

Rachael Sumner

Writing from the Margins of Europe

The Application of Postcolonial Theories
to Selected Works by William Butler Yeats,
John Millington Synge and James Joyce



PETER LANG
EDITION

Contents

Acknowledgements.....	9
Introduction.....	11
Background and Aims.....	11
Why Yeats, Synge and Joyce?.....	16
History, chronology and the postcolonial status of Yeats, Synge and Joyce.....	18
Terminology.....	20
Ideology.....	21
Imperialism and British/English identities.....	23
Subalternity.....	25
Discourse.....	25
Differentiation between literatures of resistance and postcolonial literatures.....	26
Criteria and Methodology.....	27
Chapter One: Key Issues in Postcolonial Theory.....	33
Imperial narratives of history.....	33
Historiography and Discourse Theory.....	37
The Break with Postmodernism.....	42
The Adequacy of the Term 'Postcolonial'.....	44
The "Other".....	46
Nationalism.....	49
Nationalism as Discourse.....	51
Tradition versus Modernity.....	53
Re-evaluations of Nationalism.....	56
Language and the Problematic of Writing in English.....	57
Literary Form.....	63
Hybridity.....	65
Writers and Displacement.....	67
Displacement and "Collective Trauma".....	70
Displacement and Mass Migration.....	71
The Role of Postcolonial Studies.....	73

Chapter Two: Waking from the Nightmare – Narration of Ireland’s	
Histories in Yeats, Synge and Joyce.....	79
Ireland as “Other”	79
Yeats, Synge and Joyce: Critiques	
of Western Epistemology	86
The Cultural Archive and Anthropological Fallacies.....	94
Joyce: The Paralysis of the Colonised	100
Alternative Models of Historical Discourse	106
Yeats, Synge and Joyce: The Role of the Artist	117
Chapter Three: “Combat Literature, Revolutionary Literature,	
National Literature” – Irish Nationalism, Postcolonial Theory	
and the “Drama” of Yeats, Synge and Joyce.....	125
The Cultural Dynamics of Irish Nationalism.....	125
Tradition versus Modernity in Ireland	128
The Narrative of Cultural Decline	131
The Gendering of Irish Nationalism	132
Nationalism and Drama	134
On Yeats and National Culture.....	136
Synge and the Gendering of Irish Nationalism.....	150
Joyce: Towards a Postcolonial Modernity	157
Chapter Four: “I’ll give them back their language. I’m not	
destroying it for good.” – Language and Literary Style	165
The Decline of Irish Gaelic and the Rise of English	165
The Decision to Write in English.....	169
Folktales, Myths and Legends	177
Yeats and the Irish Oral Tradition	180
The Challenge to Authenticity	185
Towards Hybridity: A Marriage of Traditions	188
Synge and the Inscription of Culture	192
Metonymy	195
<i>Finnegans Wake</i> – The Transformative Text.....	199
Joyce and Glissant – Towards a National Literature.....	203
Chapter Five: “I had no nation now but the imagination” –	
Emigration, Diaspora and Displacement	209
Imperial Economics and Irish Emigration	209
Irish writers in London and Europe	213
Physical Displacement	219

Psychological Displacement	224
Healing a Fractured Psyche	231
Conclusions.....	241
The application of postcolonial literary theory to the works of Yeats, Synge and Joyce	241
Comparative and contrastive analysis of Yeats, Synge and Joyce within the given theoretical context.....	245
Areas for further consideration/study	247
Notes	253
References	279
Index	299