (1897), for example, Connolly claimed that so-called 'progressive ideas' are aligned with, and uphold, 'the present order of society'.<sup>43</sup> Consequently, for

Connolly, an Irish political autonomy that failed to challenge progressivism would simply reproduce the economic and political paradigms of the imperialist-capitalist project. Genuine liberation from imperialism, Connolly argued, entailed a genuine alternative to political and social conventions, and hence necessitated a rejection of the conceptual frameworks that underpinned these conventions. In Connolly's analysis, that which 'unfitted [Ireland's] sons for the competitive scramble for existence' would provide the basis for a 'just social system' which 'recognize[d] the right of all to an equal opportunity to develop to their fullest capacity all the powers and capabilities inherent in them'.<sup>44</sup> Following in the tradition of Connolly, the Irish postcolonial scholar David Lloyd locates resistance in the still recalcitrant formations of Irish culture that defy historicist or developmental temporality.<sup>45</sup>

In Ireland, as in many former colonies elsewhere, imperialism has profoundly shaped the form that capitalism has taken. Consequently, the strand of postcolonial studies that is of most value to Ireland is that which allows for a strong critique of colonial capitalist modernity. Polish postcolonial scholars have argued that the dominance of a leftist postcolonial approach has resulted in the exclusion of central and Eastern European countries from the postcolonial framework, but their wholesale rejection of this approach has resulted in a Polish postcolonial scholarship that addresses the question as to whether Polish history should be viewed in the context of colonialism almost entirely with reference to either Polish people's conscious understanding of their postcolonial status or the ways in which this status, unbeknownst to them, manifests itself in their behaviour. Hence David Chioni Moore argues that the reluctance on behalf of some scholars specializing in Central and Eastern Europe to embrace postcolonial theory is in fact further indication of the postcolonial status of the region as this reluctance stems from a connected desire to both differentiate European post-Soviets from non-Europeans and emphasize the Westernness of Central and Eastern Europe. Such examples of 'compensatory behaviour' and 'mimicry', Moore reminds us, are viewed by theorists of colonialism as the unavoidable 'result of extended subjugation'.<sup>46</sup> Moreover, the repudiation of a leftist postcolonial approach has facilitated the establishment of a relatively cosy relationship between Polish postcolonial studies and the Polish Right. Ewa Thompson, whose publication *Imperial Knowledge* (2000) is considered a

foundational text of ‘Second World’ postcolonial studies, for example, openly associates her scholarship with conservative politics.<sup>47</sup> Michael D. Kennedy, in *Cultural Formations of Post-Communism*, refers to the inclusive vision of civil society advanced by dissident East European intellectuals of the 1970s and 1980s. Following the collapse of communism, however, this vision was displaced in the new post-revolutionary states, he tells us, by a politico-economic approach that emphasized the creation of the market over the promotion of equality and pluralism.<sup>48</sup> Consequently, post-socialist discourses in ‘Second World’ countries, of which Polish postcolonial studies is an example, often represent a tacit affirmation of neoliberalism. Notwithstanding corresponding claims to colonial status, therefore, obvious disjunctions exist between this variant of postcolonial studies and an Irish postcolonial scholarship that, when inspired by Connolly’s critique of colonial capitalist modernity, offers perhaps the strongest intellectual opposition to neoliberalism in present-day Ireland.<sup>49</sup>

From an Irish perspective, European postcolonial studies, particularly the body of work that attempts to establish other European locations as colonies/former colonies, potentially offers a useful challenge to the argument that Ireland should either be examined within a European framework or a postcolonial one. That said, this approach gives rise to questions that require further debate. Does the expansion of the term ‘colonial’ to facilitate the categorization of a greater number of European societies as either colonies, internal colonies or former colonies reduce its analytical value? How best can we theorize the overlaps and disparities between locations like Ireland which were part of the ‘great’ capitalist empires of Western Europe, and the societies of the ‘Second World’ that were subsumed by a nominally-socialist regime? Is European postcolonial studies, as it is currently conceptualized, too narrowly focused on Western Europe? And, if so, to what extent is this narrow focus facilitated by ‘Second World’ postcolonial scholars who align themselves with the more conservative anti-Russian/pro-nationalist elements of their societies? These questions are intended as a springboard for further discussion between those who rank themselves among the colonized/ex-colonized of Europe.

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<sup>1</sup> Field Day was originally founded in 1980 by the playwright Brian Friel and the actor Stephen Rea. Seamus Deane, Seamus Heaney, Tom Paulin, David Hammond and Thomas Kilroy later became involved. The project, which was intended as a response to an on-going political impasse in Northern Ireland that Field Day viewed as a colonial crisis, committed itself to a radical re-examination of Irish society. This re-examination initially took the form of theatrical productions, as in the staging of Brian Friel's play *Translations* (1980), and the publication of pamphlets and a five-volume anthology of Irish writing. The most recent medium employed by Field Day is the *Field Day Review*, an annual journal focused on Irish literary and political culture.

<sup>2</sup> Clare Carroll and Patricia King (eds), *Ireland and Postcolonial Theory*, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003.

<sup>3</sup> Joseph Lennon, *Irish Orientalism: A Literary and Intellectual History*, Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2004.

<sup>4</sup> Colin Graham, "'Liminal Spaces': Post-colonial Theories and Irish Culture", *Irish Review*, 16, Autumn/Winter 1994, pp 29–43; Joe Cleary, "'Misplaced Ideas?': Locating and Dislocating Ireland in Colonial and Postcolonial Studies", in Crystal Bartolovich and Neil Lazarus (eds), *Marxism, Modernity and Postcolonial Studies*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, pp 101–24; Eoin Flannery, *Ireland and Postcolonial Studies: Theory, Discourse, Utopia*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

<sup>5</sup> Declan Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland: The Literature of the Modern Nation*, London: Jonathan Cape, 1995.

<sup>6</sup> Linda Connolly, *The Irish Women's Movement: From Revolution to Devolution*, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002, p 30.

<sup>7</sup> Emer Nolan, 'Postcolonial Literary Studies, Nationalism, and Feminist Critique in Contemporary Ireland', *Éire-Ireland*, 42(1&2), Spring/Summer 2007, pp 336–61, p 338.

<sup>8</sup> Included in the *Oxford Literary Review* special issue 13(1–2) are: Luke Gibbons, 'Race against Time: Racial Discourse and Irish History', pp 95–117; David Lloyd, 'Race under Representation', pp 62–94; Clair Wills, 'Language Politics, Narrative, Political Violence', pp 20–60.

<sup>9</sup> Following his execution, James Connolly was claimed by Irish bourgeois nationalism as a potent symbol of its struggle. In a 2000 essay, Gregory Dobbins challenged this co-option, outlining the process whereby 'a prototypical theorist of decolonisation' who was 'one of Ireland's most radical thinkers' was converted into a 'muted national symbol'. Dobbins, 'Whenever Green is Red: James Connolly and Postcolonial Theory', *Nepantla: Views from the South*, 1(3), 2000, pp 605–48, p 607. Three years later, David Lloyd contributed an essay on Connolly to an *Interventions* special issue on 'Ireland's Modernities' in which he drew comparisons between Connolly's writings and later publications by such key 'national Marxist' thinkers as Frantz Fanon, Amílcar Cabral and José Carlos Mariátegui. Lloyd, 'Rethinking National Marxism: James Connolly and "Celtic Communism"', *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, 5(3), 2003, pp 345–70. Thus, the 2008 *Interventions* special issue on Connolly is part of a relatively recent re-situating of Connolly as an anti-colonial revolutionary who was also 'perhaps the first theorist to rethink Marxism according to the specificity of colonial history'. Gregory Dobbins, 'Connolly, the Archive, and Method', *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, 10(1), 2008, pp 48–66, p 48.

<sup>10</sup> In 1988, Field Day published a pamphlet by Said titled *Yeats and Decolonization* and a pamphlet by Jameson titled *Modernism and Imperialism*. Moreover, shortly before his death in 2003, Said wrote an Afterword for the aforementioned *Ireland and Postcolonial Theory* (2003) in which he drew connections between Ireland and Palestine.

<sup>11</sup> In 2005, 'Outside History: Irish New Histories and the "Subalternity" Effect' was republished, alongside work by Ranajit Guha, in Gaurav Desai and Supriya Nair (eds), *Postcolonialisms: An Anthology of Cultural Theory and Criticism*. Joe Cleary's 'Misplaced Ideas?' was first published, in shortened form, in the aforementioned *Marxism, Modernity and Postcolonial Studies* (2002). This collection also includes writings by such eminent scholars of colonialism as Benita Parry and E. San Juan, Jr.

<sup>12</sup> Liam Kennedy, 'Modern Ireland: Post-Colonial Society or Post-Colonial Pretensions?', *Colonialism, Religion and Nationalism in Ireland*, Belfast: Queen's University Institute of Irish Studies, 1996, pp 167–181, pp 179–180.

<sup>13</sup> Edna Longley, 'Introduction: Revising "Irish Literature"', *The Living Stream: Literature and Revisionism in Ireland*, Newcastle upon Tyne: Bloodaxe Books, 1994, pp 9–68, p 28, p 30.



- <sup>14</sup> Joe Cleary, “‘Misplaced Ideas?’: Colonialism, Location and Dislocation in Irish Studies”, in Clare Carroll and Patricia King (eds), *Ireland and Postcolonial Theory*, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003, pp 16–45, p 22, p 24.
- <sup>15</sup> Raymond Crotty, *Ireland in Crisis: A Study of Capitalist Colonial Underdevelopment*, Dingle: Brandon, 1986, pp 15–16, p 11.
- <sup>16</sup> Michael Cronin, ‘Minding Ourselves: A New Face for Irish Studies’, *Field Day Review*, 4, 2008, pp 174–85, p 184.
- <sup>17</sup> Ronit Lentin, ‘Black Bodies and “Headless Hookers”’: Alternative Global Narratives for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Ireland’, *Irish Review*, 33, Spring 2005, pp 1–12, p 5.
- <sup>18</sup> For an overview of the 2004 citizenship referendum and an analysis of its implications, see Lentin, ‘Black Bodies and “Headless Hookers”’, pp 5–8.
- <sup>19</sup> See, for example, Jane Schneider (ed), *Italy’s ‘Southern Question’: Orientalism in One Country*, Oxford: Berg, 1998; Michael Hechter, *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development, 1536–1966*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975.
- <sup>20</sup> See Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, London: Vintage Books, 1994, p 9.
- <sup>21</sup> Janusz Korek, ‘Central and Eastern Europe from a Postcolonial Perspective’, *Postcolonial Europe*, April 2009, pp 1–14, p 2. Web. Available at: <http://www.postcolonial-europe.eu/en/essays/60--central-and-eastern-europe-from-a-postcolonial-perspective.html> (accessed 23 September 2014).
- <sup>22</sup> Clare Cavanagh, ‘Postkolonialna Polska: Biała Plama na Mapia Współczesnej Teorii’ [Postcolonial Poland: An Empty Space on the Map of Contemporary Theory], *Teksty Drugie*, 2–3, 2003, pp 60–71, pp 63–64. Cited in English in Aleksander Fiut, ‘In the Shadow of Empires: Postcolonialism in Central and Eastern Europe – Why Not?’, *Teksty Drugie*, Special Issue English Edition: Postcolonial or Postdependence Studies?, 1(5), 2014, pp 34–40, p 35.
- <sup>23</sup> Clare Cavanagh, ‘Postcolonial Poland’, *Common Knowledge*, 10(1), Winter 2004, pp 82–92, pp 82, 84, 83.
- <sup>24</sup> See, for example, Benita Parry, ‘Problems in Current Theories of Colonial Discourse’, *Oxford Literary Review*, 9(1–2), 1987, pp 27–58; Aijaz Ahmad, ‘The Politics of Literary Postcoloniality’, *Race & Class: A Journal for Black and Third World Liberation*, 36(3), January–March 1995, pp 1–20; E. San Juan Jr., *Beyond Postcolonial Theory*, New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998; Neil Lazarus, *The Postcolonial Unconscious*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- <sup>25</sup> Cavanagh, ‘Postcolonial Poland’, p 83.
- <sup>26</sup> Stanley Bill, ‘Seeking the Authentic: Polish Culture and the Nature of Postcolonial Theory’, *nonsite.org*, 12, August 2014, pp 1–23, p 6. Available at: <http://nonsite.org/article/seeking-the-authentic-polish-culture-and-the-nature-of-postcolonial-theory> (accessed 22 October 2014).
- <sup>27</sup> Ewa Thompson, ‘It is Colonialism After All: Some Epistemological Remarks’, *Teksty Drugie*, Special Issue English Edition: Postcolonial or Postdependence Studies?, 1(5), 2014, pp 67–81, p 68.
- <sup>28</sup> Myroslav Shkandrij, *Russia and Ukraine: Literature and the Discourse of Empire from Napoleonic to Postcolonial Times*, Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2001, p xii.
- <sup>29</sup> David Chioni Moore, ‘Is the Post- in Postcolonial the Post- in Post-Soviet?: Towards a Global Postcolonial Critique’, in Gaurav Desai and Supriya Nair (eds), *Postcolonialisms: An Anthology of Cultural Theory and Criticism*, Oxford: Berg, 2005, pp 514–538, p 517.
- <sup>30</sup> Dariusz Skórczewski, ‘Post-colonial Poland – (Im)possible Project’, *Teksty Drugie*, Special Issue English Edition: Postcolonial or Postdependence Studies?, 1(5), 2014, pp 82–95, p 85, p 91.
- <sup>31</sup> Cavanagh, ‘Postcolonial Poland’, p 85.
- <sup>32</sup> Companion Field Day pamphlets, published in the same year, include the aforementioned pamphlet by Edward Said and Terry Eagleton’s ‘Nationalism: Irony and Commitment’. All three pamphlets were later republished in Seamus Deane (ed.), *Nationalism, Colonialism, and Literature*, Minneapolis, MN: Minnesota University Press, 1990.
- <sup>33</sup> Cavanagh, ‘Postcolonial Poland’, p 92, p 82.
- <sup>34</sup> See Cavanagh, ‘Postcolonial Poland’, p 85.
- <sup>35</sup> James Connolly, ‘The Irish Flag’ (1916), *Collected Works*, Volume 2, Dublin: New Books, 1987, pp 173–176, p 175.
- <sup>36</sup> Robert Young, *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction*, London: Blackwell, 2001, p 305.

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<sup>37</sup> Cleary, 'Misplaced Ideas?', p 32.

<sup>38</sup> David Lloyd, *Ireland after History*, Cork: Cork University Press, 1999, p 8.

<sup>39</sup> Though Gaelic landholding differed from region to region, 'certain characteristics were common throughout the country, the most notable of which was the absence of a concept of absolute ownership of land. Even the overlord, who occupied the highest rung of this landholding system, did not "own" land. Certain lands were attached to his office, but [ . . . ] these demesne lands were technically the property of the entire sept as opposed to the property of the individual lord.' While 'Surrender and Regrant' undoubtedly transformed property relations in Ireland, it should be noted that rights of occupancy, a key feature of Gaelic landholding, continued to exert an influence until at least the end of the nineteenth century. Heather Laird, *Subversive Law in Ireland: From 'Unwritten Law' to the Dáil Courts*, Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005, p 68.

<sup>40</sup> Cleary, 'Misplaced Ideas?', p 33. Cleary's article is shaped by world systems theory; it is underpinned by a 'long waves' view of capitalism, and considers development and underdevelopment as closely bound up with each other as opposed to separate phenomena.

<sup>41</sup> In the period leading up to and during the Celtic Tiger, a 'social partnership' between the Irish government, employer groups and Ireland's principle trade unions ensured that wage levels and rates of taxation stayed at a level designed to attract further multinational investment from outside Ireland.

<sup>42</sup> Crotty, *Ireland in Crisis*, p 80. Ireland, of course, is not the only country to have experienced a severe economic downturn. Indeed, global capitalism remains in crisis. However, the effects of this crisis have been unevenly distributed, with Ireland's dependent economy making it particularly vulnerable to economic collapse.

<sup>43</sup> James Connolly, 'Erin's Hope: The End and the Means' (1897), in Donal Nevin (ed.), *Writings of James Connolly*, Volume 2, Dublin: Siptu, 2011, pp 1–22, p 8.

<sup>44</sup> Connolly, 'Erin's Hope', p 8, p 19, p 19.

<sup>45</sup> See, for example, David Lloyd, *Irish Culture and Colonial Modernity, 1800–2000: The Transformation of Oral Space*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

<sup>46</sup> Chioni Moore, 'Is the Post- in Postcolonial the Post- in Post-Soviet?', p 522.

<sup>47</sup> For an analysis of Polish right-wing postcolonialism, see Stanley Bill, 'Seeking the Authentic', and Leszek Koczanowicz, 'Post-Communism and Cultural Wars', *Teksty Drugie*, Special Issue English Edition: Postcolonial or Postdependence Studies?, 1(5), 2014, pp 167–180.

<sup>48</sup> Michael D. Kennedy, *Cultural Formations of Post-Communism: Emancipation, Transition, Nation, and War*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002.

<sup>49</sup> For an example of the opposition offered by Irish postcolonial scholars to neo-liberalism, see *The Irish Review*, Special Issue: Criticism and the Crisis, 46, Autumn 2013.