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IRISH CULTURE AND CULTURAL POLICY IN IRELAND

A study made for the
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IRISH CULTURE AND CULTURAL POLICY IN IRELAND

Part 1. European aspects of Irish culture and cultural links between Europe and Ireland.

"The devil mostly speaks a language called Bellsybabble which he makes up himself as he goes along but when he is very angry he can speak quite bad French very well though some who have heard him say that he has a strong Dublin accent".

(James Joyce, The Cat and the Devil)

On 1 January 1973 Ireland became a member of the European Communities. By a clear majority the Irish voters had decided on 10 May 1972 that their country should join that association of Western European nations once derided by the "anti-Marketeers" as "Little Europe". Nothing has since changed in what has always been a positive attitude towards "Brussels". In opinion polls and during the 1979 elections to the European Parliament the percentage of support or actual turnout in Ireland always topped the corresponding ratings of most continental countries. The people of Ireland have stood by their decision and have little difficulty in identifying themselves with current developments in the European Communities.

But joining the Communities was not the first token of Ireland's attachment to Europe. She had previously belonged to the European Free Trade Association* and was a founder member of the Council of Europe. Between the wars she played a prominent role in the League of Nations - a world-oriented but still clearly European organization. In World War II as well the Irish Free State was committed to Europe: militarily neutral, she supported the Allied cause with supplies and with volunteers for the British army.

Conversely, Europe is and always has been aware of Ireland, the Irish people and all things Irish. Whatever historical changes Ireland or the Irish experienced, however they lived their history or shaped it, Europe knew of the facts and took account of them. To that extent Ireland and the Irish were spared what befell the smaller nations of central and eastern Europe right up to the twentieth century: they were not forgotten by the civilized world on the continent or in Britain.

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*Translator's note: Ireland was never a member of EFTA!

Ireland was always good for news that aroused interest or provoked concern. It should of course be added that interest or concern on the part of Europe usually failed to meet Irish expectations and aspirations.

So one can only assume that Ireland's problems, the sources of her tribulations past and present, left and commonly still leave her European neighbours cold. Europe has shown an active concern with the country and its people whenever events in Ireland have been determined by influences, changes and innovations that originated or gained acceptance in Europe. What Ireland got and gets out of them is scarcely noticed, and there is little or no understanding of the ensuing complications for or in Ireland. We observe with reluctance, surprise or disapproval the overwrought enthusiasm on the part of Ireland and the Irish as they adjust to or grow into European relationships and patterns of living and thought.

The Irish historian, F.S. Lyons, has said that for observers of Irish history the sensational has become almost a commonplace; it is all too easy to analyse the Irish problem not in terms of political concepts but with the concepts of the politics of violence.

This spotlights the question how far the outsider, but especially the historian, can gain access at all to Ireland's past and present. And we should remember how difficult it is to convey and shed light on national or regional idiosyncrasies of life, thought and behaviour for a wider audience.

This applies directly to Ireland's relationship to Europe, be it to the peoples and countries of the mainland or to her nearest neighbours on Western Europe's offshore islands. For certain facets of Irish culture have always been and are still discernible in Europe today, yet Ireland has often felt she was not truly known and still sees herself as not properly understood.

This attitude explains why Ireland has never taken pains to give Irish culture prominence on the international scene and to project her "true" image; and this in turn is a consequence of the heterogeneity of Irish culture and the fact that even in Ireland there is no unchallenged conception of what exactly constitutes Irish culture.

In this paper we shall try to paint a more detailed picture of the international aspects of Irish culture and of the ebb and flow of influences between Ireland and the nations and peoples of Europe. This historical course of relations and the substance, the forms and the social context of cultural ties call for at least a cursory appraisal.

To revitalize the ties between Ireland and Europe is clearly worth while today. But in looking for suitable places to begin we need to know more about when, where and how exchanges came about in the past. Obvious obstacles must clearly be mentioned, and we must also say where the substance of culture or the specific understanding of culture in Ireland and in Europe stand in the way of expanding the links.

Irish culture has many facets and even its sharp contrasts. Irish attitudes are determined in widely different ways by religious persuasion, educational background and regional and social differences. The broad spectrum over which culture is given expression goes to make the image of Irish culture even more vividly alive. It was the openness and receptiveness of the various groups, of those creating culture and of the cultural scene (or rather - scenes) that in the past determined the continuity of and breaks in Irish culture and today determines its adaptability, tempo and outward impact.

On the other hand, the position and authority of those involved show openmindedness and flexibility. These considerations must be borne in mind in investigating whether, where and how cultural encounters between Ireland and Europe can be intensified, or even whether and under what conditions, if any, cultural policy ventures on the part of the European institutions might be possible, desirable or auspicious.

The situation is further complicated by the fact that any European initiative is subject to the absolute precondition that it must respect and promote Irish culture - and that may mean proceeding with restraint or actually doing nothing. It is only in the light of the history of Ireland's relations with Europe that the importance of such a consistent approach for the Irish cultural contribution can be fully appreciated.

All this might give the impression that in their diversity Ireland and Irish culture are for the most part withdrawn, carrying on as it were the tradition of the old Celtic population and isolating themselves from the outside world. To some extent this was indeed true in the past and still holds good today.

But there is an obvious briskness and magnetism about Irish cultural activity that attests to an astonishing vivacity and gift for communication. Today Ireland has a population of 3.3 million and Northern Ireland 1.5 million - small numbers compared with other countries.

But though the island lies quite some distance from the continent, it nevertheless has a wealth of close affinities with it. London, Paris and Rome - as the Catholic centre - are especially important. The influence of links forged in modern times is still making itself felt. The readiness to foster these relations, each with its own specific basis, came from Ireland. This direct tie with the continent is all the more noteworthy in that it cannot be taken for granted in the case of all the nations of Europe. Much bigger countries, especially those of Eastern Europe, have always found it hard to convey to us the image of their culture. For Europe has often shown little inclination to notice that nations as much as exist. Nothing short of hard scientific evidence would be accepted as a basis for the claims of isolated eastern central European culture to a hearing or at least to sufferance on the part of the major western or southern European nations.

Paradoxically, the breakthrough frequently came from the involvement of America, where influential ethnic groups from the smaller European nations could express themselves more easily than in the old countries. Ireland's path to independence and thus to Europe was decisively cleared by America, by the strong Irish minority in the United States. Despite her close ties there, Ireland has not counted on the effectiveness of the host of Irish and Irish-oriented writers on the other side of the water or left it to them to represent Irish culture.

Irish writers have always managed to make use of the benefits that could be drawn from the Roman-Romanesque and English influences that have made themselves felt in the course of Ireland's history, past and present. They have come to recognize Europe's impact on Ireland as a permanent fact of life. This has given them the freedom to communicate and exert their own influence beyond the Irish Sea. We should not try to put a particular label on this interchange. There is nothing here of the sterility which demonstrably distinguishes the post-war "cultural exchanges" and the like between eastern European countries. Irish workers going to England, priests and lay people on pilgrimage to Rome, Irish folk groups playing to student audiences on the continent, scientists off to a congress somewhere in Europe, writers who gravitate towards Paris and other poles of attraction, publishers working with English houses, television people working together on European networks, MEPs sitting as members of European rather than national parliamentary parties - they all represent their country and her culture and bring with them manifestations of Irish cultural life. There is no uniformity in all this cultural give-and-take. And it is worth noting that Ireland's influence on Europe is not all one-way: there is two-way traffic. What is more, expressions of Irish culture are not only capable of being communicated or transmitted - they are also readily identifiable as specifically Irish even when they originate outside Ireland and show much evidence of cross-fertilization between Ireland and Europe. Joyce and his "devil of Beangency"*, with his Dublin-accented French, are but one particularly eloquent example of this.

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*Sic in original German."Beaugency" perhaps?

This enumeration of the Irish who turn up in Europe (and beyond) and as Europeans is anything but exhaustive. But, incomplete as it is, it does show that there are limits to the "Europeanness" of Irish cultural expression. There are quite specific social groups, quite clearly identifiable voices that communicate between Ireland and Europe - the same who are the communicators everywhere else in Europe. This defines the "actors" and no doubt the "spectators" on both sides, the audience that is able to distinguish and disseminate this "language", this cultural creation.

Ability to render Irish experience and opinion varies very widely. The urban centres, especially those on the east and south coasts, have always had great vitality, being more receptive, more approachable and more outward-looking. In contrast, the more rural areas and the farming community are more loosely or much less directly integrated. This is especially true of the Gaeltacht, which unlike the rest of the country is faced with the dilemma of making itself understood and accessible without jettisoning its linguistic peculiarities. Outside Ireland, surviving Celts have an even harder time. Irish-speakers who keep up the Gaelic traditions have to rely upon their countrymen to interpret for them, and the danger cannot be dismissed of the Irish language being or remaining in a state of dependence scarcely conducive to survival. A dependence not on the outside world but on those Irishmen - larger in number - who have learnt Irish to some extent as a foreign language.

This is a problem that arises from the manifold differentiation of Irish culture, and also has significance for contacts abroad. The old upper classes had an affinity for Europe and its cultural centres - an affinity that the modern media and their power of attraction are reinforcing among the culturally creative, while the backward rural areas are lagging further behind. The efforts of travellers to discover that other Ireland cannot compensate for the danger we have referred to, especially as the language barrier is not easy to surmount. Linguistic Europeanization, integration into the English language community and the strong connections with French and Latin all make for differentiation in Ireland itself.

Irish sociologists and writers have identified and studied Ireland's various social groups, the barriers between them, the strata of Irish society. Anyone who studies the dissertations on regional and social issues and takes the religious aspects into account as well comes to have serious misgivings about European programmes in the cultural sphere.

Ireland's internal problems - which so enliven the cultural scene and fascinate the foreigner - stand in the way of a European policy; there is no way of avoiding or removing them. But one could envisage carefully considered support being provided in areas where Irish resources do not suffice to maintain cultural traditions, where possibly experience can be gathered - in monument preservation or on the folklore side - from European countries that can be turned to good account in Ireland.

This should be done in such a way as to help the representatives from "Europe" to stimulate their Irish opposite numbers and perhaps teach them some "tricks of the trade" and broaden their knowledge. Special emphasis might be laid on encouraging contacts precisely in those areas which have no eloquent advocates, such as minority cultures, always respecting the responsibilities and achievements of the Irish. In The Irish, Sean O'Faolain describes what he sees as the six representative types or "branches" of the tree of Irish consciousness: the new peasantry, the Anglo-Irish, the rebels, the priests, the writers and the politicians. It is they who, in varying degrees, have determined Ireland's development. O'Faolain traces the impact of these six "branches", notably their impact on Ireland's culture, taking culture in T.S. Eliot's sense of an all-inclusive way of life. Each of these groups is in some way marked by Europe and owes something to European influence. If Ireland is not a homogeneous society today, one of the reasons is that since the Middle Ages Europe has passed on to the island not only the broad general pattern but also the divergent and antagonistic components of its development. From Europe came ideas, models, all manner of techniques, men who acted as a bridge between Ireland and the outside world, and finally settlers. Besides the Norsemen and people from Britain there were other Europeans, albeit in much smaller numbers. O'Faolain's six branches are the Irish counterparts of certain European socio-cultural types.

Because the interaction of the six groups has not been without its bitter struggles, which have their repercussions on the present too, we should give some thought to the historical foundations of Irish culture today and the relationship between Europe and Ireland in the past. This will enable us to identify problems which have always been peculiar to that relationship and which are still perceptible today. It will show us in what areas the cultural links were most evident and will give us a clearer view of what is basic to the Irish-European cultural tradition. Here again, "culture" should not be understood in a narrow sense, even though Ireland's great medieval monuments, in the state in which they have come down to us, can comfortably be pigeonholed as relics from the history of art. This isolation masks the variety and vibrancy of relations between Ireland, her island neighbours and the continent at this time. When the few but enthusiastic visitors from Europe go round the early medieval and prehistoric monuments, they are not only - remarkably enough - expecting a taste of the exotic in foreign parts: they are also seeking a way in that will allow them to commune with the essence of things past. This, incidentally, is another reason for preserving and caring for Ireland's heritage.

Any study of Irish-European cultural ties must bear in mind that down the centuries the concept of "Ireland" or "Irishness" could never be taken for granted and is still not unchallenged today. The course of Ireland's history and her steadily developing associations with her European neighbours, especially with England, brought with them a continuing metamorphosis of what was "Irish", the various phases of which are still visible in Ireland today. This explains the conflicting notions that even now determine the political thinking and action of Irish people. O'Faolain's six branches each have a different perception of Ireland's past and of her mission today; they take their values to some extent from different traditions. The sharpest but not the only contrast is that which distinguishes the religious groups, each of which sees itself as the principal if not the only genuine manifestation of Irishness. Relations with Ireland's European neighbours are appraised in correspondingly different ways: for instance, English cultural influences, in particular the role of the English language - and here the nexus between internal Irish and Irish-European conditions is most clearly visible - have been viewed differently by sharply antagonistic camps since the nineteenth century. These divergences also had an outward impact in the controversy over the authenticity of Ireland's artistic and cultural influence, seen in terms of a putative real Ireland and genuine Irishness. This frequently led to the rejection of artistic emanations that offended against majority opinion; certain works or artists found it very hard to win acceptance in their own country. This tension, which put a heavy strain on Irish culture, but also stimulated and helped it, was a consequence of the nation's history. It is the Irish "response" to the political, economic, social and in the

broadest sense cultural challenges which have confronted Ireland and her people ever since the Middle Ages.

This must not lead us to suppose that before then Irish culture had to some degree developed autonomously, self-sufficiently. On the contrary. The material culture of early Ireland and substantial parts of the rural culture of Celtic Ireland even into modern times correspond to features in other cultural zones of north-western Europe from Scandinavia to Spain. Indeed, the accounts in Irish chronicles of the origin of the Irish emphasize that settlement of the island and the traditions of the ancient Irish can be traced to the Iberian peninsula. They explicitly point to a pattern of relationships supporting a continuity of the ancient Irish character and its overseas connections. The antiquity of the claims of ancient Irish culture, its equality with other cultures, indeed the superiority of its own world over later influences were views that could easily be justified against such a background, even though the later external influences proved in the event to be the superior ones. In re-establishing an independent Ireland, reappraisal of and recourse to the earliest traditions of the country have become uncommonly important. Here, as in the language revival at the turn of the century, there appeared a hardening of attitudes and a focus on Ireland's own forces, which made separation not only from England but from Europe as well appear eminently sensible, if not indeed imperative. This did not perturb European interest in Ireland, which from the end of the eighteenth century onwards has been vigorously searching for Ireland's specific origins, expecting to find therein an especially limpid source of divine revelation. This can be seen as a fateful conjunction of the Irish and the European pursuit of clarity and insight!

This independent tradition was of special importance as Ireland moved from ancient times into the Middle Ages. The country was stepping into

the context of Mediterranean European culture. It did so as an outsider, for Ireland had never belonged to the Roman Empire and by that token was part of the non-civilized world. The fall of Rome left a vacuum, and the successor-polities proved so unstable and the threads of Greco-Roman cultural tradition so easily picked up that Ireland, only a novice in the Christian world, believed she was called to pass on the new message in her own way. The state of development of Irish culture at the time and its social structures was conducive to this "mission". Various factors prompted Irish monks to move to the neighbouring islands and the continent and work there as missionaries, bringing with them not only the Gospels but also Irish forms of interpretation and Irish cultural traditions. The extent of Irish influence on the continent cannot be accurately measured. What prepared the way for this activity is as uncertain as how long the distinctly Irish impact lasted. Great caution needs to be exercised in asserting what walks of life were influenced by Irish preachers and what was the territorial reach of Irish influence. Whether these Irish missionaries were ever able to establish contact with living Celtic cultural - especially language - traditions is an open question. If at all, it was certainly only at particular spots and not everywhere that the tradition records the appearance of envoys from Ireland. The stock of Irish words that then migrated to the continent is very, very small, though there is much room for conjecture here. Irish activity left its clearest traces where it most effectively adapted to the still dominant Latin tradition, namely in ecclesiastical concerns and here again in the Latin works of John Scotus Eriugena.

This does not rule out the possibility of a Celtic lingua franca which afforded these missionaries easy access to the hearts of the residual Celtic population on the continent, but it does cast doubt on the theory

that the search for Celtic speech islands was the occasion for the missions to Europe. Research today tends to be very wary in assessing the Irish element in early medieval Europe. It takes a highly sceptical view of many supposed Irish influences and Irish missionary activities. and has exposed as bogus quite a few medieval traditions allegedly deriving from Irish wandering preachers. In reconstructing the past in terms of what can or cannot be regarded as established fact there is another phenomenon to be reckoned with: in many places in medieval Europe things Irish clearly enjoyed such a fine reputation that generations that had not experienced the Irish presence found it useful to assert Irish influence, to demonstrate that they had had Irish monks or even saints in their own past, to underscore the special status of a convent, church or pilgrimage by claiming Irish foundation for it. Since according to seventh- and eighth-century accounts enthusiasm for the Irish missionaries had its limits and the upper classes were concerned rather to curb their influence, one can only assume that the Irish traditions of later centuries valued the extraordinary and the exceptional. The "anarchy" of the missionaries provided welcome support for the efforts to enhance individuality in the rivalry between the many religious institutions and foundations. There are only limited traces still extant of the Irish presence in western, central and southern Europe. In vitalizing these rather peripheral early medieval links, it is of great importance that in Ireland itself monuments, witnesses of that age, have survived and remain accessible to visitors from Europe. Their appeal lies first and foremost in their strangeness, and the towers, crosses and other relics of Ireland's beginnings bring it closer to the early history of continental Europe, which developed from these same places under the influence of the Irish spiritual and cultural centres of the age.

Though their significance for medieval thought and action was not in the long term as decisive as the impact from the Mediterranean, the Irish influences did create the conditions for a recollection of the heritage of ancient times in Europe's renaissances - especially in the first, the Carolingian. Their real and lasting significance lay not in the "export" of things Irish but in the communication and comprehension of texts from the Christian Mediterranean areas. Information essential to medieval knowledge and understanding of the world came to the continent through Ireland, as interpreted by Irishmen. Irish experience made only a peripheral contribution to the treasury of Greco-Latin enlightenment and learning. The great achievements of ancient Irish culture, especially vivid in the illuminations and metalwork of the early Middle Ages, contained in the epics of old Ireland, were transmitted incidentally. They were not - to use the vogue word - the message which Irish missionaries were intent on spreading.

For things to have been different would have required either strong political pressure or an obvious military presence. But there was no question of this. What is more, the social foundations of Ireland's early medieval culture were not easy to link with continental Europe. Research has shown that the conditions for lasting contact with the continent did not obtain. Ancient Irish society was not sufficiently extrovert for the trend towards overseas expansion to become established. In fact, it tended to be passive towards the outside world.

Ireland imparted durable ideas and images to Western Europe without entering into any lasting contact with the societies of the West. The isolation which the incursions of the Magyars and Scandinavian and Arab expansion entailed for Europe and the early medieval cultures in the ninth and tenth centuries affected Ireland in particular. Relations with her European neighbours were blocked. Ireland's fringe position,

already a salient feature in the days of the Roman Empire, was confirmed. In these circumstances the resulting exposure and isolation were particularly evident. The first signs of Ireland's colonization were now to be seen.

The Norse settlements proved to be permanent. The Norsemen were the first non-Irish group to settle in the country, and their settlements were the points of departure for the successive waves of migrants. While the Norsemen might have appeared to be a new force of non-Western origin, they were in fact integrated into the western world and turned out to be the forerunners of the English, who were able to secure European legitimacy for their intervention. Colonization of the east coast facing England and Wales, the Pale, proved despite all Irish opposition to be permanent. Here from the Norsemen to the English was formed a particular area of settlement, which became the gateway for European (insular and continental) influences. The Roman Church legitimized English claims to the island, claims deriving from the customs and rights of the European Middle Ages. In the Pale there developed a world in opposition to old Irish society and old Irish culture. Though Irish society was certainly capable of assimilating the newcomers from beyond the Irish Sea, despite every effort on the English side to thwart it, it failed to withstand the superior concepts, the demands of ecclesiastical financial administration and the legal and social systems of the Church and the English crown.

The twelfth and thirteenth centuries marked a turning point. Ireland's relations with Europe were more closely interwoven than ever before. With the reform of the Church, the structures of western Christianity were also implanted in Ireland. The new orders that sprang up in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries took root on Irish soil. And with them came new concepts of economic enterprise and new forms of urban life.

Ecclesiastical financial organization was successfully engaged in opening up Ireland's financial sources. Europe's presence was everywhere: Italian banks, merchants of the west, English administration. And behind these peacefully mounted offensives there was always - in case of need - the military.

With the military and the civil servants, the merchants, bankers and representatives of the Church and the English crown came European standards. The most conspicuous and long-lasting (even if only surviving in the shape of ruins today) were building design, urban facilities, the founding of monasteries, the development of the orders. The Irish language was held to be inferior and accordingly banned. Astonishingly, it nevertheless managed to hold its own and even spread to the non-Irish settlers.

The flexibility of the old and the new settlers that we see here and their ability to get on with one another does not seem to have been typical of the old Irish culture of the upper strata. The nobility, established in their ordered world - apprehensible in poetry and saga - closed their eyes to the new ways. They appeared to stagnate, while all around European ideas and demands gathered force even in the purely Irish parts of the country.

From the thirteenth century the island formed part of the European cultural area, incorporated into its spiritual, economic and social contexts, but also figuring in the political arithmetic of the nations and ruling houses of Europe. The traditional was covered up, considered undesirable, received from Europe's representatives no kind of support. The vicissitudes of the continent, ecclesiastical tensions and economic crises affected Ireland too, which in the ecclesiastical bond with Rome, and under predominantly English sway, nevertheless insisted on her right to a role in shaping her own history. Against the claims from abroad there emerged loyalties which no longer followed linguistic boundaries or recognized the main dividing lines between the old and the new population. But there was no denying the differences between the

standards imported from Europe and the old Irish models, which with their supporters were driven further and further into the interior and remoter areas. The Reformation did not interrupt this process. Ireland did not have the chance other parts of Europe had to acquire a new autonomy as the new religious demarcations emerged or to win cultural or linguistic independence. At all events, opting for Rome against England's dominance (especially the supremacy of the Crown and the London Parliament) did not in the end ensure continuity with the old Irish traditions. Maintaining and defending the link with Rome paved the way eventually for separation from England and for evolving an Irish identity - an identity to be confirmed in protracted strife.

For Ireland, rebellion against London and allegiance to Rome culminated in a policy of extirpation, which applied not solely to the Celtic but to any form of anti-English resistance, and so also to the new arrivals in the Pale. In the centuries that followed new settlers were brought to the island, from Britain and - albeit in small numbers - from the continent. The religious divisions and political rivalries between the European powers left no room for the Celtic or Anglo-Norman traditions. Ireland was now altogether a pawn in power politics. The nations of Europe did not see the conflict in Ireland, either with or against the Irish insurgents, as a means of restoring the status quo. Conserving the old way of life - an amalgam of the Celtic and the Anglo-Norman - was of no concern to any of the rival powers. By that token Ireland had no advocate - no one to speak for her. Sympathy for this wronged and persecuted people fell short of a resolve to help them.

Basically, it was a matter of different systems from Europe vying with each other to incorporate the island. This shattered the social foundations of Celtic culture: it was forced into peripheral areas, where it survived even more precariously than in other outlying parts of Europe.

The eventual outcome of European intervention was all the more exciting for that. Ireland, which had been no more than a pawn in the disputes of continental Europe and Britain, finally re-emerged as an independent nation.

Ireland was the victim of European strife. However she reacted, she was unable to attenuate the oppression. The belligerents always found fresh occasion for ruthless retaliation. The persecuted population fled in droves to the continent. After the early Irish missionaries there now came a further wave of emigration from the island. Irish mercenaries played a major role in European armies, on European battlefields and in the newly developing colonial world. But this Irish involvement did not have the repercussions or enjoy the lasting fame that followed the missionaries.

Ireland today is the result of massive European influence. England's share certainly predominates and is everywhere to be seen. But other factors are no less important to Ireland's self-image and orientation. England's policy, which culminated in Ireland's union with Great Britain at the beginning of the nineteenth century, has left indelible traces in language, legislation and the social system. These are offset by the adherence of the vast majority of the population to the Roman Catholic Church and their obvious receptiveness to Romanesque, particularly French influences. This Irish independence is to be seen today in the activity of missionary and contemplative institutions throughout the world.

Though Ireland was long unable to escape the influence of the English Crown and Parliament, it still proved possible to pursue an independent Irish policy underground or in more or less covert forms of resistance or disobedience. London's policy after the times of major repression showed itself at its most effective when it was attuned to the sensitivities of Irish society. The inability to cast off London's yoke was compensated for by the fact that on the spiritual and religious side a that much more resolute attachment to the Roman/continental milieu developed. This led to close links with Rome and northern France, an involvement in developments in catholicism, all of which became a decisive factor in the people's attitude to the outside world. But this did not help Celtic traditions to survive. Neither Rome nor Paris nor Madrid cared about protecting the old Irish social structure or the cultural independence of the original inhabitants. Until the end of the eighteenth century such objectives did not figure in European minds and so could not be made into a political programme. Continental relationships, which found their main expression in matters spiritual and religious but also economic - witness the dealings with wine trade centres in France and Spain and Portugal - were essentially a one-way street. From the continent came the goods: the spiritual or material products were fetched over the sea as contraband. Ireland supplied men in return: soldiers to fight in European battles and candidates for the clergy. Ordained priests they came back, but not like the Patrick of a thousand years ago, who knew how to match the new teaching to the Irish environment. These priests brought with them the doctrines of the Counter-Reformation and the severity of Rome. Here there was no place for the indigenous: Celtic culture found no champion in Catholic orthodoxy.

Ireland's emancipation began to take shape when the modern concepts of

autonomy and self-determination took hold. The old upper strata had almost gone. New families were emerging and gaining a foothold in the European world. For them cultural and especially economic intercourse with the countries of Europe and their colonies were taken for granted. From the underground sprang demands for equality of rights and freedom of worship, as the Irish people rising against persecution were caught up in the industrial revolution. Not given their due as human beings, the Irish turned to the ever-faster-changing world of industry. As Irish merchant families took over important business in the colonial trade, Irish labour became indispensable to England's mushrooming factories of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Living though they may have been in London ghettos, alien to and scorned by the bourgeois and refined Londoners, they demonstrated in the heart of the British Empire for respect for the Irish, thus acting on behalf of the rural population, denied human rights in their homeland.

European migration was eventually to be a decisive factor for the renaissance of Ireland and her rebirth as a state. It showed in the fact that the centres of enlightened English culture growing in the east- and south-coast towns were quick to take an Anglo-Irish turn. It was not the purpose of the institutions of religious and intellectual life emerging under English patronage (such as Trinity College) to underpin the specific cultural and political situation of the island. As time went by, despite the close ties with England's cultural development, they became largely independent. They encouraged the English upper classes' tendency to see themselves and the country as being in an exceptional position. This finally became a readiness to accept and take part in moves towards home rule. Ireland was not indefinitely to be a colony providing settlers from Scotland and England with the good life and opportunities for speculation,

an eternal appendage to the motherland. Of course the traces of English colonial policy in social and economic life are not to be overlooked even today. But against the background of Ireland's history until independence in the twentieth century, it must also be remembered that integration into the context of English culture, the influence of the Established Church and the activities of the English upper classes had in the long run an unintended effect: a significant element in Irish identity - the awareness of being in a special, self-contained situation - survived and was intensively fostered from the end of the eighteenth century.

The distance to the old Irish world could not be bridged. The image of Irish society was initially and for a long time determined by religious, socio-economic and political contrasts. Nevertheless, the conditions for Irish independence were developing and this did not bring with it a return to the earlier isolation and consequent defencelessness. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries forces were developed and assembled which made the island attractive to an enlightened England and Europe. Depending on political orientation and ideological commitment, one part of Europe undeniably gave preference to the forces of the ascendancy, of the English upper classes in Ireland, the other to the illicit forces of the Catholic movement. In any case, however, Ireland withstood the danger of being degraded to a mere colony. She remained not only a military card in the hands of political rivals; she obtruded anew into the minds and discourse of Europe's upper classes, the leaders of society. The aura of Dublin, with its imposing buildings and parks, the early industrialization and opening-up to trade impressed not only England. "Progressive" thinkers in Europe were taking a keener and keener interest in everything that happened on the island. The

impression of modernity that receptive observers got in many parts of the country did not obscure other aspects.

It was not long before people in England and on the continent began to notice the hardship of the Irish rural population. The feeling that the civilized world had an obligation to make changes grew quickly. But the hardship of the peasants was spreading and worsening, with no brighter prospects for any real improvement. Something else was needed, apart from awareness of Ireland's special political position and her economic independence and special interests, to unleash the drive for social and spiritual reform. At this juncture remembrance of the nation's past and a concern to preserve and revive its traces took on fundamental importance. Around 1800 - at the same time when after the suppression of the rising of 1798 the union with Great Britain was effected, ending Ireland's medieval special position under the English kings - there began a conscious return to old Ireland and to the spiritual and moral forces of the old culture. This soon became a focus of public interest in Ireland, in England and finally on the continent. This renewed awareness of the past was initially to be found in circles which were not themselves part of the Celtic-Irish cultural complex. They belonged to the English ascendancy but saw it as their duty to transmit the heritage of earlier ages. The focal point of their interest was the tradition of the Middle Ages, the myths and images, the places and buildings of history and associated with them the surviving customs and habits of the rural and substantially still Gaelic population. But assembling and preserving the old and the traditional eventually produced more than a cultural renaissance. It created a depository of what was authentically Irish and made it available to all the people of Ireland, regardless of origin. And in fact all the people drew upon it and made it part of their own existence.

Political and religious circumstances were such that this return to tradition led not only to a revival of the cultural scene, a retrieval of Irish themes for artistic and scientific activity on the island and thereby to a thematic liberation from the non-Irish in matters of artistic creation and research. This renaissance allied itself with the struggles for independence which, though linked with various social groups, were still going on. It included social problems expressly in its programme and so was able to exert direct influence on political debate in Ireland and England. In this process the cultural interplay, the mutual replenishment and enrichment between Ireland and the Union and post-revolutionary Europe, was of great value. The renaissance of old Ireland was stimulated by the intellectual currents from Europe. Conversely, everything that was now unearthed from Ireland's Celtic past fitted beautifully into the picture that Europeans of the Romantic Age were beginning to form of their own origins and nature. The Celtic world was a piece of the continent's own past. It was hoped that it would reveal the origins of European culture, and what survived in Ireland - language, myths, folk tales, illuminations and ruins - were prized as holy relics and as an authentic gateway to Europe's past. European researchers were concerned with finding the way to these treasures and were beginning to shed light on the old ties between Ireland and the continent, especially the itineraries of the Irish missionaries.

From the early nineteenth century travellers' accounts of Ireland found a ready market all over Europe. French or German travel writers and eccentrics like Prince Pückler could be certain that their reports were attentively read. As was then the custom, they were concerned to paint a complete picture of the island and its inhabitants.

Statistics, historical events, social circumstances, folklore, geographical peculiarities - all were to be found in the descriptions by the German Kohl or the Frenchman Beaumont and their many successors. Their accounts naturally covered music, literature, painting and architecture as well. Kohl also carefully recorded the friction between the learned interest in Irish history, the local attempts to rescue or revive customs and the frequent lack of understanding in the population at large of what might be saved. In the face of the widespread poverty, it seemed to him that the upper classes were duty bound to care for the culture heritage. He did not close his eyes to the social disparities and took note of the multiple divisions between the various religious and social categories - social prerequisites for the undeniable differentiations of the cultural scene in the twentieth century.

Despite all the misunderstanding, not to say mistrust, of the uneducated, superstitious mass of the people, Ireland's belonging to Europe and Europe's duty to be socially and politically committed and to make serious efforts on behalf of the people and the cultural assets of the past and present were unquestioned. Kohl, who made no secret of his admiration for England's progress, censured the failures of the English administration and the Irish upper strata and gave due praise wherever he noticed any effective action being taken for the country and her people.

The island fuelled European interest diligently and received in return confirmation of its dignity and equality, whose importance for political movements and the confrontation with the politicians of England cannot be overestimated. While Europe was broadening the horizons of her own past, the cultural and political movement in Ireland was seeing its antiquity recognized. In one way or another - and certainly in their rivalries and quarrels - the various communities of the island enthusiastically seized the opportunities for determining new political and social goals.

None of them thought of restoring the old order. Any possibility of that had been destroyed under European influence. Neither Catholics nor Protestants had any "nostalgic" ideas. Their purpose now was to establish themselves as well as they could in the present, removing the manifold barriers to Irish liberation and using the heritage of old Ireland as the banner and the universally understood medium for the new messages: religious emancipation, political autonomy and social progress. The political implications of the renaissance were to the fore - equal rights, social betterment for the Catholic rural population. The European public was deeply affected by the poverty of the peasantry and the Great Famine of 1845-1849, and this imparted legitimacy to the programme of the Irish Catholics, who were now swiftly becoming the most significant of the political movements.

Here too, European awareness of what was going on in Ireland had important consequences for both sides. In Ireland issues and political fronts developed in accordance with ideas devised and tested in Europe. Conversely, Ireland contributed crucial experience to European social movements for civil rights and equality. National movements in other parts of Europe patterned themselves on or even appropriated to themselves the principles and methods of the Irish national movement. The Repeal movement in Ireland, calling for an end to political union with England, was acclaimed by the Czech clubs in Prague, voicing not only their sympathy with Ireland but also - thinly disguised - their repudiation of the Habsburg dual monarchy. National revival, the national struggle in Ireland were at that time European events and remained so through successive political changes. Protest was legitimized by the European enlightenment and subsequent trends in England and on the continent, and stimulated by the rise of liberalism.

And, in exchange, Irish events determined further developments on the continent. Here as there, manifestations of national awareness and national aspirations were developed which could be transmitted and were in fact taken up everywhere. These manifestations offered scope for Irish traditions and caused them to revive and flourish. Naturally, it was developments in the Union itself that provided the clearest evidence of this association and the concatenation of internal and external. The political weight of Irish voices in the English Parliament had its effect on England's internal development: Ireland proved that she was no mere province to be governed from London but exerted a considerable influence on political decisions in Parliament. The social changes, especially the land reform towards the end of the century, owe much to this cooperation between opposing forces in the union between Great Britain and Ireland. At first glance it might well seem as if this game was confined to the political and social arena (repeal, the land question). But in fact the whole cultural sphere was involved and stimulated: the foundations for Irish cultural development and for the authority of modern Irish culture abroad were laid in this tense nationwide conflict.

The return to Celtic traditions had lasting consequences for Ireland. In painting, songs and poetry, the nation took possession of its past. Whatever still remained of Celtic tradition in the Gaelic regions was seized upon and made available in forms familiar to England and Europe. Irish culture thus entered into European associations from which it could not easily be released. The national poet, Thomas Moore, fascinated the inhabitants of Ireland as well as the English across the Irish Sea and soon found wide recognition on the continent too. Settings by Robert Schumann highlighted the Europeanness of the new English-language Irish national literature. And this is characteristic of Irish literature to this day. It did not sidestep the great issues facing Ireland in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. But it did avoid following a

course that would have compelled it to adapt to the narrow political preconditions of the Irish political movements. In this way it saved the country lapsing into isolation and provincialism. It also helped to keep Irish events in the European mind, thus assuring Ireland of constant attention and even sympathy from Europe.

In the concern to release Ireland from the Union, in the struggle for home rule and independence, Ireland no longer stood alone. No doubt, European governments watched the strife in the United Kingdom not without some ulterior motive. But the merit of Irish creative artists from the second half of the nineteenth century on lies precisely in the fact that they did not allow the Irish question to degenerate into political tactics and imperial rivalry. They gave it a European dimension and showed the parties involved, often against their will, alternatives that offered a chance of survival.

The European public followed these developments. They were aware to some extent of Europe's part in Ireland's predicament, recognized that Europe had failed Ireland. In England especially, this awareness was partly responsible for the changes in London's policy towards the home rule movement since the beginning of this century.

The misery that was at its worst in the nineteenth century was another factor that brought about a change in European attitudes. Even before the Great Famine there was a growing feeling of shared guilt and responsibility; with every allowance for Irish superstition and apathy, enlightened visitors to Ireland saw the distress of the mass of the rural population and urged that action be taken and aid given. English agricultural policy in the second half of the century reflected a reaction to this distress and the rising tide of contemporary criticism.

Attention to domestic themes did not sidetrack Irish culture. Indeed the picturesque and the romantic were followed by increasing concern with social problems in the home country. Unlike many regions of Europe (consider the literature of the Baltic or Ugric* peoples of eastern central Europe, which failed to raise their individuality, their joys and cares to a European level - a problem that persists to this day), Ireland and Irish authors, poets, essayists and novelists soon found their way to themes of daily life. The regional aspect, the multiplicity and individuality of Ireland's counties, were externalized. Like the Russian writers, and stimulated by them, Irish authors around 1900 were exemplary in reaching out to real-world problems and setting standards which applied to European writers in general.

The close link between cultural renewal and political aspirations imparted enormous significance to literature, especially in Ireland. At the same time it led to unreal expectations of literature and in the end, as the political fronts hardened, to a differentiation and polemicization of literature and its Irish character, which persists to this day. On the one side there were demands that writers be unequivocally committed to the Irish cause and, at the core, the language revival; on the other a call for openness to the Irish situation, which could not be blindly partisan. The tedious arguments at the beginning of this century on the role of literature led to a polarization in which a substantial proportion of writers were "written off" by the politically minded and militant. A prominent group of poets, while not insensitive to Ireland's special circumstances, then still part of the United Kingdom, nevertheless recognized her linguistic and cultural links with the English-speaking world and were not prepared to extend the political battle lines into their own art. The main thing in their eyes was the opening that was attainable via English: the wider context into which Irish experiences could be

*Translator's guess. Original unclear.

integrated. In England - and, via England, in Europe - this openness was seized upon.

In the long term, going beyond the narrow Irish-Gaelic framework did more for the Irish cause, politically and otherwise, than the largely self-centred nationalistic stance.

The ostracism of the prominent, internationally most effective literary representatives by the nationalist parties exposed Ireland to the risk of isolation and cultural atrophy. The risk was at its greatest, when after long, hard and embittered conflicts the prime objective, the end of the Union of 1801 and - as a first step - the independence of the non-Protestant areas, was achieved after the end of World War I. For a time the new political and religious leaders wanted to take the country back to the "Celtitude" of its past, but this was no longer possible.

Very often there was a mistrust, an aversion to the European concepts and models to which the Irish Free State largely owed its existence. "Not free merely, but Gaelic as well" - such ideas, made into an internal policy programme, flew in the face of Ireland's real links with the English-speaking and Roman Catholic worlds outside. What is more, they were an affront to the supporters of the Irish cause in years gone by, who from England, the continent and especially America had been drumming up understanding and sympathy for Ireland's struggle.

The most conspicuous example of this introversion was the official attempts to reintroduce the Gaelic script. This may well have been convincingly justified on aesthetic grounds, but such a retrograde step was bound to have an adverse effect on cultural links with Europe and with America. The Gaelic revival did not last. It did, however, at home and abroad, ensure that the

Gaelic past was much more clearly perceived and that the Celtic components of Irish culture were afforded a permanent place in Irishmen's understanding of themselves and in the outside world's understanding of the Irish.

The failure of the Gaelic revival was not only a consequence of Irish conditions moving away from the old Celtic associations and adapting to the advanced European societies. The renewal of interest in Irish traditions had already been prepared by Ireland's dramatists and other authors before there was any State support for schooling in Irish and for all forms of Irish education. In the event, Ireland's Anglo-European creative artists had achieved the same results as the politically prominent groups with their efforts to reintroduce Irish. A point to emphasize here, however, is that the official line was not without its dangers for Ireland. Moreover, it bespoke a mistrust of one's own people or of the efficaciousness of Irish life as it was and as it appeared in the novels, narratives and plays of the great writers and provoked European sympathy.

Not until the struggle for independence receded into the past did Ireland come to repudiate this isolationist policy. The country turned unequivocally to Europe - both politically and culturally. And Europe took an intensive part in this development.

The writers, many Irish among them, but also a great many European journalists and artists, stubbornly maintained their interest in Irish cultural life. The political and religious complacency, often even intolerance, on the part of Ireland's élite failed to stifle curiosity. European writers, in particular, adopted the techniques and subjects developed and perfected in large measure by the Irish and took them a stage further. Time and again they took the country and its people as the object of their literary portrayals, thereby

acknowledging in particularly eloquent fashion their Irish models and inspiration. Heinrich Böll, particularly his Irish Journal (which sold 750 000 copies in paperback in Germany), is one example. Travel writing - of which there is a great deal in the German-speaking world - is another.

The continent's image of Ireland and the Irish people's image of themselves is still stamped today with the concepts of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Even in advertising, even in the expectations aroused by the tourist brochures, we still move along tracks, within a framework, that were marked out then. Even the limitations and biases stem from that time. The insistence, for example, on the oddity of Irish behaviour in religion and ritual, the stereotypes of the clean life exploited in agricultural marketing, and last but not least the long tradition of fanaticism and religious intolerance are cases in point. The European attitude showed and still shows streaks of condescension and arrogance and a consequent lack of genuine inquiry into the causes of Irish idiosyncrasies.

This is not without danger for European-Irish relations. Ireland and Irish cultural characteristics tend to be but casually noted. They are not taken into account in "high politics". At times of unrest, conflict and military confrontation we are quick to praise Ireland. But this only masks a ploy to enlist Ireland's support. Germany's enthusiasm for Ireland was invariably at its warmest at times of armed conflict with Britain. It was precisely then that the number of German publications on Irish affairs sharply increased. In the present unrest in Northern Ireland the same can be discerned in Russian attitudes. This passion for Ireland, whose real aim is to destabilize Europe's political balance, is in the tradition

of the rivalries of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, when 'playing the Irish card' summed up all there was to Ireland's role in politics.

Had Ireland stuck to the role in which an enlightened Europe had cast her in the early days of the industrial age, she would indeed have remained politically and culturally insignificant. Irish artists, first and foremost the writers and singers, took the decisive step towards obliterating the slightly sterile image of old Ireland. In Europe the easiest publicity for the island has hitherto lain in the relics of the past. The romantic combination of beautiful countryside - Irish landscapes and landscape gardening were models for the English style in continental gardens - and buildings from the remote past is immediately captivating. The mysteries of myth and fairy tale, of excavations and holy places fascinated people in the early and late industrial age. The present revival of interest in things Celtic in Britain provokes more curiosity about Ireland's manifold Celtic heritage. But it would be absurd if that were the sum total of interest in Ireland.

That Ireland has more to offer than thrills or exotica on the fringe of Europe was already clear to nineteenth-century visitors. And today, too, we must beware of undervaluing Irish culture! Ireland's inclusion in Western European organizations and the unflagging interest in Irish culture, past and present, have helped to widen the scope for exchange. These developments are vital to Ireland's cultural activity, to the recognition of Irish artists at home and to tolerance for those who were long ostracized as traitors to their faith and their homeland. Where for so many years a gulf yawned between Europe and Ireland, the differences are now being smoothed out - not least to the advantage of today's artists.

The celebrations on "Bloomsday 1982" show that there has been a cultural rapprochement, that Joyce's work, though far from being understood and appreciated by all, is at least comprehended as a joint Irish and European problem. This rapprochement has its limits, and they are determined not by good or ill will: they are inherent in the matter itself. Culture, in so far as it is produced by an "artist class", by "culture makers", cannot as a rule count on having a general impact and direct support from the general public. This applies both within a single culture and between cultures. In the German language area Ireland still evokes only a comparatively modest response. On the other hand, it is very popular among the groups in question here. It raises alternative questions and gives many reminders of past and present.

The public that has an interest in Ireland is small. Nevertheless, given the regular appearance of Irish themes, the future seems to promise well for the development and amplification of cultural relations between Ireland and the continent. The confrontations and the lessons learned from one another down the centuries have cleared the path and created a capacity for understanding. There is a long tradition of seeing the other's point of view that has survived strains and divisions.

If past and present have given us an assured common ground and - more important - an ability to communicate, we may none the less ask whether this is all we need. Two things should be considered here. First of all, on the German side it was very much economic interests which led to organized forms of association and cooperation. For instance, the Government of Baden-Württemberg undertook to promote

economic cooperation projects. Chambers of commerce and industry are interested in such projects, and have pushed certain ventures. Naturally, these areas too are part of the broad picture of European-Irish cultural relations. But so far little has really been done to present Ireland's cultural activity in the past or present in similar tangible form outside the country. As the Irish Government hardly engages in cultural activity outside the country, it seems natural to leave the lion's share to private initiative. The founding of "German-Irish societies" might be the first step towards providing ourselves with the appropriate institutions to handle cultural relations. One of their tasks ought to be to make people aware of and care for the heritage of common ground and relationships. They should also monitor and stimulate the present situation and communication in the cultural sector. For example, information should be provided on cultural opportunities in Ireland and the conditions of cultural workers. That would help to disseminate the latest works and through them would offer access to life in Ireland today.

Secondly, such support could be of direct benefit to the arts in Ireland. Increasing attention is now being paid to the "culture industries". This is not to overlook the danger that threatens the smaller national cultures especially where they have long been closely connected with greater cultures. With its host of small language and cultural areas Europe is especially aware of the disproportion between the few "monopoly cultures" and the very many scarcely represented or even scarcely representable cultures. Ireland is not badly placed in that respect, but needs special care and support. A supranational institution like the European Communities could foster and encourage the appropriate moves. No Potemkin villages would be built, for the conditions for helpful commitment undoubtedly obtain.

Irish culture is not the result of a controlled process. Ireland and Europe went through developments which were not always directed towards harmony and interchange. If from the vantage point of today - an advantage the writer must allow himself with his very limited knowledge and experience - we look back through the long period of cultural relations and our historical togetherness, we come to the conclusion that forms of intercourse have won acceptance that speak less of Europe's urge to dominate than of the communication and hearkening that distinguished the Irish mission of the early Middle Ages. This form of communication is propitious to Ireland's culture and to the multiplicity of cultures which came to be summarily understood as European culture. European doors are open to Irish culture. Support could be of most assistance where it is intelligent and feasible to make Ireland more widely accessible. Now that the culture industry is steadily penetrating new spheres of life and devoting itself also to regional aspects and peripheral phenomena, we must ensure that lack of economic weight and influence does not decide the issue against appropriate Irish self-representation. Provided that help is forthcoming where needed, it may be expected that the cultural variety of Ireland will as in the past again become visible and accessible.

PART 2

CHAPTER 1

THE PRESERVATION OF THE ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

Ireland has a rich and varied architectural heritage, reflecting a mixture of native and imported elements which have blended well over the centuries into a rich tapestry which mirrors the course of the country's historical development. Even up till the 19th century, most dwellings in Ireland were made of short-lived materials such as mud and turf, and they have , in consequence, largely disappeared. However, the general availability of stone in large areas of the country, and the introduction of brick as a building material late in the 16th century, have endowed both town and countryside with many fine structures which have fortunately been preserved down to our own times. But as their architectural style and building materials differ, so also does their present structural condition - which ranges from the ruinous to the almost pristine. Obviously, this varied spectrum comes about because of the wealth or poverty of the buildings' owners, but in order to understand the background to this situation it is necessary to divide the important parts of Ireland's architectural heritage into four separate categories - National Monuments, Churches still in use, Great Houses and Unoccupied habitable structures not in State care- and to study the official attitude towards each of these categories.

1. National Monuments

Section 2 of the National Monuments Act, 1930, defines a National Monument as "a monument or the remains of a monument, the preservation of which is a matter of national importance by reason of the architectural, traditional, artistic or archaeological interest attaching thereto," and it also includes a number of historic monuments which had been taken into State care through and since the passing of the Ancient Monuments Protection Act of 1882. Under Section 8 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act of 1954, those monuments which the State's agents in such matters, the Commissioners of Public Works, consider to be National Monuments are listed occasionally as they occur in the official journal Iris Oifigiuil.

National Monuments may be further subdivided into two types

(i) Those which are vested in the Commissioners of Public Works, that is, owned by the State and

(ii) Those which are not owned by the State, but are in the guardianship of the Commissioners of Public Works, and for which the Commissioners take on the responsibility to preserve.

In the case of the second type, Section 5 of the 1930 Act makes provision for the (private) owner of a National Monument to appoint the Commissioners to be guardians of that monument - if the Commissioners agree - or may appoint a Local Authority to be guardians of the monument, but on the significant proviso that the National Monument is not a building which is occupied as a dwelling house by any person other than someone who is employed as a caretaker. Although the same proviso does not seem to apply de jure to monuments which are owned by the Commissioners, it does apply de facto in that National Monuments owned by the State are not normally dwelling houses currently occupied, and in the great majority of cases these are roofless ruins. There are some exceptions which are roofed, and these are mostly houses which were once occupied by certain of the country's dead patriots. The Commissioners are also responsible for the upkeep of important architectural buildings which are used by one or other section of the Government establishment, such as the President's House, the State Apartments , The Department of Foreign Affairs or the Department of Education, and others which play an important role in the country's history such as Kilkenny Castle or Pearse's former school, St. Enda's in Rathfarnham. But these structures are not normally treated as coming under the heading of National Monuments in the sense of the National Monuments Act of 1930.

Those monuments which come under the 1930 Act, be they in State ownership or guardianship, amount to just under 600 in number, and range from Stone Age tombs, Iron Age fortifications, Christian churches, monasteries or crosses, castles to a few historical monuments dating from the period after 1600, such as the patriots' houses mentioned above or the Casino at Marino - an architectural gem of the 1760's.

There are also a number of ruined medieval churches which are owned by Local Authorities because they stand in graveyards owned

by these Local Authorities, but generally these churches are neglected by the Local Authorities - usually due to lack of money.

In contrast, the National Monuments in State Care are well looked after by the Commissioners of Public Works who have a duty to maintain them under Section 12 of the 1930 Act. In the current Government Estimates for 1981, the stated financial allotment for National Monuments is £1,643,000, compared to £1.425,000 for 1980. Fortunately, most of the highly significant monuments (with the exception of certain monuments to be discussed in sections 2 and 4 below) dating from before 1600 are included in this estimate, so that - comparatively speaking - the country's architectural heritage for the period up to and including the Middle Ages is carefully preserved. This involves preserving the monuments in question in the architectural condition in which they were when they were taken over by the State. In certain cases, the State has gone further than mere preservation, and has restored certain features of buildings where fragments of such features (such as windows or cloisters) were known to exist or where they came to light in the course of archaeologiacl excavations carried out on the site by the Commissioners' archaeologists.

But the State does not see itself as being under any obligation to restore National Monuments to their original condition. Nevertheless, some few National Monuments have been restored to something approaching their original state, but even if such restoration was carried out by or under the supervision of the Commissioners of Public Works, it has not been paid for by the Commissioners. One of the earliest examples is Bunratty Castle in Co. Clare which was restored in 1960 to act as an attraction for tourists, but the finance was supplied by the Irish Tourist Board, Lord Gort and the Shannon Free Airport Development Company. More recent examples have been in the ecclesiastical sphere, such as the 13th century Ballintubber Abbey and the largely 15th century Holycross Abbey, where the respective churches have been converted for use as places for local worship, but at the expense of the church authorities. There are, however, other cases where the Commissioners have restored structures as showplaces. These include Kilkenny and Cahir castles, and the above-mentioned Casino at Marino. There are many other obvious examples where full restoration would be very desirable - such as the Cathedral on the Rock of Cashel (where the Commissioners are currently restoring the 15th century Hall of the Vicars' Choral) - but because financing is one of the

problems, this is one area where supra-national agencies might well consider financial aid for restoration.

The 1930 Act prohibits injury to National Monuments. But as the penalty for injuring such monuments is so small - a fine not exceeding £50 and/or not more than 6 months imprisonment - it deters few, if any, who are intent upon removing or destroying a National Monument. Scarcely anyone has ever been convicted of such an offence (not necessarily because no such offence has ever been committed), and an alarming number of earthworks which are National Monuments under the definition of the 1930 Act without actually being under the care of the Commissioners of Public Works, have been wantonly destroyed in recent years - particularly in the course of State-funded agricultural improvements.

Under the National Monuments (Amendment) Act of 1954, the Commissioners of Public Works are enabled to place a Preservation Order on a monument which is in immediate danger of injury or destruction. Alternatively, they are also empowered to place a Temporary Preservation Order on such a monument, which lasts for six months, but they may presumably at their discretion renew such an order if they so desire. However, the constitutionality of Preservation Orders has recently been challenged in the courts in the case of O'Callaghan v. The Attorney General (1980), upon which a judgment is expected very shortly. If this judgment goes against the State, new legislation will presumably have to be introduced. New legislation on National Monuments has been under consideration for many years, but so far nothing has materialised. When it is finally enacted, it will hopefully also protect important parts of the archaeological and ancient architectural heritage of the country which is under threat by modern development, as instanced by the recent and sad case of the Viking and medieval remains at Woodquay in Dublin.

The current situation with regard to National Monuments, therefore, is that while funds are not really adequate, they are more plentiful for the preservation of National Monuments than for any of the other types of buildings in the nation's architectural heritage to be discussed below. In contrast, however, Local Authorities take their duties in preserving the National Monuments in their care as being virtually non-existent. Were finance available from outside the State, these Local Authorities could be enabled to make a significant contribution to the preservation of

the nation's architectural heritage, particularly by removing ivy from and by generally keeping in repair the many ruined medieval churches in the country churchyards in their care.

The department in the Office of Public Works which deals with the preservation of National Monuments is the National Parks and Monuments Department, located at 51 St. Stephens Green / Ely Place, Dublin 2. But in a speech made by the former Taoiseach (Prime Minister), Charles J. Haughey, on March 5th, 1981, it was stated that

> "The Government has now decided to set up a National Heritage Council which will take into its care and keeping historic monuments, national parks, heritage houses and gardens, the canals and the museums themselves.
>
> Archaeologists and members of the cultural institutions will be represented on this board, and it will conduct surveys, allocate resources and plan excavations on a national scale. Because of the powers the Council will have, the expertise it will command and the advice it will be in a position to tender to public authorities and other bodies our heritage will, I believe, be much more secure under its auspices.
> The Council will ensure that our heritage will be explored, assessed and exhibited to the general public in a manner worthy of its splendour and will endeavour to see to it that the sort of mistakes that happened in the past will not recur."

This National Heritage Council foreseen in Mr. Haughey's speech was not formally established before the General Election of June 11th, 1981, which brought a new Coalition Government into office, under the leadership of Dr. Garret FitzGerald, T.D. In its policy document published in the national newspapers on June 29th, 1981, the Coalition Government made the following statement concerning the preservation of National Monuments :

> "Legislation will be introduced to protect our archaeological, architectural and natural heritage and the Services of the National Museum will be strengthened. The scandal of Wood Quay must never be repeated."

2. Churches still in use

The second type of important monument which may be included in the architectural heritage is that of the church still in use for divine service. The Office of Public Works, as agents of the State, will not spend state moneys on the conservation or restoration of churches which are still in use for divine service because, according to the Irish Constitution of 1937, the State cannot be seen to be favouring one religious group more than another. This anomaly has been highlighted in at least two memorable cases, quoted above, within the last 15 years where the Catholic Church was instrumental in getting the State to restore the Abbeys of Ballintubber and Holycross - which are National Monuments - for religious services, but the Church had to pay the Office of Public Works for all the works carried out on the churches by the Office of Public Works. The only work on these Abbeys which was paid for by the State was that on the cloisters adjoining the church, which were also National Monuments but in which religious services were not going to be conducted.

There are many thousands of churches in use within the State, the great majority of them built since the beginning of the last century. These are simple country churches which may be of some architectural interest but only rarely of any great architectural merit. From the conservation point of view, the currently-used churches which cause the most headaches are those which are medieval in date. The great majority of these medieval churches which are still in use are the property of the Church of Ireland. In a report on architecturally-significant Protestant Churches in the Republic of Ireland published in the 1976 Annual Report of the Representative Church Body, the eminent architectural historian Dr. Maurice Craig counted 18 medieval churches (as opposed to just towers) which were still used for divine service by the Church of Ireland. Most of these are in bad need of major repairs, and in addition to the two Dublin Cathedrals of Christchurch and St. Patrick's which have just undergone or are in the process of undergoing major repairs, the church of St. Multose in Kinsale has recently launched a major campaign to raise funds for the repair of the church. Although the number of Church of Ireland medieval churches still in use may be small by continental standards, it includes some of the most significant examples of medieval architecture in the country - Clonfert Cathedral with

arguably, the finest Romanesque doorway in the country, the two Dublin Cathedrals already mentioned, as well as the Cathedrals of St. Canice in Kilkenny and St. Mary in Limerick. The Church of Ireland also has about 95 other churches of considerable architectural interest which are either a mixture of medieval and later periods, or which date from the 17th to the early 19th centuries. Not all of these are truly significant, but some are of very considerable architectural importance.

But while, for historical reasons, the Church of Ireland retains more medieval churches than does the Catholic church, it is in the unenviable position of having only about one-thirtieth the number of souls, totalling about 97,739 according to the 1971 census. Thus the burden of financing the upkeep of the important medieval churches, and particularly the Cathedrals, which are still in use falls on the shoulders of about 3,3% of the population - without any assistance from the State.

Dean Victor G. Griffin, a man as unafraid to speak his mind openly as was his 18th century predecessor as Dean of St. Patrick's Cathedral, Jonathan Swift, summed up the situation succinctly in a letter to The Irish Times of Friday, June 26th 1981, of which the following is an extract :

> "At a recent exhibition of paintings and sculpture in aid of the Cathedral (St. Patrick's), Lady Iveagh, who opened the event, mentioned that if St. Patrick's were a dilapidated, roofless ruin it would be maintained at public expense as a national monument, but ancient historic cathedrals and churches which are a living and active part of our national history and heritage receive no financial support from the Irish state. I believe we are the only country in the EEC which does not give any financial support to the maintenance of historic cathedrals and churches. In some countries in Europe the state accepts financial responsibility for the maintenance of the exterior fabric while the denomination to which the building belongs is responsible for the interior. In the United Kingdom the state helps indirectly by allowing people to covenant an annual subscription towards the maintenance of a church. The tax normally paid by the covenanter on this subscription, instead of being appropriated by the State, is refunded to the Church.
>
> It is becoming increasingly obvious that if we are to continue to preserve our national eeclesiastical and architectural heritage the State must be prepared to give serious

consideration to some means of allocating financial help and not leave the burden for the preservation of such buildings completely on the shoulders of voluntary agencies and individuals, many of whom are already heavily committed to the support of worthy projects for the well-being of our society."

The Catholic church has a much smaller share of medieval churches still in use - they can be counted on little more than the fingers of one hand. In addition to the examples of Ballintubber and Holycross Abbeys (the latter of which is still trying to work off a vast debt), it has one further really significant example : Graiguenamanagh, once one of the finest of Ireland's Cistercian abbeys and now the town's Catholic parish church. Known formerly as Duiske Abbey, this church has recently been beautifully restored by a voluntary local committee which have now made it into what is undoubtedly one of the finest parish churches in the country - despite tremendous financial odds. In addition, the best preserved early Cistercian cloister in Ireland which is adjacent to the church forms part of 19th century shops and houses, waiting only for enough money to become available to buy out the shop- and house-owners before being exposed and restored to its former glory.

There are also a number of 19th century churches belonging to both of the main religious denominations which are already in bad need of repair, though only little more than a century old. St. Finbarre's Cathedral in Cork, one of the chefs d'oeuvres of the Victorian architect William Burges, subject of a recent monograph by J.M. Crook, has recently launched an appeal for £500,000 to repair the Cathedral.

The list of churches of medieval and later in date which are in need of repair is not quite endless, but almost, and the conclusion is clear. Unlike most other EEC countries, the Irish state does not contribute to the restoration or maintenance of the fabric of churches still in use, no matter how important they may be from an architectural point of view. If any medieval ecclesiastical structures are to be used for religious services by any religious denomination, that denomination has to pay for the upkeep of the church - and visitors contributions are merely a drop in the ocean in comparison to what the upkeep costs. The burden is becoming intolerable for the small number of Protestants who are

responsible for the upkeep of the great majority of Ireland's medieval churches and Cathedrals still in use. If public finance is not forthcoming shortly, these highly important structures will probably have to be abandoned one by one, due to lack of money for constantly-needed repairs. Similarly, the Catholic church has some significant abbeys in its care, and also some architecturally important churches of more recent date, and these the local communities have restored in the belief and hope that 'God will provide', yet without any help from public finances.

If one were to pick out the most important and representative architectural structures in ecclesiastical hands now undergoing repair or restoration, and in need of considerable grants to carry out such work, one could mention Holycross Abbey and Graiguenamanagh in Catholic hands, and the two Dublin Cathedrals - Christchurch and St. Patrick's - St. Multose in Kinsale and St. Finbarre's in Cork, in Protestant hands, as the most urgent priorities. Because the Irish Constitution of 1937 is interpreted as not allowing the State to contribute to such projects, here is an area in which an out-of-state institution such as the EEC could play a very significant role in preserving Ireland's medieval and later architectural heritage.

3. Great Houses

This brief title is used to encompass the third division of the nation's architectural heritage of importance. It includes a number of houses both by Irish and foreign architects which are of high architectural quality not only in a national, but also in an international context. Whether they be in cities such as Dublin, or standing by themselves in country estates, they are usually distinguished also by having high-quality interior decoration, particularly in stucco. Most date from the 18th or early 19th centuries, and almost all are in private hands.

Accidental and politically-motivated fires, as well as the effects of time and other reasons have, over the years, taken an exceptionally high toll of Ireland's great houses of architectural importance. Obviously it is very difficult to know where to draw the line between a great house of major architectural importance and one of lesser importance. But in doing so along fairly strict lines, the number of surviving Great Houses in Ireland which would belong to the category of'Must be preserved for posterity'.

is certainly not less than 20 and probably not more than 150. There are also many others for the preservation of which strenuous efforts ought to be made. In addition, there are highly important groups of buildings - such as some of the few relatively intact 18th century 'Georgian' streets of Dublin - which are under considerable threat from private commercial development, and where only a considerable amount of capital from official sources could outdo commercial mammon in order to preserve the most important. However, a sensible combination of commercial resources and preservation of an important house has been achieved in Powerscourt House in Dublin's William reet, and University College, Dublin, is hoping to execute an imaginative scheme drawn up by its Professor of Art History, Alistair Rowan, to restore two adjoining 18th century houses of the highest quality in St. Stephens Green which belong to the College.

The great value of these great houses, be they in town or country, lies not alone in their significant architectural and environmental importance, but also in their value from the educational, tourism and recreational aspects. Those which have opened their doors to the public in order to keep alive have formed themselves into a group known as HITHA - Historic Irish Tourist Houses Association - which helps to market them all together as a group. It ought not to be forgotten, too, that these Great Houses provide valuable employment, particularly in country districts where other job opportunities are not very numerous.

Owners of virtually all of the Great Houses in Ireland are experiencing increasing difficulties in maintaining their properties. There are a number of contributory reasons for this, which may be summarised as follows :

A. That the amount of land belonging to the owning family and which helps to support the house has declined greatly for a variety of reasons since the houses were first built. One unnamed example is known to have dwindled from 50,000 acres to a mere 200 acres.

B. The introduction of capital taxation and, in particular, the tax package introduced in 1975 and 1976 which comprised the Wealth Tax, the Capital Acquisitions Tax and the Capital Gains Tax. At present, heritage buildings, even where they

are of great architectural importance and open to the public, are not exempt from any of these taxes, though what is termed a "principal" residence is exempt from Wealth Tax and a "main" residence is exempted from Capital Gains Tax. In addition, the funds needed to keep up these cultural assets are fully taxed, and there is at present no diminution in tax allowed in recognition of their owners' role in maintaining the nation's architectural heritage.

C. The increased cost of maintenance, heating and insurance of the buildings and their contents.

D. The virtual disappearance of craftsmen to do the specialised repairs to the buildings, and the cost of paying what few skilled workmen survive.

As a result, many owners are forced to maintain their houses out of their dwindling capital resources, and there is a concomitant danger that owners may feel inclined or forced to sell some of their houses' valuable artistic contents - sometimes outside the country - in order to keep up their properties as family residences.

In view of the situation outlined above, a report on The Future of Historic Houses, Gardens and Collections in the Republic of Ireland carried out by An Taisce - The Irish National Trust, and published in digest form in 1977 under the title "Heritage at Risk" suggested that some of the great houses should either

be taken over by the State or
be handed over to a National Trust - either already existing or to be set up -

or that financial arrangements ought to be made by the Government to enable and encourage owners to keep and maintain their buildings themselves.

As this report felt that it was preferable that, where practical, the houses should remain in private hands, it was proposed that there were two approaches necessary to achieve this aim

a) Taxation incentives, including large-scale exemptions from capital taxation;
b) Repair grants.

Alternatively, machinery ought to be available whereby the State could take over these properties in lieu of tax or debt due. The sad case of Malahide Castle in 1977 showed an instance where the State refused to take over an important property which had been in the hands of the same family for more than 600 years, and opted instead for a tax package involving death duties, and were it not for the combined efforts of the Dublin County Council, Dublin Tourism in conjunction with the Irish Tourist Board, and the National Gallery of Ireland, the castle would have been sold and its contents - or allowed to disintegrate - dispersed. However, the most recent case of Glenveagh Castle in Co. Donegal shows the State to be in a more benign mood towards solving this problem, in which the State has agreed to take over this fine property and its gardens, on unspecified terms.

Further relief in this direction may be forthcoming from the Coalition Government which took office on June 30th , 1981. Its programme includes the following :

> "Tax reliefs will be made available for owners of significant buildings which are worthy of conservation but which are in danger of being sold or are falling into disrepair. Such tax relief will be conditional on reasonable access being allowed to the building."

Even if such promised relief is forthcoming, the option of the Irish Government or the EEC, or both, giving special repair grants to the most significant houses ought to be considered, and such money would be well spent in the interests of the nation's architectural heritage of Great Houses. Rather than being seen as being socially unacceptable in view of the pressing need to house the poor, such grants would be vitally necessary in order to preserve properly almost every single house of high architectural significance in the country.

4. Unoccupied habitable structures not in State care

The fourth division comprises unoccupied habitable structures not in State care but which nevertheless form a significant part of the country's architectural heritage. This category is not intended to include houses of slightly lesser architectural importance which are not covered in Section 3 above. Rather it is

envisaged as comprising in particular medieval castles and tower houses which are not in State care. Their total number amounts perhaps to 2000, but probably at most one-tenth of these are still sufficiently well preserved that they could be reasonably restored to their original structural form without the expenditure of an inordinately large amount of money upon them, which their owners could not afford. Most of these castles and, more specifically, tower houses have had no repairs done to them since they were last occupied around the 17th century, unless they have been incorporated into later houses. They are usually on the lands of country farmers whose incomes cannot rise to keeping them in repair, and who - in a number of instances - regard them as a potential danger to the life of their cattle. A dozen or so such tower houses have been restored by private individuals, including some Americans, for use as private residences, but most of them are simply allowed to continue to be a prey to the elements.

There is no system of Government financial aid for the repair or upkeep of such structures, yet because of their importance as part of the national architectural heritage, it would be of great advantage if monies could be made available to the owners for the repair of such structures - particularly where a sensible use could be found for them subsequently.

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In addition to these major categories defined above, there are a number of less eye-catching structures which - even if they would not rank as being of international importance - are nevertheless a significant part of the nation's heritage. These include Ireland's most typical piece of architecture, the simple thatched house or 'cottage', which is highly attractive , if architecturally unpretentious. They would also include the more recent but much neglected military defensive works such as those erected around the coast in the early years of the 19th century, and buildings of the 19th century industrial revolution, of which little or no cognizance has been taken at national level - due to both lack of public interest and public finance.

The Irish Tourist Board is known to be preparing a scheme to give financial support towards the thatching of thatched houses which is much to be welcomed, particularly in view of the revival

in interest in this ancient method of roofing, and a recent rise in the number of younger craftsmen able to execute it, through the efforts of the State's Youth Training organisation, AnCo. But, at least in a select number of examples, attention could be paid to the other minor categories just listed by giving grants towards repair and upkeep, which could be coupled with a guarantee by the owner to maintain such structures properly in the future and to allow the public reasonable access to them.

Before concluding this chapter, attention must be drawn to the situation with regard to Ireland's architectural archives. Prior to 1976, no systematic attempt had been made to collect together all the archival material concerning Ireland's architectural heritage, though the Commissioners of Public Works preserve a considerable collection of drawings and photographs of the monuments in their care. But this material does not cover the vast majority of structures which have been built in Ireland during the last 400 years.

In 1976, The Irish Architectural Archive was set up in order to fill the gap. This Archive was not, however, a State organisation, but one instituted on private initiative. Since it has been set up, the Archive - which is housed at 63 Merrion Square, Dublin 2 - has collected Ir£ 280,000 to keep it going. Its main source of funding hitherto has been the Heritage Trust, but this Trust is now terminating its grant, and there is no immediate prospect of raising monies from an alternative source. Ireland appears to be the only country within the EEC which does not have a State-financed archive of the country's architectural heritage, preserving drawings and other documents of those monuments and buildings not in state care. This is a sad reflection on the country's interest - or lack of interest - in its architectural heritage. It must be recommended in the strongest terms that the State should now fund the Irish Architectural Archive, preferably by taking over the Archive and the material which it has already collected - and expanding it, as a state-run organisation, to collect further surviving material before it is irretrievably lost. The Archive would strongly favour such a move.

CHAPTER 2

THE TEACHING OF THE DIFFERENT CULTURAL DISCIPLINES : CREATION AND PERFORMING

"The Irish schoolchild is visually and artistically among the most under-educated in Europe" - was one of the sad conclusions reached by a report on Design in Ireland. The situation has, however, changed for the better in the intervening years, particularly through the change in the Department of Education's curriculum which took place in 1971. Sadly, little improvement can be claimed for musical education in Irish schools. According to a speech issued by Colm O Briain, Director of the Irish Arts Council, in connection with the opening of the Waterford Festival of Light Opera in September 1981, recent surveys have shown that Irish children were amongst the most deprived in being given opportunities at school to develop their musical abilities.

The same report of 1961 also pointed out how seriously lacking Ireland was in design education. Its conclusions jolted the Irish Government into corrective action and constructive change. "The last decade saw more development in art and design education in Ireland than did the previous half century. The establishment of the Art and Design Board of Studies by the National Council for Educational Awards was of major significance and has been an integral part of this development." This quotation is taken from Ciarán Benson's "The Place of the Arts in Irish Education" - the Report of the Arts' Council Working Party on the Arts in Education in the Republic of Ireland, published in 1979, on which a considerable amount of this section of the present report is based.

The Benson Report points out that there have never been very many jobs for young Irish people who chose a career in the general area of the arts, with the exception of architecture. In other areas, the greatest prospects lay in the sphere of teaching the various cultural disciplines, both in secondary schools and in institutions of third-level education. The increased prosperity of the 1970's opened up more career possibilities in the arts for young people, so that now television and radio, hand-crafts and

design are now major sources of employment in the arts. Particularly in the field of Irish traditional music, there are many young artists who have had no formal musical training in academic institutions, but who have trained themselves by learning their craft from other, older practitioners. This present report, however, does not take these into consideration, but concentrates rather on the formal teaching available to young artists of various kinds in recognised state-funded institutions.

The Plastic Arts

Graduate and post-graduate tuition is provided in the History of Art both in Trinity College and University College in Dublin, but these universities do not provide courses in the creative aspects of the visual arts. Instead, these are provided in a variety of non-university institutions in various parts of the country. Of these, the most significant is

The National College of Art and Design

which is located in Dublin. It is now enabled to issue both diplomas and degrees. It can issue diplomas to students who have successfully completed the four-year (including pre-diploma year) diploma course at the College. The diploma can be awarded for study in any of the areas covered by the College's courses which are

Painting
Sculpture
Printmaking
Visual communication
Fashion
Crafts (ceramics, woven textiles etc.)
Education.

Since 1980, the National Council for Educational Awards has awarded degrees at the National College of Art and Design in the following areas :

Fine Art
Visual communications
Industrial Design
Art and Design Education

These degrees are being awarded to students on their individual merits, pending the full recognition of their courses by the

National Council for Educational Awards. These degree courses are of five years duration, except for Industrial Design, which is a four-year course.

At present, students with degrees must also take the Principles of Teaching Art examination to qualify as art teachers. It is likely that, when the Art and Design course is fully recognised, this requirement will no longer apply to graduates of that course.

Schools of Art and Design, and Regional Technical Colleges

In addition to the National College of Art and Design, there is a number of schools of art and design, as well as Regional Technical Colleges, which offer courses which can lead to diplomas awarded by the National Council for Educational Awards to those students who take these courses. These may be tabulated as follows

COLLEGE	AWARD	MAIN AREAS OF STUDY
Crawford Municipal School of Art	National Diploma in Art	Painting, Sculpture, Printmaking
Limerick School of Art & Design	National Diploma in Art	Painting, Sculpture, Printmaking
Galway Regional Technical College	National Diploma in Art	Painting and Printmaking
	National Diploma in Design (Textiles)	Printed and woven textiles
Limerick School of Art and Design	National Diploma in Design (Communications)	Graphic Design
	National Diploma in Design (Products)	Ceramics

The arrangements which allowed the National Council for Educational Awards to award diplomas to students at Colleges without recognised courses - to which Section 6.15 (page 113) of the Benson Report referred - are still in force, so that in 1981 diplomas are still being awarded in the Dun Laoghaire School of Art, as well as at the Regional Technical Colleges in Letterkenny, Sligo and Waterford. The courses at these Colleges are still in the process of being validated.

It ought to be pointed out that the Art Teacher's Certificate which was formerly issued by the Department of Education has been discontinued, according to the circular letter S20/80 issued by the Department's Examination Branch, because awards in Arts courses are no longer the responsibility of the Department of Education, but of the National Council for Educational Awards. The Techical Subjects art examinations mentioned in the Benson Report (4.25(b)) have also been discontinued.

Musical Composition

Courses in music composition are offered in the major University music departments, as well as in some of the Schools of Music. Of these, the university courses are the most important and advanced. They are offered by three of the Universities, Trinity College and University College, both in Dublin. and University College, Cork.

Trinity College, Dublin

The College awards two degrees in music at Bachelor level :

1. Moderatorship (B.A.) in Music, which is a four-year course, in which Music may be taken as the only subject, or in conjunction with another subject.
2. Mus. B., for which there is an examination - but no tuition. Of the three parts forming this degree, the first two may be exempted for those who have performed satisfactorily in the course for the Moderatorship (No. 1 above).

The honor (more advanced) course in music in the Moderatorship exam offers a course of study in the theory and techniques of musical composition in each of the four years, and in the third (Junior Sophister) year one of the options to be fulfilled by the student is the submission of a composition of an extended nature

such as a string quartet or a sonata for not less than three performers or a folio consisting of a variety of smaller compositions. The same option is open to those taking the Mus. B. examination. The degree of Mus. D. may be awarded on the strength of the submitted musical compositions.

University College, Dublin

University College, Dublin, awards a B. Mus. degree. Within the degree course, there is a specialised Composition School, which provides a course in composition for third and fourth year students. Thereby, it is required that, at the end of the sixth university term, the student must submit a composition or set of exercises showing an aptitude or talent for creative work.

But for the degree of Doctor of Music, one of the options open to the candidate is the submission of a symphony, or concerto, or major work for choir and full orchestra.

University College, Cork

In the degree of B. Mus. awarded by University College, Cork, composition is one of the options open to students in their second and third years of study.

Schools of Music

Some of the Schools of Music include Composition as one of the subjects on the syllabus, but this is taught at a more junior level to that of the Universities.

The Contemporary Resource Centre

Plans are now under way for the establishment of a Contemporary Resource Centre. It is to be set up by the Association of Irish Composers, with a grant of £20,000 from the Arts Council. It is to be housed in the new Irish Life complex in Dublin. Its purpose will be to collect, catalogue and make available compositions (scores and recordings where available) by living Irish composers. The centre will also provide facilities for experimentation, lecture programmes and workshops - a forum for composers and their works.

Prospects for composers

There are no composers of serious music living in Ireland who

earn their living from compositions. With the exception of those associated with the Pop Music scene, all others live largely by teaching. The opportunity of having works co missioned remains very limited, and indeed the propspect for performance of a new work for a large ensemble is very slight except for a handful of already established composers.

THE THE TEACHING OF THE PERFORMING ARTS

The teaching facilities for the various types of performing arts differ considerably according to the particular art. Each of these is discussed in succession below.

Acting

The disastrous situation with regard to ~~the~~ preparing budding actors for a career on the stage in Ireland is best summed up in paragraph 6.27 of Ciarán Benson's report on The Place of the Arts in Irish Education (1979), p. 107 :

> "There is no fixed route to a career in theatre in Ireland. Opportunities depend on talent, chance, initiative in seeking openings, contacts in the theatrical world etc. Nonetheless, there are a number of private schools and courses which offer a training in drama and the theatre. These can serve as valuable introductions to the world of the theatre. University drama societies and the amateur drama movement are also sources of experience. None of these, however, equips a student to undertake a career in the theatre. At the moment, careers normally develop more from working with a theatre group than by doing a course and then applying for an advertised job."

The part-time School of Acting associated with Ireland's famous Abbey Theatre was forced to close down in 1974, due to lack of funds. One of the oldest privately-run schools, the Brendan Smith Academy, founded in 1943, has since taken on an added importance. Bill Keating, Head of Drama in RTE - the state-run radio and television service - has recently set up an intensive 10-day workshop in Parnell Square in Dublin to provide students with a 'crash-course' in acting, and the brothers Chris and Vincent O'Neill plan to open a full-time, two-year course in the Oscar Theatre in

January 1982.

Hitherto, alas, the call made in the Provision for the Arts Report (1976) by J.M. Richards for the setting up of a Theatre Training Board to provide training in all the theatre arts, including producing, designing, stage management and performing has remained unheeded. However, the Arts Council is acutely aware of this lacuna in the Irish Arts and has set up an Ad Hoc Committee with a view to researching the feasibility of a National Theatre School, and its plans should be ready for submission by the end of 1982. Its proposals will doubtless merit the strongest support both in the State and outside.

Singing and the playing of musical instruments

The teaching of singing and the playing of musical instruments is not part of the universities' curriculum. Instead, this is provided in a number of music schools or colleges throughout the country, of which the following are the most prominent :

The College of Music, Chatham Row, Dublin, which provides 'a complete musical education from the beginning stages to professional level'. Students of singing are required to join a choir in the college.

The Royal Irish Academy of Music, Westland Row, Dublin, which provides courses in singing and in the playing of instruments.

The School of Music, Mulgrave Street, Limerick

The School of Music, Union Quay, Cork.

With regard to singers, the lack of a professional opera company in Ireland makes the situation precarious for a trainee singer, and those looking for professional experience have to seek it outside the country. This drains the country of much of its potential talent, despite the presence of a number of highly-qualified singing teachers in the main centres of population. The country is not equipped to provide third level diplomas or even 'student status' to full-time students of singing. These students may, however, apply along with students of instrumental music for scholarships and bursaries provided by the Arts Council to allow students to study outside the country. For this purpose, the Arts Council currently has £30,000 at its disposal, two-thirds of which is supporting Irish students abroad. Teachers constantly complain that their students must go away too

early, as the necessary experience is not available in the country, though the training facilities are. Nevertheless, the training facilities in Ireland rarely equip a student to compete successfully with his or her counterparts trained outside the country in entering professional colleges in England or on the European continent. The position would, however, doubtless improve dramatically if the Arts Council were enabled to realise its plan of setting up an Irish National Opera Company which would provide the appropriate forum for trainee singers, and would tour extensively throughout the country. Until then, the highly laudable Opera Groups, such as those in Kilkenny and Wicklow, do provide some opportunities, as do also the numerous amateur musical societies throughout the country.

The situation with regard to instrumental tuition is equally unsatisfactory. Many young instrumental players would normally go to foreign conservatories in order to receive advanced tuition which would not be available in Ireland, but many cannot do so - either for domestic reasons or because it is too costly.

For this reason, a proposal put forward recently by the Dublin Philharmonic Society to provide Master Classes is worthy of the utmost support, as its fulfilment would fill a long-felt need. The Dublin Philharmonic Society, a non-profit making company set up in its present form in 1973, revives an older society which was inspired with the need to fill certain gaps in the musical life of the country. The proposal foresees the provision of three-year Master Classes in

Cello
Violin
Chamber Music
Brass
Woodwind

which, at a cost of £9,000 per item, would thus cost a total of £50,000 over a three-year period. If finance were available to bring this very necessary project to fruition, it would

- introduce Irish students to practical tuition of Conservatoire standard
- retain talented students in the country who, through their performances, would inspire younger musicians and raise the general standard of performance in the country

- bring Masters to Ireland on a regular basis
- encourage music appreciation in Ireland.

The Dance

As the Benson report on The Place of the Arts in Irish Education (paragraph 6.35-38) pointed out in 1979, there is very little advanced training in ballet or contemporary dance available in Ireland. The Irish Ballet Company, based in Cork, can offer training to only a very few dancers because it is primarily a professional and not a training company. Sadly, those wishing to make a professional career in dance must go abroad for their training.

These students can be aided by the Arts Council, which offers a small number of annual scholarships to dancers seeking advanced training. These scholarships are awarded to dancers of both sexes. However, male dancers wishing to train with the Irish Ballet Company are more favoured by the scheme, not because there is any discrimination against female dancers, but because male dancers - if they go outside Ireland for their training - are unlikely to be enticed back to Ireland as they are almost guaranteed employment outside Ireland if they are of a sufficiently high standard. What might, therefore, seem like discrimination, is an attempt to keep male dancers in Ireland. But in this attempt, it must also be realised that there are very few opportunities for a dance career in Ireland, and if the employment possibilities were improved, it would doubtless draw a number of expatriate Irish dancers back to their native country, and also help to keep up-and-coming dancers at home.

A survey of the situation with regard to dance in Ireland has recently been set in train. It was announced in September 1981 that as a result of a Seminar held in conjunction with the Arts Council and the Gulbenkian Foundation, an Ad Hoc Committee has been set up to prepare a report on the present state of dance in Ireland, both in the professional and educational fields. This survey will interest itself in a considerable variety of dance, including ballet and modern stage dancing.

CHAPTER 3

THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL POSITION OF CULTURAL WORKERS

In contrast to ancient Ireland where craftsmen-artists were highly-respected freemen in society, the position of the artist in modern Irish society has declined considerably in comparison. The plight of the modern artist in Ireland has recently been made clear in A Survey of the Living and Working Conditions of Artists in Ireland which was commissioned from Irish Marketing Surveys Ltd by the Arts Council in 1978. The full report, in three volumes, was presented to the Arts Council in November 1979. Although the full report remains unpublished, the Arts Council published a summary of the main results in April 1980. As this summary is the only document which gives an accurate and up-to-date view of the economic and social position of artists, both interpretive and creative, it is quoted in extenso in the paragraphs which follow.

The results of the survey show a very worrying, though not unexpected situation. Most artists, both interpretive and creative, rely for the majority of their income on money earned from activities unconnected with their art. Their confused and varied income precludes many of them from access to the social welfare benefits provided by the State. The instability of their incomes makes planning difficult, and most artists have no plans for pensions. Those interpretive artists who cannot practise their art unless they are employed to do so are often unemployed, sometimes for long periods. The majority of artists believe the Irish public to be disinterested in the arts, and blame the Irish education system for this. The disinterest in the arts in Ireland is borne out by a French survey published in the magazine Le Point on some of France's EEC partners, in which the Irish were considered to be the least cultured and the least arts-orientated among the EEC members.

Dependence on non-artistic earnings

75% of creative and 50% of interpretive artists were shown by the survey to have jobs in addition to their artistic work. Some have teaching jobs which relate to their artistic work, but 28% of

creative artists and one third of interpretive artists have jobs entirely unconnected with their artistic occupation, and these range from company director to waiter. Some artists - 10% of interpretive artists and 26% of creative artists - have more than one other job, and it seems fair to imply from the pattern of unemployment among interpretive artists that they change jobs quite frequently. There is also evidence of substantial dependence upon earnings of other family members.

The following table from the Arts Council Survey shows the number of different occupations carried on by Irish artists working in the fields of literature, the visual arts and music composition

Number of Different Occupations		Main Artistic Occupation		
	Total	Literature	Visual Arts	Composer
BASE	105	41	61	3
	%	%	%	%
One	23	22	21	-
Two	51	37	59	33
Three	~~29~~ 19	29	16	-
Four	6	12	3	33
Five	1	-	-	33

Access to Social Security

Deriving their earnings from such a wide variety of sources of different kinds, artists tend to have a rather unstable income. This makes it very difficult for all but a very few of them to be able to plan their finances in an adequate manner. One example of this is in the area of providing for their old age. Two thirds of artists in Ireland have made no provisions for pensions. The one third who have made provision have probably done so in the context of their non-artistic employment.

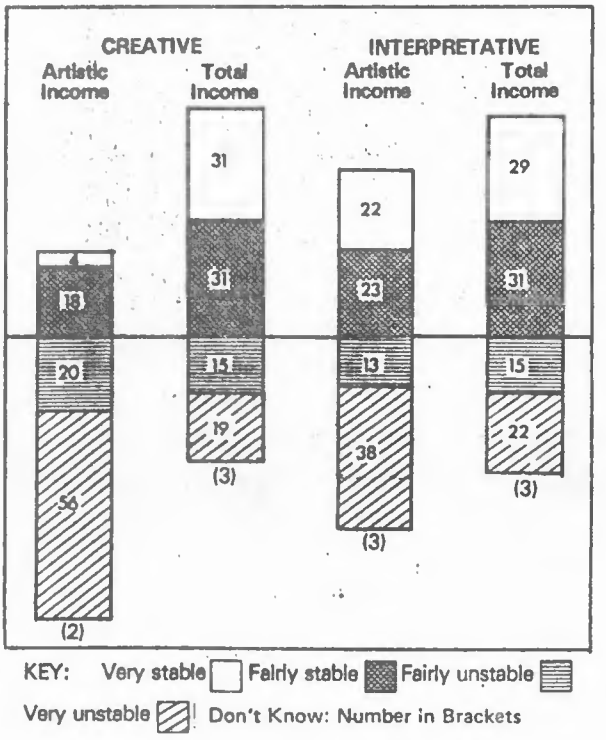
The confused nature of artists' incomes also affects their ability to participate in state-financed Social Welfare schemes. More than half of all artists claimed not to be stamping a card in any of their employments - and this rose to 69% among creative artists.

Access to unemployment payments - either assistance or benefit - is also affected. Actors are most likely to have availed of employment benefit, though somewhat less than 50% of them claimed that they had never done so. On the other hand, however, about three-quarters of the creative artists claimed never to have availed of either benefit or assistance.

Instability of Income

The situation just described, when taken in conjunction with the occupationally irregular pattern of artistic earnings for creative artists, leads to a high degree of instability of income. Both creative (76%) and interpretive (51%) artists regard their artistic income as fairly or very unstable, while 34% of creative and 37% of interpretive artists regard their total income from all sources as fairly or very unstable. For most artists, the only really stable income they earn is largely provided from sources other than their artistic earnings. It would appear that at least 23% of creative artists have no earnings from artistic work for at least one month of the year. The artists' impression of the stability of their income is percentually tabulated in the following diagram

Artists Impression of the Stability of their Income

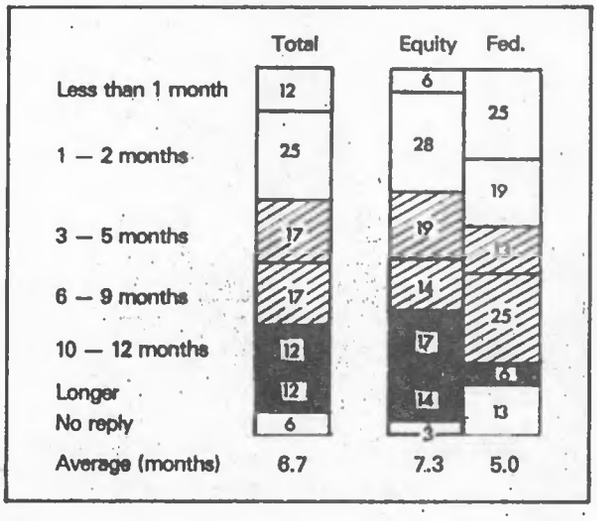


Unemployment

In the Arts Council's survey of the Living and Working Conditions of artists in Ireland, questions ~~were~~ about unemployment were put only to those not self-employed in their artistic occupation, which meant that only musicians and actors answered questions about unemployment. They were asked about unemployment in their artistic work and in their other jobs.

90% of actors and 30% of musicians have been unemployed in their artistic occupations. 54% of actors and 29% of musicians have been unemployed in their artistic occupation more than seven times. The average longest period of unemployment from artistic work is 6-7 months. The figures suggest that the average artist in this category is unemployed in his or her artistic work for one month in every year. The longest period of unemployment from artistic work for actors and musicians is laid out in the following diagram :

Longest Period of Unemployment from Artistic Work



44% of these artists,when unemployed from their artistic work, take up other jobs. In many cases, they serve in bars, but others are known to take up teaching jobs or to become labourers.

The same group of artists (those not self-employed in their artistic profession) were asked about periods of total unemployment from all jobs. 37% of this group have been totally unemployed. Over half of those who have been totally unemployed have been so more than seven times in all. This is more likely to be the case with actos than with musicians.

Distribution of artistic income among artists

The Arts Council survey showed that income from artistic work was unevenly balanced between the creative and the interpretive artists. It transpired that 50% of creative artists earn between them only 10% of the total artistic income. On the other hand, however, 50% of the total monies earned by creative artists were apportioned to the top earning 18% of artists.

A similar, but not quite so dramatic figure, applies to the interpretive artists. Here, 50% of interpretive artists earn less than 20% of the total artistic earnings within this sector, while 50% of this artistic "wealth" is earned by the top 25% of interpretive artists.

These considerable discrepancy in earning power are largely evened out when total income (including other jobs, married partners' income etc.) is taken into account. Seen in this light, the distribution of total income seems to be no worse - and perhaps even better - than that of the population as a whole. The breakdown of income among interpretive and creative artists in Irish £ may be tabulated as follows :

BREAKDOWN OF INCOME

INTERPRETIVE

Mean Income (Irf) from ...

Artistic Work	Other Work	Other Sources	Total Non-Artistic
2546	950	960	1910

CREATIVE

Mean Income from (£) from ...

Artistic Work	Other Work	Other Sources	Total Non-Artistic
1474	2009	1332	3341

These figures - the latest available - refer to the year ending 1978, and allowing for inflation in the meantime, the situation is unlikely to have changed very much since then. The trend among creative artists is for a very wide variance in their artistic earnings. The gap between the high and the low earners is narrowed by income from other sources and other jobs. Interpretive artists are more likely to give up other jobs when they reach a

certain level of earnings from their artistic work.

Artists' attitudes to the Public and to the Arts Council

Artists in all categories were asked about their attitudes to government and public interest in the arts and their attitudes to the Arts Council. About two thirds of all artists feel that the public are quite or very disinterested in the arts, for which they tend to blame the educational system. The comparatively low level of interest in the arts among the general public tends to be borne out - though not as pessimistically as the artists themselves would seem to imagine - by an audience survey carried out for the Arts Council early in 1981, some statistics from which may be quoted by permission of the Arts Council.

Out of a total of 1400 people questioned, 23% had attended a play within the last two years, 11% a classical music performance, 9% an exhibition of paintings or sculptures, 22% performances of traditional music, while only 4% had attended a ballet within that period.

Within the previous year, 22% said that they had purchased records or tapes of traditional Irish music, 10% records or tapes of classical music, 15% had bought novels, books of poetry or plays by living Irish authors, and only 2% had purchased paintings or sculptures by living Irish artists.

Nor were the results of participation in amateur artistic activities particularly encouraging. These may be summarised as follows :

Choir	4%
Musical	2%
Orchestras or ensembles	0%
Music lessons	2%
Performance of traditional music	1%
Painting	1%
Sculpturing	1%
Art Classes	3%
Etching, lithography, woodcuts etc.	1%
Pottery, woodwork etc.	5%
Amateur drama	3%

Among artists, the Survey of Working and Living Conditions of Artists in Ireland showed a high level of recognition of the

Arts Council, and an understanding of its role. The majority of those artists who did make a judgment felt that the Council was successful in varying degrees. Its good showing was based upon the grants it gave to individuals, and upon its noticeable improvement in reent years. On the debit side, its lack of success was ascribed to lack of funds and the neglect of particular categories of artists. Nevertheless, most artists were not satisfied with the level of grants and bursaries given by the Council. The current system was considered to be too competitive, with too few awards and not enough money.

Membership of Trade Unions or Professional Organisations

In the Survey of Living and Working Conditions, half of the creative artists stated that they were not members of professional bodies, and 62% said that they were not members of trades unions. The corresponding figures for interpretive artists are 18% who say that they are not members of professional organisations and 22% not members of trades unions. There was, however, a degree of confusion - among musicians in particular - as to whether organisations were professional organisations or trade unions.

Aspirations for the future

All artists were generally pessimistic about the future bringing a change for the better in their economic positions. The order of importance of the changes which they would like to see in this regard are : more (preferably full-time) work, getting a house or studio and paying off a mortgage, security and a steady income, more holidays and more money.

Aosdána

Despite the artists' pessimistic attitude towards betterment of their situation expressed in the Survey of Working and Living Conditions of 1978/79, a new scheme for Government support for creative artists was announced by the previous Taoiseach (Prime Minister), Mr. Haughey, on March 5th,1981. It is called Aosdána, an old Irish term for "men of art" or "professional men" who formed a special caste in early Irish society who were wedged in between the nobility and the commoner, but whose status was closer to the former than to the latter. The scheme is to be organised by the Arts Council, which describes it as

"an affiliation of artists engaged in literature, music and visual arts; it will honour those artists whose work has made an outstanding contribution to the arts in Ireland; and it will encourage and assist members in devoting their energies fully to their art." It is intended to give support to the individual artist working in isolation, so that he can achieve an adequate financial reward for his work and provide for his own and his family's future, and thereby to redress parts of the rather distressing picture which emerged from the Survey of Living and Working Conditions.

Aosdána will consist of not more than 150 artists who, having established a reputation for achievement and distinction in their discipline, will be entitled to be admitted as members. Not more than five of these will be specially recognised by an award of honour to be known as a Saoi, which will come into operation in 1984. But, more importantly perhaps from the artist's point of view, each member (up to 150) of the Aosdána will be given an annuity (a Cnuas) of Ir£ 4,000 per annum for a term of five years to assist them in concentrating their time and energies in the full-time pursuit of their art. Those who are entitled to membership of Aosdána will be required to have produced a body of works of merit which are original and creative, and they must have been born or have been resident for five years in Ireland, and in addition they must be more than thirty years of age. Their particular field of activity may be in literature (fiction, poetry or drama), music, sculpture, painting, printmaking, photography, film or video. Prior to the first meeting of Aosdána in 1983, assessments for admission will be carried out by the Arts Council under ~~its~~ the general conditions of its existing Bursary Programme, and after that, two existing members may propose a candidate for election. Any artist who becomes entitled to a Cnuas will join an artists' pension scheme which is to be set up, and deductions will be made from his or her annuity to cover the full cost of membership of the pension scheme. Aosdána will meet annually after 1983 to discuss issues relevant to the status of the artist and the arts in society, and to elect a supervisory board of ten to review the administration of Cnuas grants and the pension scheme and - when appropriate - to select a Saoi. While the administration of Aosdána and the selection of its members will not be easy, one cannot but wish it well and hope that it will succeed in giving at least 150 artists the fulfilment and security which they so badly need.

CHAPTER 4

STATE AND REGIONAL AIDS TO THE CREATION AND DIFFUSION OF CULTURE

While the amount of money being spent on the creation and diffusion of culture in Ireland is small in comparison to other countries of the European Economic Community, it is nevertheless heartening to see that the total amount is rising every year at a greater rate than inflation. The following factors may be taken as having a significant influence on this extra expenditure :

1. Successive governments since the later 1960's being much more receptive to requests for money for cultural activities in Ireland than had previously been the case
2. An intelligent and creative approach to a broad spectrum of cultural matters on behalf of the Arts Council, who attempt to spread available finance according to artistic needs, and who thereby encourage and generate a considerable amount of artistic activity
3. Greater demand by the Irish public for artistic events and developments which require more public spending on the arts.

While many would complain that the amount spent on the arts in Ireland is pitifully inadequate, and that the pace of development is not nearly fast enough, it must be said that great strides forward have been made within the last decade in comparison to the three decades which preceded it. These strides are due, to a considerable extent, to the increasingly active role played by the Arts Council, which has now become the main distributor of government funds to the arts in Ireland. Another important area of progress has been the readiness of Local Authorities to come forward and provide financial assistance for cultural activities within own sphere of influence. We may expect to see further advances made when the Arts Officers of the Regional Development Organisations make their presence felt more and more. We must now turn to a somewhat more detailed consideration of these three groups as being the most important organisations involved in the

creation and promotion of culture in Ireland.

The Arts Council

The Arts Council, based in Dublin, and consisting of 16 members drawn from various fields in the arts, a director and seven officers, is undoubtedly the most vital force in the Irish cultural scene at present. In 1980, it received a government subsidy of £3 million, and while spending £250,654 on administration, it was in the position of being able to distribute the remainder to a variety of cultural activities throughout the country. These disbursements, while being on a national basis, are nevertheless often made to arts organisations of a regional character which serve the needs of a particular region or community.

The cultural areas covered by the Arts Council, together with the amounts granted in 1980, may be summarised briefly as follows:

Literature includes support for Irish publishers, small printing houses, cultural journals, and organised writers' activities, such as Listowel Writers' Week - and bursaries for writers ... £58,382

Visual Arts - enables the mounting of exhibitions and support of individual artists ... £138,706

Purchase of Works of Art - a way of subsidising Irish artists by buying their works ... £8,918

Exhibitions - mounting special exhibitions ... £25,492

Drama supporting Irish theatre in Dublin and the provinces. This item takes up more than half of the Arts Council's total expenditure ...£1,506,115

Dance - aids to performances by visiting Ballet Companies, as well as to Irish Companies such as the Irish Ballet Company, and others in Dublin and Cork - as well as bursaries for students... £216,709

Traditional Music	- an active and significant aspect of Irish culture	...	£48,400
Music	- a heading which includes grants to orchestras, chamber music groups, music associations and competitions, as well as bursaries for instrumental musicians	...	£136,723
Opera	- indispensable grants for the staging of opera in Ireland, often with foreign soloists, the beneficiaries being the seasons of the Dublin Grand Opera Society, the Wexford Festival and the Irish National Opera	...	£122,555
Film	- support for film-makers, both individually and in groups, as well as a major Film Script award, funded jointly with Radio Telefís Eireann	...	£95,455
Arts Centreas and Festivals	- essential funds to provide for a number of Arts Centres (e.g. The Project in Dublin, and the Arts Centre in Wexford) which have grown up within the last decade, as well as for important Arts Festivals in Dublin, Galway and Gorey	...	£143,830
Community Arts	- keeping very much alive the amateur interest in the arts in Ireland	...	£72,358

Other areas to which the Arts Council contributes are

Arts in Education	...	£25,238
Arts Developments in the Regions	...	£20,180
Bursary payments	...	£103,170

Local Authorities

A major breakthrough was achieved in 1973 when, under Section 12 of the Arts Act, Local Authorities -and this includes Corporations and Urban District Councils of the major Irish towns and cities, as well as County Councils - became entitled to expend monies directly on the arts. This expenditure is almost exclusively on regional or local community arts activities. Local authorities are also responsible for a number of arts venues both in the capital city and in the provinces, such as

- Municipal Art Galleries in Dublin, Cork, Limerick and Waterford, and monies expended on them include grants for the purchase of works of art for the respective collections
- the Theatre Royal in Wexford.

The following are among the most significant contributions of the various Local Authorities to the arts in the year 1980 (the last full year for which statistics are available) :

Dublin Corporation	£90,000	
Cork Corporation	£19,345	
Limerick Corporation	£15,000	- for the Belltable Arts Centre
Waterford Corporation	£758	
Sligo Corporation	£55,000	- over 5 years - for the Hawkswell Theatre
	£5,000	- for current expenditure
Dublin County Council	£10,000	
Galway County Council	£4,850	
Mayo County Council	£4,366	
Wexford County Council	£2,500	
Tipperary (North Riding) County Council	£1,600	

These statistics do not include all the local authorities, but are a representative sample of the most important. Local authorities are not obliged to spend money on the arts, and many of the smaller ones do not do so.

Regional Development Organisations

The Richards report on Provision for the Arts, published by the Arts Council in 1976, proposed a plan for regionalisation of the arts by the appointment of Regional Arts Officers in the Regional Development Organisation areas around the country. The mid-west region, covering Limerick, Clare and North Tipperary was the first to make an appointment and it was followed in mid-1979 by Galway/Mayo. By the end of 1980, a total of five officers had been appointed. These posts are partially funded by the Arts Council, but the appointees are directly responsible to the Regional Development Organisations who pay the other half. These officers are involved in the promotion of the arts from a regional point of view and are concerned with the development of arts activities at local level as well as with arrangements for touring groups from outside the region.

Museums and Galleries

The National Museum and the National Gallery are both funded by the State. There are, however, a number of local museums - such as those in Cork and Monaghan - which are funded by the Local Authorities, but the majority of the country's museums get no significant financial assistance at all, and work on a shoe-string budget. The Irish Tourist Board did assist local museums particularly in the 1960's and early 1970's, but is no longer a significant contributor. The Department of Education has been considering the question of aid to museums other than the National Museum for some considerable time, but has hitherto not adopted any policy in this regard. The independent Irish Museums Trust, set up a few years ago, has stepped in to fill the gap, and encourages local museums, as well as generating interest by giving an annual Museums Award.

RTE Orchestras

Radio Telefís Eireann has the only full symphony orchestra in the country, which it pays for from its own budget. It also has its own Concert Orchestra.

CHAPTER 5

FILM PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION

1. The History of Film-making in Ireland

It will come as a surprise to many to learn that films were being made, and also screened, in Ireland before the end of the last century. Before the outbreak of the First World War, a feature film "The Lad from Old Ireland" had been shot by Sidney Olcott for the American film company Kalem, which subsequently made almost twenty other feature films in Ireland. In 1915, the Film Company of Ireland was established, and it used the actors of the Abbey Theatre to a considerable extent in its films.

The responsibility for censoring such early films lay with the Local Authorities, but when the Irish Free State was established the Minister for Justice, Kevin O'Higgins, created the position of Film Censor - and an Appeals Board, as in the courts of justice. The Film Censor is still active, and he retains the power to stop the distribution of, or to cut films at his discretion.

During the economically-depressed years of the 1920's and 1930's it is understandable that film-making in Ireland was kept at a very modest level. In 1937, the State began to take an active interest in sponsoring films albeit in a small way, as shown by the Irish Tourist Board's initiative in getting Norris Davidson to produce a film about Ireland, and since then many films have been made for other State-sponsored bodies or for Government departments. In 1939, One of these, the Department of Industry and Commerce, initiated discussions with representatives of the film trade, following upon the setting up of an inter-departmental committee on the film industry two years earlier. But in the 1940's Governmental interest seems to have focussed more on the screening than on the making of films, doubtless because of the revenue it reaped from a tax on cinema seats, and in 1943 the National Film Institute was founded primarily to represent the views of the Roman Catholic church on the cinema.

In 1950, the Government asked the Industrial Development

Authority (I.D.A.) to assess the viability of an Irish film industry, and out of this grew the establishment in 1958 of the Ardmore Film Studios near Bray, made possible by a grant of £45,000 from the I.D.A. and a loan of £217,000 from the Industrial Credit Company, a state-financed credit bank.Two years later, the Industrial Credit Company set up the Irish Film Finance Corporation as a subsidiary to provide "end" money primarily for B features. It had lost £385,000 by the time it went out of existence in 1962 - the year which saw the establishment of Telefís Eireann - the national television broadcasting company, now Radio Teleffs Eireann (R.T.E.).

1964 saw Ardmore Studios going bankrupt. The studios had been designated as English for the purpose of attracting production finance, but this turned out to be of minimal benefit to Irish film-makers and was, in many respects, an impediment to the making of Irish films. At around this time, attendance at cinemas began to decline, and in 1967, the Minister for Industry and Commerce appointed a Film Industry Committee to examine anew the question of an Irish film industry. This Committee reported in the following year, and recommended the establishment of a Film Board with wide responsibilities ranging from funding to distribution. A bill to this effect was introduced in the Dáil, Ireland's Parliament, in 1970, but it was never debated. In 1965, the earlier censorship of films was amended to include limited certificates, and in 1970 the "seven-year rule" was introduced, whereby films which had once been banned or cut could be re-submitted for consideration after seven years.

Film distribution did not remain unaffected by the decline in cinema attendance figures. A large number of cinemas, particularly those outside the major towns and cities, closed their doors, and many of the larger and better-off cinemas doubled, trebled - or in some instances quadrupled - their screens, while at the same time reducing seats per screen from averages of around 1000 to between 250 and 500. The tensions caused by these changes led to accusations that the major distributors, renters and cinema-owners were unfairly monopolising the trade - accusations which were investigated first by the Examiner of Restrictive Practises and, eventually, in 1977, by a public enquiry.

Ardmore Studios, which had been purchased by a private British company (New Brighton Tower) in 1967, went bankrupt for a second

time in the early 1970's, and in 1973 they were bought by R.T.E. on behalf of the Minister for Industry and Commerce, and re-established as the National Film Studios of Ireland Ltd., under the chairmanship of film director John Boorman. These continued to lose money and were in receipt of Government grants from the Department of Industry and Commerce who, in 1977, asked consultants Arthur D. Little to report on the viability of the Studios.

The Arts Council - the State-sponsored body for the disbursement of State funds to the Arts - was expanded in 1973, and began funding film organisations and production. During the 1970's, a steady trickle of independent films, principally on 16 mm and generally of "television-hour" length were being made, but they were poorly distributed. The "bread and butter" work for the film-makers, which in the 1960's had taken the form of commissioned documentaries, had switched to the making of advertising material in the 1970's.

In 1979, the Minister for Industry and Commerce published a Film Bill, which proposed the establishment of a Film Board with a fund of £4 million. The bill was debated and passed by the Dail (Parliament) in 1980. On August 14th, 1981, the Minister for Industry, Commerce and Tourism established the Irish Film Board under the Irish Film Board Act, 1980, and appointed later. In the communiqué announcing the establishment of the Board, it was stated that : "The purpose of establishing the Film Board is to assist and encourage the development of a film industry in the State. The Board is empowered to provide investments, grants, loans and guarantees of loans for the making of films. The Minister's hope is that the establishment of the Board - although funds at its disposal are necessarily modest in these times of financial stringency - will be seen as an act of faith in our ability to sustain a viable Irish film industry, and as an encouragement to creative talent which such an industry should release".

2. Film Production

The brief history of the Irish film industry, outlined above, points up the contradictions of film production and distribution in Ireland, along with some of its causes. Perhaps because of their natural love of drama, the Irish have always provided large audiences for the cinema since its inception, without ever developing a proper film industry of their own. Approximate figures of annual cinema attendance may be tabulated as follows :

1933	1944	1955	1960	1977
36.4m	21m	30.9m	41.2m	5.41m

Despite the obvious decline in numbers in the 1970's - largely due to the increasing number of families acquiring television sets - there is still an audience of considerable size for the showing of films in Ireland. Yet, in contrast, film-making has gone from fairly minor levels of production in the first three

decades this century, through points in the 1940's and 1950's where it could said not to have existed to its present position which could charitably be described as modest.

The causes of this situation are not difficult to find and differ from the problems of indigenous production in other European countries only in the severity of the problem in Ireland.

Finance for film production is difficult, if not impossible, to find. No particular tax incentives exist, and the Irish financial scene has not tended to be "cash-rich" to that degree. Nor, with such a bad track record, could investment in film-making be seen to be a particularly good risk. Irish film-makers have not a great deal of experience, although they are by no means lacking in commitment or ability, and despite the undoubted high-quality of some Irish films, their commercial exploitation has not been successful enough to attract further investment. A vicious circle exists whereby a successful film-maker might attract finance, but is prevented from becoming successful by lack of finance. It might be possible to break this circle were Irish film-makers able to distribute their films more successfully in Ireland but, in the context of the extremely competitive distribution network in Ireland and the dominant position of the major British and American representatives, this seems alas to be a comparatively remote possibility. Similarly, the severity of the present crisis might have been avoided and the film-makers plight improved had past Governments taken a more enlightened and consistent attitude to the development of the industry from the point of view both of its cultural and industrial importance.

The present situation is best appreciated by describing the institutions or concerns that currently make up the industry in Ireland.

The National Film Studios of Ireland

The National Film Studios of Ireland is the largest facility available for film-making in Ireland. The studio has three sound-stages and employs about 55 technical staff, mostly set-builders and electricians. It is situated not far from Dublin on about 25 acres of land. The equipment and technical facilities of the studios are modest, primarily because of the impossibility of obtaining adequate capital investment over the years.

The Studios are now in severe financial difficulties and are dependent upon the proposed Film Board for their continued survival. Their history has been outlined briefly above, but it was only in 1980 that they have been backed by legislation which has not yet been implemented. They have recorded a loss in each year of their operation, and by June 1980 (the end of the financial year) had received Government grants totalling £1,289,034, had outstanding loans of £1,072,807 and recorded a loss of trading in that year of £523,295. Bank and loan payments in 1979/80 totalled £227,850 and net current liabilities were £1,130,087. This financial crisis has, in recent months, forced the Studios to close their canteen and to put up for sale 23 acres of the back lots which constituted one of the most useful facilities which they had to offer.

Since their incorporation in 1975, the Studios have had 28 productions partially or wholly made there. Over the last year, post-production work was carried out on 3 British productions and services provided for a fourth. Cinema commercials, still photography and set construction for the theatre were undertaken there in leaner times and, most importantly, John Boorman - the chairman of the Studio - produced and directed "Excalibur" for Orion Pictures Incorporated. This film offered acting parts for a number of Irish actors and involved an unprecedented amount of set-building. The Studios, however, have no percentage in the film, and stand to gain little but reflected glory from the film's hoped-for commercial success. Another example is"Taxi Mauve", a French-Irish production in which the Studios bought a 7% stake in English-speaking territories, except North America, for £260,000. Only about 80% of this has been recovered to date.

Clearly, the Studios wish to be in a position to offer a more attractive package to prospective productions. Financial pressures are such, however, that the Studios need to break out of the descending spiral in which they find themselves by investing more effectively and, by implication, more heavily in potentially successful product. That such a success is unlikely to be produced or directed by an Irish film-maker is self-evident and, despite the Studios' insistence that they are interested in national productions and despite their consistent, if rather low-level, assistance to independent film-makers, it is clear that the Studios will have to depend on non-Irish productions

for their survival, if a considerable amount of money is not invested in them by some source such as the EEC. This potential channeling of the very limited funds currently available for film to non-Irish production has caused considerable disquiet among independent film-makers.

Independent Film-making

Independent film-makers in Ireland exist in a very different and even more precarious world to that of the National Film Studios. Their work, typically, is on 16 mm, is grossly under-funded and very poorly distributed. Sources of funding are limited, there being no incentives for private sponsorship and there is, consequently, excessive dependence on the Arts Council and R.T.E. The National Film Studios occasionally provide equipment to independent productions.

Despite these constraints, there appears to be a modest increase in the numbers of film-makers and of films in Ireland. Six films by Irish directors will, apparently, be premiered at the Cork International Film Festival in September 1981. All of these are on 16 mm, and they vary in length from 30 minutes to one hour and twenty minutes. An increasing number of these film-makers are attempting to commit themselves exclusively to film-making, turning their backs on the sponsored documentaries and advertising which are the main source of income for their colleagues, and they are hoping to get opportunities to make the 35 mm films to which most of them aspire.

The shortage of available opportunities has brought the differences between the National Film Studios' view of the future of film in Ireland and that of the independent film-makers into sharp contrast. Is film primarily an industry, to be dealt with by the Minister for Industry and Commerce, on grounds such as those of employment and profitability ? Or is it an art form in need - like other art forms - of subsidisation by the modern-day patron of the Arts, the State, with the only return on capital being an intangible, though valuable, cultural one ? Like all such arguments, one stands in danger of ending up with the worst of both sides which, in this case, would see the State pouring money into something which was neither successful as an industry nor commercially beneficial. Many who would criticise earlier Irish Government involvement in the world of films would see this

as an accurate description of the present situation. Furthermore, the previous administration's solution - the establishment of a Film Board - is also open to the worrying possibility that very little will be changed.

The Film Board

The most major of previous Governments' initiatives in the film industry is that promised by the Film Board Act of 1980. The Act proposes to establish a Film Board which will have a fund of £4.1m, made available by the Government over the next four years for the encouragement of film-making in Ireland. The Act, which has however not yet been implemented, was the Government's response to the recommendations made in the report of the Film Industry which was appointed by the Minister for Industry and Commerce under the chairmanship of John Huston in July 1967.

That report proposed a Board which would have a very wide responsibilities. The Board would not itself undertake productions, its role being rather "the creation of conditions in which other interests will be likely to do this, and the stimulation of these interests to undertake the task." The Board was foreseen as sponsoring short films and making available loans for the funding of feature films, advising on distribution, providing opportunities and financial assistance for training, making recommendations to Government on the progress of the film industry as it sees fit, advising on the revision of tax laws so as to benefit production, and in establishing a National Film Archive. A bill based on this report was, as mentioned above, introduced in 1970, but never debated. Many of the ideas contained in the report and in the 1970 bill are not included in the present Film Board Act of 1980.

The new bill was introduced in 1979, largely as a result of lobbying by the National Film Studios of Ireland, and its contents are based on a report commissioned from Arthur D. Little by the Minister for Industry and Commerce of the time, Mr. Desmond O'Malley. The 1980 Act proposed the establishment of a Board, consisting of seven members to be appointed by the Minister. The intention is that the Board should disburse money in such a way as to ensure a return on investment with which to continue its activities, once the initial £4.1m has been paid out. That this

means an inbuilt tendency to go for potentially profitable films (implying largely foreign productions) is obvious. However, the provisions of the Act refer largely to the structure and administration of the proposed Board, while giving at the same time only the most general information about its likely approach. Those interested in the potential policy of the Board, and aware of the provision in the Act enabling the Minister to issue instructions to the Board were particularly interested in the Minister's comments in the Dáil (Parliament) during the debate on the Act. Among other things, the Minister said :

> "I will be looking to the Board to adopt a business-like approach to prospective projects and will expect that the potential viability of each project will be a major consideration for assistance being given.....
> The Board will not be in the business of giving gratuitous hand-outs, as this would not be of long-term benefit to an area which, eventually, will have to stand on its own feet without State support.....
> In the short term, the National Film Studios will require a limited number of international feature films .... "

Partly as a result of these remarks, the Act has been received with some scepticism in many quarters, indeed with downright hostility in some cases. It is argued that the money made available is inadequate if all aspects of film-making in Ireland is to be properly assisted. The Minister's insistence that the Board will require "distribution guarantees" before funding particular proposals is interpreted as evidence that the Minister's intention is to assist the National Film Studios of Ireland to attract international films to the Studios, rather than to help fund smaller-scale and implicitly riskier indigenous film-making.

The Arts Council

The contrasting positions of independent film-makers and the National Film Studios is reinforced by the role played by the Arts council. The Arts Council is an independent, though State-sponsored body, with responsibility for the disbursement of State funds to the Arts. The Council was established in 1951 under an Act in the Dáil, though it was substantially altered in 1973.

Among the alterations was the inclusion, in the definition of the Arts, of film. Since then, the Arts Council has been involved in modest levels of grant-aid to films production, primarily through its Film Script Award. This award has been made exclusively to film-makers resident in Ireland, and has been intended primarily to enable these film-makers to make fiction films. Although the money involved has been of extremely modest proportions, the results - in cultural terms - have been considerable. A number of film-makers have been enabled to undertake projects which they could not otherwise have attempted, and have progressed subsequently to similar or larger undertakings. There is now a body of films of reasonable quality made by Irish film-makers which deal with Irish themes, and which are also capable of standing up to critical judgment on an international level.

The Arts Council's role in film production is, however, under review in the context of the introduction of the Film Board. The Council has supported criticisms of the Film Board, and is anxious not to be left in the position of having to take responsibility for indigenous film-making should the Board choose to concentrate on foreign productions at the Studios.

Film Distribution

The structure and control of film distribution innIreland differs from that in other European countries only in the reliance of the Irish industry on its British counterpart. The Irish subsidiaries of major distributors (CIC, Columbia, Warner etc.) come together to form an Irish Advisory Committee of the London-based Society of Film Distributions. A number of other Irish companies (Abbey Films, Impact Films etc.) are members of the Independent Film Renters Association, and there are also associations of cinema owners. Among these, the Green Group (which includes Abbey Films) owns or books for nearly half of all the cinemas in Ireland. Films released in Ireland are seen first in Dublin, then in other major urban centres such as Cork, Limerick and Galway, and lastly in the smaller towns and villages.

Films which are produced in Ireland are poorly distributed. Almost entirely on 16 mm, most independent film is unsuitable for theatrical distribution, and aspirations to transfer 16 mm to 35 mm are common to most film-makers.

Where it exists, distribution of this 16 mm film is principally through Irish television. R.T.E. takes most independent products for at least one screening. The winners of the Arts Council's Film Script Award get two screenings, for which R.T.E. puts up half the amount of the award. In some instances, particularly where the film involved has received R.T.E. money or other assistance, R.T.E. will negotiate with the film-makers to have the film distributed through the London-based firm which distributes R.T.E.'s own product.

Film-makers have also, on occasions, negotiated direct deals for screenings on other television stations, particularly European, but also American and Australian. Contacts for these sales are often made at festivals, and then furthered when other product is available. The more successful film-makers have standing arrangements with distributors, but few - no matter how successful - can claim to have even recovered the initial cost of production for their films.

There are some more modest distribution-circuits in Ireland which are occasionally made use of, such as showings at the Irish Film Theatre (see below) or to film societies, through the Federation of Irish Film Societies, or lodging the film with the National Film Institute, which distributes films on 16 mm to schools and other bodies as one of its services.

The arrival of the fourth television channel in Great Britain is seen by some film-makers as an exciting new market, but - no matter how anxious the station may be to buy product - it is scarcely likely to have any dramatic effect.

Television cable systems are installed throughout Dublin as a means for Dublin viewers to get better reception of English-based BBC and ITV programmes, and they are likely to be installed in Limerick and Cork in the near future. The eventual advent of pay television seems not unlikely. Again, some film-makers see this as a potential market, but it has also been argued that its potential damaging effects may far outweigh its possible advantages.

R.T.E., which has funded itself for years on the proportion of home-produced material which it transmits, has recently begun to pay a great deal more attention to the possibility of selling this product outside Ireland, and also to the whole question of co-production with other stations.

Films made by the National Film Studios have largely been foreign productions with their own distribution arrangements. The most successful film made so far in the Studios has been "Excalibur", mentioned above, but other productions are not generally of the same status or quality.

Finally, two other elements of film distribution in Ireland may be mentioned. The first of these is the "Art House circuits". The Federation of Irish Film Societies shows 16 mm films in non-theatrical venues. It has 47 affiliated societies throughout the country, and shows a much wider range of product than that seen in commercial houses. The second is the Irish Film Theatre. It is a membership-only cinema with two screens (one in Dublin and one in Limerick) which, like the Federation of Irish Film Societies, shows uncensored films of wider origin than the USA- and UK-dominated product of the commercial cinemas.