Mad Colonial Narrators in Anglo-Irish Literature: Lemuel Gulliver and Freddie Montgomery

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ABSTRACT

This discussion highlights parallels between the narrators, Lemuel Gulliver of Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) and Freddie Montgomery of John Banville's *The Book of Evidence* (1989). The argument calls on post-colonialism, Foucaultian theory of "will to truth" and the narrative theory of Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan to emphasize similarities in the rendering of mental degeneration in Gulliver and Montgomery. The colonial-induced mental breakdown of both narrators can be said to unravel, not so much in the tale these narrators think they are relating, but instead between the lines of their stories in narratives which continually focus attention back onto themselves. Despite the 260 years separating these works, the madness of both Gulliver and Montgomery can be interpreted as a reluctance on their respective parts to shed established colonial identities once the colonial stage has receded.

Key words: Colonialism, Madness, Narrative, Swift, Banville, Gulliver, Irish

INTRODUCTION

The following discussion revisits literary theories of the late 20th century to highlight parallels in the blend of post-colonial discourse and narrative manipulation which the Irish writers, Jonathan Swift and John Banville wielded in creating the respective perspectives and ultimate "insanities" of Lemuel Gulliver and Freddie Montgomery. Richard Pine argues that in Ireland, the post-colonial experience has been recurring in literary terms since the emergence of the written culture from the oral.[1] *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), described by Claude Rawson as a trap for innocent readers,[2] could be classed as an ironic post-colonial writing back[3] in so far as Swift's satirical mimicry of seventeenth and eighteenth-century travel narratives, as outlined by Terry Eagleton[4] and Clement Hawes,[5] presages later post-colonial rewritings of colonial texts.[6] Concerning Banville, many scholars highlight the Beckettian or Joycean influences on his work.[7] Derek Hand describes Banville's work as possessing, "in Beckettian terms, an overwhelming preoccupation with failure".[8] Tony Jackson describes *The Book of Evidence* (1989) as revolving "around a character who lives in a world that in some senses takes for granted the disillusionment with knowledge that had come belatedly to the astronomers" (515).[9] To use the words of Eamonn Kelly, when it comes to Banville, "You'll need to wear your best European-Philosophical-Post-Modern-Post-Structural-Freudian slippers to get the best out of what is on offer …".[10] In view of all this, 20th century Freddie Montgomery and 18th century Lemuel Gulliver, on many levels, would seem unlikely bedfellows. In *Gulliver's Travels,* Lemuel Gulliver narrates four of his own travel adventures beginning with his departure from Bristol on May 4, 1699. Meanwhile, in *The Book of Evidence,* Freddie Montgomery while in custody for murder, writes his own book of evidence which reads more like a self-indulgent voyage through his life and life-long anachronistic colonial worldview of superiority than a defence of his actions. Indeed, to say nothing of the contrast in story-lines, the vast differences between the historical, political, social and cultural contexts of Swift and Banville could be considered enough justification for shying away from a comparison of these works. However, it is precisely because of the many differences that the similarities are of interest.[11] This paper sets the singular task of a post-colonial interpretation of the narrative and insanity of Montgomery in *The Book of Evidence* in parallel with the narrative and insanity of Gulliver in *Gulliver's Travels.* The aim is to show congruities in how madness as opposed to hybridity is portrayed as the post-colonial fate of the colonizer.[12] After an application of colonial theory to the texts, this discussion will suggest two ways of interpreting madness in relation to both Gulliver and Montgomery. Finally, similarities will be outlined in both Swift and Banville's use of the unreliable storyteller in the portrayal of their respective protagonists' descent into madness when deprived of the colonial stage.[13]

Nandy describes colonialism as a psychological state rooted in earlier forms of social consciousness in both colonized and colonizer. He maintains that in the colonial culture, "identification with the aggressor bound the rulers along with the ruled in an unbreakable binary relationship.[14] In *Gulliver's Travels* Swift satirically plays on Gulliver's en-

trapment and subsequent vacillation between the binary opposite identities of colonizer and colonized.[15] It is ultimately Gulliver's inability to continue vacillating between the mentalities of superior colonizer and inferior colonized that triggers his madness at the end of his travels.[16] The land of the Houyhnhnm offers Gulliver a fixed mirror image of his inferior self in the form of the Yahoo which, try as he might, he cannot shake off. On returning to England, his inability to switch back to a perception of the Yahoos/humans as superior and the Houyhnhnms/horses as inferior may be considered a psychosis, similar, in ways, to cases outlined by Franz Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth*.[17] Meanwhile, Freddie Montgomery of Banville's *The Book of Evidence* would seem the last stand in a long history of resistance within his own family to Irish post-colonial hybridity. However, without an inferior colonized Other to define it, Montgomery's identity presents as an act, a role he cannot stop playing, and is also reminiscent of the cases of psychosis highlighted by Fanon. However, both Gulliver and Montgomery's insanities can also be interpreted in the Foucaultian sense of madness[18] as an unpopular discourse post-colonial society wishes to curb.

The inanity of Gulliver's eccentric insistence on the inferiority of the Yahoo/human back in England where the discourse of superior Yahoo/human and inferior Houyhnhnm/horse dominates, ultimately corrals Gulliver's obscure discourse on the superiority of the Houyhnhnm into the category of madness. Likewise, Montgomery's discourse of superiority without the appropriate colonial stage to define it, presents as madness in a post-colonial Ireland that has moved on. In short, for the purpose of this argument madness will be interpreted either in the Foucaultian sense of marginalized discourse or in the psychotic sense as outlined in case studies by Fanon. Finally, the narrative theories of Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan and others, help unravel the madness of narrators, Gulliver and Montgomery from their corresponding texts. The stories of Gulliver and Montgomery's colonial-induced psychoses are revealed, not so much in the tales these narrators think they are relating, but instead between the lines of their stories in narratives which continually focus attention back onto the narrator[19].

THE COLONIZER'S REFUSAL TO DECOLONIZE

Gerry Smyth considers the violence of colonialism and decolonization one of the major reasons for the reoccurrence of madness as a theme in Irish fiction. According to Smyth, the decolonizing subject, should he attempt to resist the colonial logic of the Manichean allegory[20] or mimesis, becomes in danger of alienation and may slip into a madness which only cements the opposition between (rational) colonizer and (irrational) colonized. Using the arguments of both Ashis Nandy and Franz Fanon, Smyth emphasizes how the decolonizing subject's resistance to colonization from within the psychological rules set by the rulers, means that the subject remains a victim of alien modes of thought, trapped within a colonialist logic of Self and Other.[21] However, issues of decolonization preoccupy both colonizer as well as colonized. For example, the character of Mr Flory in George Orwell's

Burmese Days (1934) embodies all the characteristics, not of the colonized, but of the colonizer in the process of mental decolonization:

Was it possible that they could go on [...] repeating word for word the same evil-minded drivel [...] What a civilisation is this of ours—this godless civilisation founded on whisky, Blackwood's and the 'Bonzo' pictures! God have mercy on us, for all of us are part of it.

Flory did not say any of this, and he was at some pains not to show it in his face.[22]

Although Flory himself is tormented in his role as superior colonizer over the native Burmese, he, nonetheless, conforms to it: "'Steady on,' he said at last, sullenly and rather feebly. 'Steady on. There's no need to get so excited. I never suggested having any native members in here'" (22). Thus Flory's case can be taken as an example of how issues of decolonization can preoccupy the colonizer who is still operating within the colonial system. However, according to Smyth, a decolonizing subject may also resist colonialism by refusing to conform to its structures of Manichean allegory. If the decolonizing subject resists colonialism from outside its structures, he likewise risks becoming alienated to such a degree that insanity may take hold (*The Novel and the Nation* 49). I would argue that the respective identities and ultimate neuroses of Gulliver and Montgomery can be interpreted as stemming from the Self/Other logic of colonialism. However, the mental instabilities of Gulliver and Montgomery do not stem from any attempt on their parts to resist colonialism from either within or without the colonial system as described by Smyth. Their neuroses stem rather from a resistance on their parts to decolonize. By way of example, a similar reluctance to decolonize could be said to lie at the root of Gabriel Conroy's isolation from his housemaids, peers and wife in James Joyce's "The Dead" (1914). Although he does not descend into madness, Gabriel seems to have descended into an isolation instigated by his reluctance, in the face of a decolonizing Ireland, to discard what could be described as a "mimetic" identity.[23] Conroy, whom Miss Ivors reproachfully describes as a "West-Briton", asserts not only that Irish is not his language but that he is sick of his own country.[24] However, while Conroy's reluctance to discard his mimetic identity only seems to isolate him from wife, peers and servants, Gulliver's disinclination to decolonize triggers the onset of insanity.[25] Unable to assume the Houyhnhnm identity, Gulliver ultimately makes an uncompromising rejection of his human/Yahoo identity, seeing no room for compromise or maneuver between the two: "[...] so horrible was the idea I conceived of returning to live in the society and under the government of Yahoos [*England*]. For in such a solitude as I desired I could at least enjoy my own thoughts, and reflect with delight on the virtues of those inimitable Houyhnhnms, without any opportunity of degenerating into the vices and corruptions of my own species."[26] Once the presence of the inferior Yahoo Other in the land of the Houyhnhnms prevents him from continuing to vacillate naively, as the occasion might require, between the roles of superior colonizer and inferior colonized, Gulliver on his final return to England, is unable to once again embrace the English discourse of superior Yahoo. He can reach no compromising attitude

or middle ground that would help him to better function in an England where the superior Houyhnhnm/horse is kept in stables by Yahoos.[27]

Montgomery's resistance to decolonization can also be interpreted as the catalyst for his mental breakdown. Montgomery's role of superiority, given its "Castle Catholic"[28] roots, could actually be interpreted as springing from a mimetic origin. Despite how well he plays the colonialist part, there are subtle but fundamental flaws in Montgomery's role. For example, while he might describe his mother as exhibiting "the broad brow and high cheekbones of her Dutch forebears" (*TBOE* 51), he also refers to her as barely literate (44) and with the "broad face and heavy hair of a tinker's wife" (41). Montgomery's father was not a Protestant but a "Castle Catholic".[29] While Montgomery might at times refer to him as a country squireen, his mother describes her husband as "a mick": "I should have known better, she said, than to marry a mick" (60). Neither does Montgomery's sexuality conform to his colonialist identity. According to Ashis Nandy, colonialism "produced a cultural consensus in which political and socio-economic dominance symbolized the dominance of men and masculinity over women and femininity" (*The Intimate Enemy* 4). However, the colonial Victorian upper class was expected to "affirm its masculinity through sexual distance, abstinence and self-control" (10). This does not coincide with the picture Montgomery presents of his sexuality:

Those burning noons, in that room and countless others like it – my God, I tremble to think of them now. I could not resist her careless nudity, the weight and density of that glimmering flesh […] I liked to watch the island men, too, hunched over their pastis and their thimbles of turbid coffee, swivelling their lizard eyes as she went past. That's right, you bastards, yearn, yearn. (*TBOE* 8-10)

Meanwhile, Montgomery, despite the identity of superiority he assumes, seems only too aware of his sameness to his Other: "I looked in their eyes and saw myself ennobled there, and so could forget for a moment what I was, a paltry, shivering thing, just like them, full of longing and loathing, solitary, afraid, racked by doubts, and dying" (11). Indeed, at times he seems to class himself as inferior to the Irish Other: "Ah, these poor, simple lives, so many, across which I have dragged my trail of slime" (93). Montgomery's distinguished heritage is almost that of the colonizer but not quite and with the "strong mixture of Catholic and Calvinist blood [*coursing*] in [*his*] veins" (98), subsequently raises suspicions regarding its possible mimetic origin. However, regardless of from where it stems, the prime function of Montgomery's assumed identity is to distinguish him from the Irish: "I thought it hardly appropriate for a woman of my mother's position in society –her position! – in society! – to be so chummy with a stable-girl" (74). However, as we shall see, the post-colonial climate has made the task of maintaining his superiority increasingly difficult for Freddie.[30]

According to Homi K. Bhabha, hybridity undermines the colonial Manichean allegory of inferior colonized and superior colonizer.[31] For Bhabha, it is only through the exploration of the binary opposites of the Manichean allegory and hybridity, a third space between them, that the politics

of polarity may be evaded (56). However, as illustrated, hybridity, the gateway to "the others of ourselves" (Bhabha 56) is unattainable for Gulliver back home in England because of his preoccupation with the superiority of the Houyhnhnm/horse. It is not so easily embraced by mimic-man Montgomery either.[32] Unfortunately, his professed identity as one of the "gilded children of poor old addled Europe" (*TBOE* 66) has definition only in its difference to an inferior Other: "We presided among this rabble, Daphne and I, with a kind of grand detachment, like an exiled king and queen waiting daily for word of the counter-rebellion and the summons from the palace to return" (10). However, post-colonial Ireland would seem to have left Freddie and his lineage with no inferior binary opposite from which to mirror back a superior identity of the self. The following lines display Montgomery's difficulty in adjusting his outlook to more modern hybrid times when the inferior colonized may legally become master of the colonizer's estate:

I suspect she [*Joanne*] was as surprised as I when the will was read. I find it hard to see her as the mistress of Coolgrange. Perhaps that is what my mother intended-after her, the drip. Ah, that is unworthy of me, my new seriousness. I do not hate her for disinheriting me. I think that in her way she was trying to teach me something, to make me look more closely at things, perhaps, to pay more attention to people, such as this poor clumsy girl, with her freckles and her timid smile and her almost invisible eyebrows. (*TBOE* 220)

A COLONIAL-INSTIGATED PSYCHOSIS

As emphasized by Ashis Nandy, the structures of thought which characterize the specific historical phenomena of colonialism and decolonization do not simply disappear at the moment when the colonial power leaves. Instead, psychological systems remain well into the post-colonial period and produce perceivable effects in the individual and in society. Nandy stresses the mental damage that colonialism does to the oppressor as well as to the oppressed (2). Meanwhile, according to Franz Fanon, the "victors" in the colonial encounter "are ultimately camouflaged victims, at an advanced stage of psychosocial decay" (*The Wretched* XVI). The following quote from *The Wretched of the Earth* illustrates the general inability of the superior colonizer, in this case a police inspector/torturer, to discard the role of superior colonialist outside its context and the inevitable psychosis which ensues: "But what really frightened him was one evening when his wife had criticized him particularly for hitting his children too much. (She had even said to him, 'My word, anyone'd think you were going mad.') He threw himself upon her, beat her and tied her to a chair, saying to himself, 'I'll teach her once and for all that I'm master in this house'" (Fanon, 215). Gulliver bears resemblance to the subject in this excerpt in that once the presence of the Yahoo fixes him irreversibly in the role of inferior Other, he cannot adjust back in England where his praise and mimicry of the Houyhnhnm/horse is inappropriate. On his return home he is unable to bear the touch of his wife whom he describes as an "odious animal" (*GT* 312). Neither can he endure his spouse or children in his presence (312). Mean-

while, five years after his return he is conversing, at least four hours a day, with his two stone-horses with whom he professes to live in great amity (312). "I fell to imitate their gait and gesture, which is now grown into an habit" (308). Likewise, Montgomery cannot discard the fossilized role of superior colonizer and persists in attempting to perpetuate this anachronistic discourse in an attempt to distinguish himself from a long-since vanished inferior Irish Other. He says of his father: "My father never referred to the place as anything but Kingstown: he had no time for the native jabber" (*TBOE* 27). Even Montgomery's murder of Josie Bell, from within the parameters of his outlook of superiority, would seem hardly more than an academic quibble. Whom he has murdered seems more an issue to him than the fact that he has murdered: "That was when I realised, for the first time, it was *one of theirs* I had killed" (211).

THE MARGINALIZED DISCOURSE OF THE MADMAN

However, the madness of both Gulliver and Montgomery can also be interpreted in the Foucaultian sense of a discourse corralled into the category of insanity by society's more dominant discourses. Gulliver's discourse of madness advocates the superiority of horses over humans: "The united praise of the whole race would be of less consequence to me than the neighing of those two degenerate Houyhnhnms I keep in my stable; because from these, degenerate as they are, I still improve in some virtues, without any mixture of vice" (*GT* 4-5).[33] According to Foucault, the production of discourse in every society is controlled, selected, organized, and circulated according to procedures whose function it is to avert the powers and dangers of discourse. In other words, societal structures tend to nurture a discourse which maintains the status quo while curbing any discourse that threatens it. Consequently, the dominant discourses in society may fringe discourses which they cannot assimilate into the category of madness. Foucault goes on to point out how the madman's speech may have the power of uttering a hidden truth, or of perceiving in naivety, what another in wisdom cannot see (51-53). There is truth in Gulliver's logic. He relates his (Houyhnhnm) master's convincing argument for the superiority of the Houyhnhnm's body over the Yahoo's: "He then began to find fault with other parts of my body […] my eyes placed directly in front, so that I could not look on either side without turning my head; that I was not able to feed myself without lifting one of my fore-feet to my mouth […] that my whole body wanted a fence against heat and cold, which I was forced to put on and off every day with tediousness and trouble" (*GT* 267). All of these points are indeed valid criticisms of the human body. However, because the discourse of Gulliver's fellow countrymen is fuelled by a discourse which desires the human body to be different as a signifier of human superiority over animals, Gulliver's agreement with the Houyhnhnm discourse on the inferiority of the human/Yahoo body falls outside of his home society's circulating discourse and, subsequently, into the category of madness.

Montgomery's petrified colonialist identity in a modern Ireland could also be interpreted in the Foucaultian sense of

a discourse marginalized into the category of madness by society's more dominant discourses.[34] Freddie Montgomery emphasizes how public opinion considers him insane, an opinion Montgomery can well understand as his remarks indicate: "I smiled, Mad-dog Montgomery, captured at last" (*TBOE* 198). However, there is also truth in "Mad-dog" Montgomery's speech for perhaps the Behrenses and others of his "set" (20) who move outside the parameters of conventional post-colonial Irish discourse. Inspector Haslet's scepticism regarding the truth of Freddie Montgomery's book of evidence, whether justified or not, is reminiscent of the historical reaction to the speech of the madman as outlined by Foucault: "He gave me a wry look. Did you put in about being a scientist, he said and knowing the Behrens woman, and owing money, all that stuff? I smiled. It's my story, I said, and I'm sticking to it. […] Come on, Freddie, he said, how much of it is true? It was the first time he had called me by my name. True, Inspector? I said. All of it. None of it. Only the shame" (220). The only truth Freddie Montgomery admits to in his book of evidence is his shame. However, there is a reason why this truth is dismissed by Inspector Haslet along with the rest of Montgomery's story. Montgomery's truth (shame) has relevance not for the post-colonial Irish masses, but for the few remaining others of his "set" (20). "Ever since I reached what they call the use of reason I had been doing one thing and thinking another, because the weight of things seemed so much greater than that of thoughts. What I said was never exactly what I felt, what I felt was never what it seemed I should feel, though the feelings were what felt genuine, and right, and inescapable" (124). Montgomery reveals that his entire identity has been an act, which he inherited from his family:

[…] the world, the only worthwhile world, had ended with the last viceroy's departure from these shores, after that it was all just a wrangle among peasants. He [*father*] really did try to believe in this fantasy of a great good place that had been taken away from us and our kind – our kind being Castle Catholics, as he liked to say, yes, sir, Castle Catholics, and proud of it! But I think there was less pride than chagrin. I think he was secretly ashamed not to be a Protestant […]. (*TBOE* 29)

Montgomery has known since he possessed the use of reason that his identity is an assumed one. However, the truth of his text, relevant only to himself and others of his kind, such as the Behrenses and Frenches, is that the farce of such an identity fools no one. Montgomery's reoccurring nightmare about the shame he feels, not at having committed a crime but at having being caught out, has a moral in it for others like him. He says of his dream in which he rescues his father: "I used to believe that in the dream it was death I was rescuing him from, but lately I have begun to think that it is, instead, the long calamity of his life I am undoing at a stroke" (89). While Montgomery's book of evidence might seem like the discourse of a mentally unstable murderer to Inspector Haslet, his text may ring home a truth for the likes of friendless Charlie French (173) who "could act them all into a cocked hat" (134). The truth is that the colonial act is long up; time to melt into hybridity or face the shame of an identity past its use-by date.

THE UNRELIABLE NARRATOR

Roland Barthes distinguishes between story and discourse, story being what happened and discourse being how what happened is related.[35] However, according to Rimmon-Kenan, a first-person narrator complicates the differentiation between story and discourse. To begin with, something happens. The narrator writes a text based on this reality. However, in the mind of the reader a story may, nonetheless, unfold which is not necessarily the story the narrator thinks he is telling.[36] Frank Brady refers to Gulliver as an unreliable narrator.[37] Meanwhile, according to Jeanne Clegg, "Gulliver's unreliability is notorious: his statements are contradictory, he identifies with the archetypal lying spy, conceals his identity, denies his religion, confesses to concealing and coloring the truth,… moreover his text is corrupt."[38] Swift's use of an unreliable first-person narrator has the effect of focusing the reader's attention away from the story and back onto Gulliver. That is to say, Gulliver's colonial neurosis further unfolds in the subtext of his own narrative. Gulliver goes to great lengths to describe his captivity in Lilliput: "… the King's smiths conveyed fourscore and eleven chains, like those that hang to a lady's watch in Europe, and almost as large, which were locked to my left leg with six and thirty padlocks" (*GT* 19). However, despite the chains and physical bondage which Gulliver professes to hold him captive, another story unfolds in the mind of the reader. Gulliver's naivety conceals from him alone the fact that the real bonds which hold him are not physical but colonial. In Lilliput, it is not the chains that hold Gulliver in captivity but the cultured and authoritative colonialist attitude of his captors. According to Nandy, colonialism is a psychological state for both the colonizer and the colonized alike. "It represents a certain cultural continuity and carries a certain cultural baggage" (2). Because the Lilliputians play the role of superior colonialist, Gulliver, almost by default, falls into the role of inferior colonized other: "I swore and subscribed to these articles with great cheerfulness and content […] whereupon my chains were immediately unlocked, and I was at full liberty […] I made my acknowledgements by prostrating myself at his Majesty's feet; but he commanded me to rise […] he added, that he hoped I should prove a useful servant, and well deserve all the favours he had already conferred upon me, or might do for the future" (*GT* 39). While Gulliver thinks he is relating how his liberty was granted him in Lilliput, the reader reads in his text another story of a colonizer colonized, not by the Lilliputians' superior strength or manpower, but by their farcical colonial displays which impress the naive Gulliver. According to Nandy, colonialism creates a culture in which the ruled are constantly tempted to fight their rulers within the psychological limits set by the latter (3). In keeping with Nandy's thesis, the colonized Gulliver can be freed, not by his own physical strength, but by the permission of "his Majesty", cabinet and council. This liberty, for which Gulliver is so grateful, leaves him more colonized than the chains which bound him to his lodgings like a dog to a kennel.

Shlomith Rimmon describes texts where every bit of information points back at the narrator as stories about stories.[39] Gulliver's description of "his Imperial Majesty" tells us as much, if not more, about Gulliver than it does about the King: "He is taller almost the breath of my nail, than any of his court, which alone is enough to strike an awe into beholders. His features are strong and masculine, with an Austrian lip and arched nose, his complexion olive, his countenance erect, his body and limbs well proportioned, all his motions graceful, and his deportment majestic" (*GT* 22). It is peculiar that a six-inch man should make such a striking impression on the giant Gulliver. These peculiarities continually focus the reader's attention away from Gulliver's narrative and back onto naive Gulliver. Gulliver seems no longer a giant in his own eyes but the colonized servant of his superior majesty.

Similarly, in *The Book of Evidence*, Montgomery also continually focuses attention away from his story and back onto himself.[40] He explains how people were afraid of Daphne and him. However, when he elaborates on the fear they instilled in others, the reader is left wondering if Freddie is not misinterpreting contempt or pity for fear:

People in general, I noticed it, were a little afraid of us, now and again I detected it in their eyes, a worried, placatory, doggie sort of look, or else a resentful glare, furtive and sullen. I have pondered this phenomenon, it strikes me as significant. What was it in us – or rather, what was it about us – that impressed them? Oh, we are large, well-made, I am handsome, Daphne is beautiful, but that cannot have been the whole of it. No, after much thought the conclusion I have come to is this, that they imagined they recognised in us a coherence and wholeness, an essential authenticity, which they lacked, and of which they felt they were not entirely worthy. We were – well, yes, we were heroes. (*TBOE* 10-11)

The reader deciphers from the subtext a story very different from the one Montgomery thinks he is writing. Although Montgomery realizes the "coherence and wholeness" (10) which he displays is part and parcel of his assumed identity as exiled country "squireen" (95), complete in tweed and bow tie, he is slow to realize others besides himself can see through this act. Hence, he can understand that he might be able to intimidate Reck, his unpaid taxi driver, with an authoritative voice: "I knew who would be driving the taxi, of course. Don't say anything, I said to him sternly, not a word! He looked at me in the mirror with a mournful, accusing eye" (87). However, Montgomery is perplexed when Reck allows him to leave Mrs Reck's lodgings without paying: "Just popping out for a moment, I said, get a breath of air. I could feel my horrible smile, like something sticky that had dripped on to my face. He nodded, and a little flicker of sadness passed over his brow and down his sheep's muzzle. You knew I was going to do a flit, didn't you? Why did you not stop me? I don't understand these people" (93). For Montgomery it is necessary to blot out from himself how transparent his identity is to others, because the shame of exposure is too much: "What is peculiarly awful in all this is not the prospect of being dragged before the courts and put in jail for a crime I am not even sure I have committed, but the simple, terrible fact of having been found out. This is what makes me sweat, what fills my mouth with ashes and my heart with shame" (124).

In Banville's *Birchwood*, the narrator, Gabriel Godkin, continually focuses attention back onto himself: "Am I mad, starting again, and like this?"(3). Montgomery's narrative follows a similar vein. He continually focuses attention back on himself, Freddie, and somewhere between Freddie and the story Freddie thinks he is telling unfolds the story of the colonialist's descent into madness: "… young men in cheap raincoats, and women with shopping bags, and one or two silent, grizzled characters who just stood, fixed on me hungrily, haggard with envy" (*TBOE* 3). Montgomery sets the scene which supposedly occurred just after his capture. His reference to "cheap raincoats" (3), however, distracts our attention from the image of a raging mob back onto Montgomery. It is arresting that someone accused of murder and surrounded by an angry crowd should register that they are wearing cheap raincoats let alone consider them envious.

"It may not have been like that, any of it. I invent, necessarily" (*Birchwood* 170). According to Rimmon, in psychological novels a character can very often be described more as the sum total of his memories rather than the sum total of his actions ("A Comprehensive Theory" 57). Different narratives emphasize different levels of objectivity and subjectivity (Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrat. Fiction* 94-95). Montgomery focuses attention back on himself as narrator by both insisting on his objectivity and at the same time overtly emphasizing his lack of it. He describes his identity as a sham and a burden to wear. He is relieved by the murder: "When I thought about my past it was like thinking of what someone else had been, someone I had never met but whose history I knew by heart. It all seemed no more than a vivid fiction" (*TBOE* 150). However, although Montgomery talks of the freedom the murder affords him from his identity, he still persists in using the identity to his own benefit. His "cultured and authoritative" (117) voice allows him to intimidate a witness and he consequently escapes capture. Meanwhile, he derives much pleasure from a shopping spree yet again afforded him by his superior colonial accent in conjunction with Charlie French's credit cards: "I thought I detected a slight stiffening of attention when I produced Charlie's credit cards – my God, did they know him, did he shop here? – but I turned up my accent to full force and dashed off his signature with aplomb, and everyone relaxed. I was not really worried. In fact, I felt ridiculously excited" (162). Consequently, Montgomery's interpretation of how his murder of Josie Bell freed him from his assumed identity appears to be unreliable. Montgomery would still seem to be availing of this identity of superiority and to his own benefit even after the murder. Apart from these inconsistencies pertaining to the discarding of his phony identity, Montgomery further undermines his own reliability as a narrator by blatantly indulging in still more inconsistencies in his story. His response to Maolseachlainn's cross-examination demonstrates this:

Maolseachlainn frowns […]. Is it not true that I left my mother's house in anger only a day after my arrival there? Is it not the case that I was in a state of high indignation because I had heard my father's collection of pictures had been sold to Helmut Behrens for what I considered a paltry sum? And is it not further the case that I had reason already to feel resentment against the man Behrens, who had attempted to

cuckold my father in – But hold on there, old man, I said: that last bit only came to light later on. (*TBOE* 74)

Like Lemuel Gulliver, Freddie Montgomery focuses attention away from the story he professes to be telling and back onto himself. In the liminal area between his actual text and the tale he claims to be telling lies the story of madness initiated by Montgomery's inability to discard his colonialist identity for an identity more suitable to a post-colonial context.

CONCLUSION

In *Gulliver's Travels* and *The Book of Evidence*, Swift and Banville's manipulation of their respective first-person narrators, Gulliver and Montgomery facilitates a subtext in these works on the inevitable madness of colonizers trapped in fossilized colonial roles of a by-gone colonial discourse. The narrative theories of both Roland Barthes and Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan help decipher the tale of colonial madness from between the lines of the stories the narrators think they are telling. This argument has proposed two ways of interpreting the madness of outdated superior colonizer as depicted by both Swift and Banville. On the one hand the anachronistic colonial discourse of the colonizer becomes categorized as madness by the new dominating discourses in post-colonial society. Meanwhile, the inability to discard colonial roles in an environment in which the colonial structures of Manichean allegory no longer prevail, leads to the colonizer's alienation and subsequent psychological disorder akin to Fanon's descriptions of colonial psychosis in *The Wretched of the Earth* (202-204). Nandy stresses how colonialism operates within and is legitimized by the mind (2). Despite the centuries of time that divide these works, the psychologically controlling nature of colonial structures sets a similar backdrop in both *Gulliver's Travels* and *The Book of Evidence* for the portrayal of madness as colonialism's legacy to the die-hard colonizer.

END NOTES

1. Richard Pine. *The Disappointed Bridge: Ireland and the Post-Colonial World* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), 77.
2. Claude Rawson. "Gulliver, Travel, and Empire." *Comparative Literature and Culture* 14:5 (2012), 2. Web.
3. In their general introduction to *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin maintain that by recognizing how the binarisms of colonial discourse function, post-colonial critics can promote a reading which makes colonial texts available for rewriting and subversion (London: Routledge, 1995), 2.
4. Terry Eagleton. *The English Novel: An Introduction* (Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2005), 34.
5. Clement Hawes. "Three Times Round the Globe: Gulliver and Colonial Discourse." *Cultural Critique* 18 (1991), 190. (See pages 198-202 for contradictions in the presentation of Gulliver as the invading colonizer.)
6. For an analysis of Swift's political views on his writing see Emer Nolan's "Swift: the patriot game." *Brit-*

ish Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies. 21 (1998): 39-53.

7. See: Kersti Tarien's "'Not a son but a survivor:' Beckett… Joyce… Banville," *Yearbook of English Studies "Irish Writing since 1950,"* Ed. Ronan McDonald, Vol. 35, Leeds: Manley Publishing & Modern Humanities Research Association, 2005: 201.

8. Derek Hand. "Introduction: John Banville's Quixotic Humanity." *Irish University Review*. 36.1 (2006): ix.

9. See: Tony E. Jackson's, "Science, Art, and the Shipwreck of Knowledge: The Novels of John Banville." *Contemporary Literature*. 38.3 (Autumn, 1997): 510-533.

10. Eamonn Kelly, "Literary Studies, *John Banville: art and authenticity." Books Ireland*. 356:4 (2014): 12-13.

11. Derek Hand points out about Banville what is equally true of Swift when he says, "… the place out of which John Banville writes - Ireland - colours his relationship to the novel and its peculiar possibilities" (xi). The objective of this study is to establish specific similarities in the texts of *Gulliver's Travels* and *The Book of Evidence*. A comparison of the lives of Swift and Banville and the different influences (including Ireland) that may have led to the suggestion in their respective works of madness as opposed to hybridity as a legacy of colonialism is an interesting area for further discussion. However, it is not the focus here. The fact that this argument suggests similarities between works 260 years apart is not to deny the obvious differences between them or to deny the different milieus in which they were forged. In this paper the same paradigm is being applied not to the lives and influences of Swift and Banville but to the narratives of Gulliver and Montgomery.

12. The madness of Colonel Mac Gillacuddy of Daniel Corkery's "Colonel Mac Gillacuddy goes Home" (1920) may also be interpreted as the madness of a colonizer unable to shed his colonial identity as the colonial stage shatters. However, as the first-person narrator of the story is not Colonel Mac Gillacuddy, the story has not been included in this discussion.

13. The focus here is on first-person narratives of Irish literature. However, a similar analysis of Antoinette's alienation in J. Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1968) may prove interesting.

14. Ashis Nandy. *The Intimate Enemy* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1983), 7.

15. As highlighted by Terry Eagleton in *The English Novel*, Swift's own background gave him first-hand insight into the position of both colonizer and colonized (40).

16. Interestingly, Laura Brown discusses Swift's presentation of Gulliver not in the vacillating roles of colonizer and colonized but in the interchanging roles of woman and man in her reading of *Gulliver's Travels* as a work of radical political criticism. See: Laura Brown, "Reading Race and Gender: Jonathan Swift." *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 23.4 (Summer, 1990): 425-443.

17. Franz Fanon. *The Wretched of the Earth* (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1967), 215.

18 Michel Foucault. "The Order of Discourse." *Untying the Text*. Ed. Robert Young (London: Routledge, 1981), 51-53.

19. With Jennifer Lee I offer a more in-depth discussion on Gulliver's colonial-induced descent into madness in "The Madness of Lemuel Gulliver" (Jones & Lee, 239-260). Meanwhile, in "The Madness of Freddie Montgomery of John Banville's *The Book of Evidence*" I provide a fuller analysis on the insane Montgomery in a postcolonial climate (687-703).

20. Abdul R. JanMohamed argues that the dominant model of power relations in colonial communities is the Manichean opposition between the superiority of the European and the supposed inferiority of the native. See: "The Economy of Manichean Allegory: The Function of Racial Difference in Colonialist Literature." *Race, Writing and Difference*. Ed. Louis Young Gates (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1986), 84.

21. Gerry Smyth. *The Novel and the Nation* (London: Pluto Press, 1997), 48-50.

22. George Orwell. *Burmese Days* (London: Penguin Books, 1934), 31.

23. According to Homi K. Bhabha, colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, "as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite" (*Location of Culture* 122). Gabriel's outlook in "The Dead" could be interpreted as the product of a successful "mimic man" campaign by British authorities over the centuries in Ireland.

24. James Joyce, "The Dead." *The Norton Anthology: World Masterpieces*. Ed. Sarah Lawall (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999), 1595-1596.

25. The Middletons of Carraveagh in William Trevor's short story, "The Distant Past" provide another example of colonizers unable to shed their outdated identity of superiority in post-colonial Ireland:
   In the shops and elsewhere they made, quite gently, no secret of their continuing loyalty to the past. They attended on Sundays St Patrick's Protestant Church, a place that matched their mood, for prayers were still said there for the King whose sovereignty their country had denied. The revolutionary regime would not last, they quietly informed the Reverend Packham: what sense was there in green-painted pillar boxes and a language that nobody understood? (1995:251)

26. Jonathan Swift. *Gulliver's Travels* (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1994), 303.

27. As mentioned, the inability to come to terms with an identity which vacillates between that of superior colonizer and inferior colonized Other is also evident in Daniel Corkery's "Colonel Mac Gillacuddy goes Home" (1920). Colonel Mac Gillacuddy descends into a madness brought on, arguably, by the irreconcilability of his identity as colonized Irishman (whose ancestors were massacred by British colonizers) and his identity as British Colonel/butcher in India. The symptoms which Colonel Mac Gillacuddy exhibits are reminiscent of the "oneiroid symptoms" which Fanon diagnosed in French colonial interrogators/torturers in Algeria. See: *The Wretched of the Earth* 212-215.

28. John Banville. *The Book of Evidence*. (London: Martin Secker & Warburg Ltd., 1989), 29.

29. The term "Castle Catholic" suggests that Freddie's family, apparently on his father's side, descended from the Catholic Anglo-Norman or Old English community. The irony here is that these Old English Catholics allied themselves alongside the Gaelic Irish against King Billy at the battle of the Boyne and Aughrim (Fitzpatrick *Seventeenth Century Ireland* 1). Thus history would seem to undermine Freddie's reference to his fellow Irish as Other.

30. In *Inventing Ireland*, Declan Kiberd argues that "the seamless garment once wrapped like a green flag around Cathleen ní Houlihan has given way to a quilt of many patches […] Irish or English, rural or urban, Gaelic or Anglo, each [with] its part in the pattern" (653). Montgomery's anachronistic identity of superiority requires the old seamless garment of Cathleen ní Houlihan to remain firmly underfoot.

31. According to Homi K. Bhabha in *The Location of Culture,* hybridity "displays the necessary deformation and displacement of all sites of discrimination and domination. It unsettles the mimetic or narcissistic demands of colonial power but reimplicates its identifications in strategies of subversion that turn the gaze of the discriminated back upon the eye of power." (112)

32. See Declan Kiberd's *Irish Classics* for an interesting application of Homi K. Bhabha's theories to the world of Gulliver (82).

33. In *Jonathan Swift, Revised Edition*, Robert Hunting makes reference to the link between Gulliver's unreliability as a narrator and his insanity (117).

34. In *Birchwood* (1974) Banville also explores the colonizer's reluctance to discard his superior colonial identity in the face of decolonization. Like Freddie Montgomery the entire Godkin family seems to embrace madness rather than hybridity as colonial order decays around them: "…while the Lawlesses grew solid and sane the Godkins were stalked by an insatiable and glittering madness" (8). For further reference to this see Joseph McMinn's *The Supreme Fictions of John Banville* (1999:44).

35. Roland Barthes. *Image, Music, Text* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1979), 87.

36. Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan. *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics*. (New York: Methuen, 1983), 84-85.

37. Frank Brady. "Vexations and Diversions: Three Problems in 'Gulliver's Travels'." *Modern Philology* 75:4 (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1978), 346.

38. Jeanne Clegg. "Swift on False Witness." *Studies in English Literature*, *1500-1900* 44:3 (Houston: Rice U, 2004), 475.

39. Shlomith Rimmon. "A Comprehensive Theory of Narrative." PTL: *A Journal for Descriptive Poetics and Theory 1* (1976), 52.

40. In "Introduction: John Banville's Quixotic Humanity" Derek Hand mentions Banville's interest in "'how' stories are told and the nature of the relationship of the story told to the reality it is trying to encompass and express" (ix). Meanwhile, Joseph McMinn alludes to Banville's narrative deceptions in "An Exalted Naming: the Poetical Fictions of John Banville" (17).

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