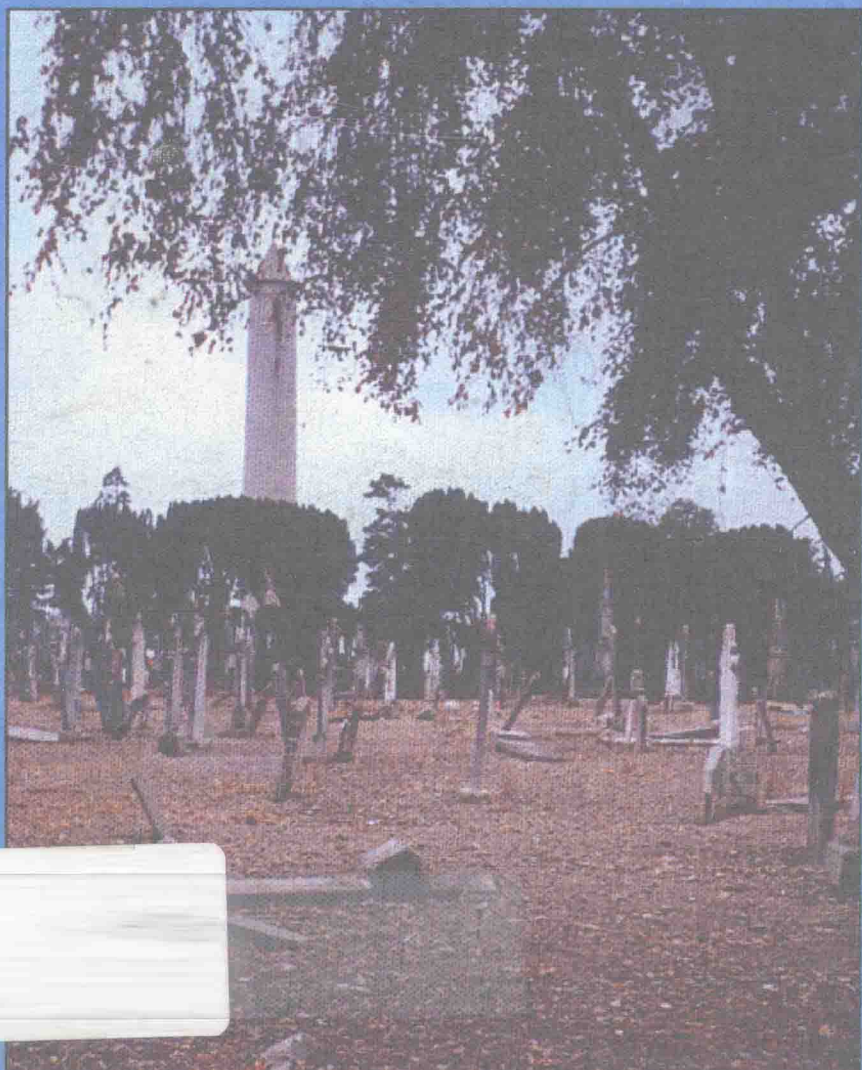


JAMES CLARENCE MANGAN, EDWARD WALSH AND NINETEENTH-CENTURY IRISH LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

BY ANNE MACCARTHY



**JAMES CLARENCE MANGAN,
EDWARD WALSH AND NINETEENTH-CENTURY
IRISH LITERATURE IN ENGLISH**

Anne MacCarthy

Studies in Irish Literature
Volume 4

The Edwin Mellen Press
Lewiston•Queenston•Lampeter

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

MacCarthy, Anne.

James Clarence Mangan, Edward Walsh, and nineteenth-century Irish literature in English / Anne MacCarthy.-- 1st ed.

p. cm. -- (Studies in Irish literature ; v. 4)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-7734-7498-6

1. Mangan, James Clarence, 1803-1849--Criticism and interpretation--History. 2. English literature--Irish authors--History and criticism--Theory, etc. 3. English literature--19th century--History and criticism--Theory, etc. 4. Walsh, Edward, 1805-1850--Criticism and interpretation--History. 5. Ireland--Intellectual life--19th century. 6. Ireland--In literature. 7. Canon (Literature) I. Title. II. Studies in Irish literature (Lewiston, N.Y.) ; v. 4.

PR4973.Z5 M26 2000

821'.8099417--dc21

00-048724

This is volume 4 in the continuing series

Studies in Irish Literature

Volume 4 ISBN 0-7734-7498-6

SLrL Series ISBN 0-7734-7983-X

A CIP catalog record for this book is available from the British Library.

Copyright © 2000 Anne MacCarthy

All rights reserved. For information contact

The Edwin Mellen Press

Box 450

Lewiston, New York

USA 14092-0450

The Edwin Mellen Press

Box 67

Queenston, Ontario

CANADA L0S 1L0

The Edwin Mellen Press, Ltd.

Lampeter, Ceredigion, Wales

UNITED KINGDOM SA48 8LT

Printed in the United States of America

GENERAL EDITOR'S PREFACE

At the dawn of a new millenium, it seems entirely appropriate that we take stock of the historical position from which we enter the twenty first century. This is especially true in the area of Irish Studies, a field where the influence of historical events is still very much operative in the present.

The importance of Irish Studies in the academy has grown exponentially, and there is much work being devoted to the major authors – Shaw, Wilde, Yeats, Synge, Joyce, Beckett, and Heaney – as well as to the burgeoning talent of new generations of writers. There has also been a proliferation of studies in the social sciences, history, politics and cultural studies, dealing with the situation of Ireland, as well as with the euphemistically entitled ‘Troubles’ in Northern Ireland.

However, the methodology of much of this work has been traditional in orientation: hence the niche which *Ireland in Theory* sets out to fill. This series will bring the theoretical developments of recent scholarship to bear on the ‘matter of Ireland’. The ongoing critique of common sense ideas, and of received and traditional paradigms of knowledge, that has been the legacy of what has come to be called ‘critical theory’, has opened up whole new areas of study and brought into question many of the cornerstones of social, cultural, literary and political thinking.

Hence *Ireland in Theory* will focus on new interpretations and interrogations of Irish culture which are theory-driven. By refusing to be limited by the traditional frameworks of academic disciplines, the series crosses the boundaries that have kept literature, cultural studies, social studies, political studies, ideological studies and ethnic and racial studies apart. It hopes to bring about new constellations in which all aspects of the Irish experience can be examined in new and challenging ways. Such a process is necessary if the notion of Irishness is to shed the attenuating historical baggage that has kept it locked in paradigms of the past for so long.

Future volumes will foreground new perspectives on a wide range of writers, periods and attitudes in an attempt to reach some genuinely fresh conclusions. It is hoped that the cumulative effect of this series will be to advance different enunciations of identity which develop pluralist and transformative definitions of Irishness, diasporic influences on Irishness, and hyphenated notions of Irishness.

The present volume, by Anne MacCarthy, sets out to discuss two Irish writers whose works have been much neglected in terms of their importance to the development of Irish writing. In discussing the texts of Edward Walsh and James Clarence Mangan, she stresses the impact of their translations from Irish language literature on the creation of a new style and language of Irish literature in English. This process of transformation is of seminal importance to the Irish canon, and to the ongoing process of cultural, social and political development, one of whose manifestations has been the peace process in Northern Ireland.

Through her use of translation theory, MacCarthy demonstrates the epistemological and ideological complexities involved in the whole process of translation as well as the political and social consequences that arise from the activity itself. Her positioning of pluralist notions of Irishness as enunciated in the works of Walsh and Mangan contributes in no small way to the reassessment of their literary reputations, and to the proleptic orientation of their views on

nationhood, identity and the vexed issues of the political and cultural relationships with England. Her conclusions will bring to the foreground the work of both writers, as well as proceeding apace the ongoing debate about the nature of Irishness, and the place in that construct of literary influences and ideas.

Eugene O'Brien,
University of Limerick, Ireland.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank the following for their great help during the research for, and the writing of this book: Juan Casas Rigall, Brian Hughes, Teresa Nandín Vila, Paloma Núñez Pertejo, Eugene O'Brien, Antonio Raúl de Toro Santos, all my friends and colleagues at the Faculty of Philology in the University of Santiago de Compostela, the staff of the National Library in Dublin, and my family.

Part of this work was presented as a paper, "James Clarence Mangan as a Translator for Nationalism" at the "Translation and Power Conference" organized by the Centre for British and Comparative Cultural Studies, Centre for Research on Translation and BCLT, Warwick in July 1997. Some of it in its initial stages also inspired the following publications: "Joyce and the Irish Literary Tradition: Major Writing and Minor Writing" in *Estudios de Literatura y Lengua Inglesa del Siglo XX* (3), Pilar Abad, José M. Barrio y José M. Ruiz, eds. Valladolid: Servicio de Apoyo a la Enseñanza, 1996; "The Various Attitudes to the Irish Language in Nineteenth-Century Ireland" in *Adquisición y aprendizaje de lenguas segundas y sus literaturas*, J. M. Oro Cabana y J. Varela Zapata, eds. Santiago de Compostela: Servicio de Publicaciones, 1997; "James Joyce, Edward Walsh and the Death of Ancient Ireland" in *Many Sundry Wits Gathered Together*, S.G. Corugedo, ed. La Coruña: Servicio de Publicacións, 1998.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

General Editor's Preface.....	vii
Acknowledgements.....	xi
Chapter 1 Introduction.....	1
Chapter 2 Edward Walsh: Irish Writer in English.....	11
Chapter 3 Edward Walsh: Critical Reception.....	69
Chapter 4 James Clarence Mangan: Critical Reception.....	121
Chapter 5 James Clarence Mangan: Literary Identity 1.....	169
Chapter 6 James Clarence Mangan: Literary Identity 2.....	237
Conclusion.....	281
Notes.....	283
Bibliography	289
Index.....	301

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The two writers discussed in the following are unjustly ignored by the Irish literary tradition. James Clarence Mangan and Edward Walsh wrote at a crucial moment in the history of Irish literature when a new consciousness was in evidence and when a new literary identity was coming into being. As writers, they are characteristic of a certain period in all new literatures. Their literary reputations have suffered from the decisions made about Irish literature when the canon was being established and afterwards. A search for criteria by which to formulate value judgements is to be encountered in Irish writing and in this it is like all new literatures. For that reason, I have analysed the output and literary fame of these writers referring to the theories of Itamar Even-Zohar and André Lefevere who discuss these formative phases of literature in general terms. These critics do not see literature as separate from society, instead there is an interdependency between the two. This helps them to analyse the struggle for power and dominance present in any human society and to show how it can be identified in literatures. Needless to say, this is of especial relevance when we are speaking of new literatures which must try to break away from any dominant culture and gain autonomy.

The advantage I see in Even-Zohar's terminology is that it draws our attention to factors which are not often taken into account by critics and which play an important factor in the decisions made on what authors, texts or literary products are considered worthy to be remembered by the community. In the following I have relied heavily on *Poetics Today* 11, 1990, given over by Even-Zohar to clarifying his ideas and so constituting the best source for any explanation of them. His definition of 'literary system' envisages a struggle for power, dominance and centrality as one of its essential characteristics. He describes it as 'the network of relations that is hypothesized to obtain between a number of activities called "literary", and consequently these activities themselves observed via that network' or as 'the complex of activities, or any section thereof, for which systemic relations can be hypothesized to support the option of considering them "literary" ' (Even-Zohar 1990, 28). He further clarifies this by stating that the literary system is part of the hierarchy within the polysystem. The polysystem is a term used to describe the whole network of systems, literary or extraliterary, in society. So it includes all kinds of writing: both canonical and non-canonical texts. According to Even-Zohar 'as a rule, the center of the whole polysystem is identical with the most prestigious canonized repertoire' (Even-Zohar 1990, 17).

The literary system is complex, each part being understood in relation to all other elements in the system. There is a permanent struggle for centrality, power and dominance taking place, not only within the literary system, but between it and other systems in the polysystem. This is the cause of the dynamism in literary systems. They are perpetually changing and developing. When a hierarchy has to be established within new literatures, criteria have to be found on which it may be formed. Even-Zohar's conception of the dynamic state of the system shows us that the canon and the criteria on which judgements of value are founded are never eternal or unchanging. On the contrary, they depend on the poetics of the time. Even-Zohar's ideas also draw our attention

to the fact that the writer depends on his/her readers and on other factors within the literary system. The writer produces a certain text keeping in mind the demands of the market. He/she is not isolated from society, a cliché which perhaps determines our cultural view of the creative artist. Even-Zohar's view of literature is historical and socio-cultural. It has a dynamic relationship with other parts of the polysystem and is never to be conceived of in isolation from it. The fact that he describes literature as a socio-cultural entity is important for Irish literature. It shows us that it may help Irish society and culture to understand itself. The two writers discussed in this study introduced new notions of Irishness by creating a new literature and writing in a new language.

The term 'literary system' also helps us to understand the struggle for dominance between two religious and racial communities in Ireland, a struggle which is an intrinsic part of all human activity, as well as the conflict between two languages. This last must be considered in any discussion of the literary system of Irish writing. The linguistic change in Ireland led to the establishment of the literary system of Irish writing in English. But the fact that another language, and literature written in that language, exists cannot be left to one side for many reasons, one of them being the fact that it causes problems when we try to define Irish writing in English and evaluate its worth.

Even-Zohar identifies certain elements within the literary system, 'institution', 'producer', 'product', 'consumer', 'market', 'repertoire', warning that none of these can be 'described to function in isolation, and the kind of relations that may be detected run across all possible axes of the scheme' (Even-Zohar 1990, 34). The 'consumer' is more than the reader, he/she is also a consumer of texts. As a member of a community, a consumer can be exposed directly and indirectly to them. Indirect consumers could be all members of any community exposed to literary fragments, idioms and so on. Direct consumers are exposed not only by reading but by involvement in literary activities. There are not only single consumers in the literary system but also consumers as a

group, commonly called the public (Even-Zohar 1990, 36-37). Thus the 'consumer' is not passive but actively involved in the text and all its implications. A text does not have to be read, to be known, even partially, by the community. Perhaps this is one of the first reasons we could put forward for the inclusion of forgotten writers in the literary tradition, that they form part of our cultural inheritance. If we look at the Sliabh Luachra area in the early twentieth century, we see that the poetry of Mangan and Walsh was read and cherished by the community and provided models for production there.

Even-Zohar defines '*market*' as 'the aggregate of factors involved with the selling and buying of literary products and with the promotion of types of consumption' (Even-Zohar 1990, 38). As will be seen later, when discussing how the institution affected what Mangan wrote, it is the absence of market which is most interesting, especially from the point of view of the reading public in nineteenth-century Ireland. The absence of a market may directly influence not only a writer's decision to stay within his/her own community, but also the type of literature he/she produces (hence the usefulness of a term taken from economics which shows us that a writer is affected by the exigencies of the public) (Even-Zohar 1990, 39). I shall speak of the other elements in the literary system, 'institution', 'producer', 'product', and 'repertoire' when they occur in the following study.

Even-Zohar holds that all literatures start as 'young', dependent on dominant systems and may become independent. This is of great relevance to the first Irish writers in English at the beginning of the nineteenth century, as I see them as having in common a wish to write something new, looking for models outside the British system and not merely imitating what they found there. They frequently came upon these models in the Irish tradition. But in the late nineteenth and throughout the twentieth century, when a canon was being established, efforts were made to base a cultural and literary hierarchy on nationalistic and ethnic criteria solely, so leading to a confusion of isolationism

with autonomy. The effect of this can be seen in the critical evaluations, and canonical marginalization of both Mangan and Walsh.

André Lefevere uses some of the terminology employed by Even-Zohar. For him, too, the canon is not 'timeless and immutable' (Lefevere 1992a, 137). Lefevere outlines his theories on rewriting, ideology and the manipulation of literary fame with particular reference to translation. This is of interest when discussing Mangan and Walsh as they both played an important rôle in Irish writing by creating an independent literary tradition based on translations from Irish poetry. Lefevere and Susan Bassnett hold that 'translation is ... a rewriting of an original text. All rewritings, whatever their intention, reflect a certain ideology and a poetics and as such manipulate literature to function in a given society in a given way'. It would be erroneous to see the word 'manipulation' in a negative way. Lefevere and Bassnett explain: 'rewriting is manipulation, undertaken in the service of power, and in its positive aspect can help in the evolution of a literature and a society'. So, 'rewritings can introduce new concepts, new genres, new devices and the history of translation is the history also of literary innovation, of the shaping power of one culture upon another'. Nevertheless, 'rewriting can also repress innovation, distort and contain, and in an age of ever increasing manipulation of all kinds, the study of the manipulation processes of literature as exemplified by translation can help us towards a greater awareness of the world in which we live' (Lefevere 1992b, preface). According to Lefevere, the same process of 'rewriting' in translation is also to be found in 'historiography, anthologization, criticism, and editing' as well as in 'adaptations for film and television' (Lefevere 1992b, 9). He maintains that if 'a work of literature is not rewritten in one way or another, it is not likely to survive its date of publication by many years or even many months' (Lefevere 1992a, 14). Writers will be forgotten unless they are rewritten. This is very much the case with the work of Walsh. The example I provide in the last chapter of D. J. O'Donoghue's rewritings of Mangan's life

and poetry is in no way a negative assessment. Instead, I view it as simply characteristic of the stage at which it took place in the establishment of a new literature and as helping to keep Mangan's work alive for future generations.

As the two writers who are the subject of this study produced translations mostly, then it must be true that this was a determining factor in their unenthusiastic reception by following generations of Irish critics. Lefevere tries to explain why both 'the study of translation has been eclipsed, and the status of the production of translations lowered, in the republic of letters'. This comes about due to:

a combination of at least four factors: the Romantic idea of literature as 'secular scripture' and the concomitant emphasis on originality, the Romantic equation of literature with language and the concomitant equation of language with nation, the nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century philologists' insistence on reading texts in the original only, and the enormous influence exerted by New Criticism with its almost exclusive emphasis on interpretation.
(Lefevere 1992a, 134)

All these factors will be seen at work in the decisions reached about the literary reputations of the two poets I shall discuss in this study. Unlike the New Critics, Lefevere believes that the canon is dependent on its context and that 'greatness' is not 'naturally given' but a 'quality painstakingly constructed over the years by scholars, critics, and translators', a fact 'illustrated by changes in the canon, the "imaginary library" containing all that a culture regards as its Great Books at a certain time' (Lefevere 1992a, 137). If we can understand why these changes take place and how literary fame is constructed, how literary works are rewritten to fit in with the ideology of a certain time, then we can reflect on how the canon was established in the first place. This is something that should enable us to include

neglected or forgotten writers, whether or not we consider them major or minor, and perhaps we might then come to an ampler understanding of Irish literature in English.

Lefevere holds that 'the dominant concept of what literature should (be allowed to) be', is its poetics and of 'what society should (be allowed to) be' is its ideology (Lefevere 1992b, 14). There are 'two factors [which] basically determine the image of a work of literature as projected by a translation'. He describes them in order of importance as 'the translator's ideology (whether he/she willingly embraces it, or whether it is imposed on him/her as a constraint by some form of patronage) and the poetics dominant in the receiving literature at the time the translation is made' (Lefevere 1992b, 41). Patronage is defined by Lefevere as a 'control factor' which operates generally outside the literary system and can be 'understood to mean something like the powers (persons, institutions) that can further or hinder the reading, writing, and rewriting of literature' (Lefevere 1992b, 15).

I think we can safely say that Walsh 'embraced' the ideology of nationalism and wrote his translations according to the poetics of his time. Mangan also observed the poetics of his age but whether or not he wholeheartedly embraced the ideology is unclear. His patronage kept on changing until at the end he found an outlet in translations on Irish themes.

Whereas a translation is never a totally original composition, it is my view that it can, nevertheless, be creative writing. I shall try to avoid the more common value judgements attached to translations wherein certain writers' translated works are seen as being of lesser worth than their original compositions. I shall evaluate what both Mangan and Walsh hoped to achieve with their 'versions', and suggest how these contributed to Irish writing in English. I hope that one of the results of this work will be an ability to perceive Irish writing in English as having a lot in common with other new literatures whilst at the same time never forgetting its inherent features. Irish writing is often perceived in relation to British culture and

in accordance with simplistic notions of oppressor and oppressed. If we can view it in more general terms we may break away from that limiting framework and give value to writers and texts which have been forgotten. This may lead to a new appreciation of the necessity for a more comprehensive literary tradition. As I have just argued, if we understand the reasons for the value judgements on the writers we exclude from or include in the canon, then perhaps we can come to a better understanding of Irish literature and learn to appreciate qualities in our tradition which may have been unacceptable until recently because of certain ideological factors. We may realize that literary judgements are not permanent. With particular reference to Mangan and Walsh, their literary reputations demonstrate the uneasiness of a writing which is still unsure of its identity as regards its very beginnings.

I hope this study will lead to a new valuation of their literary reputations in the twentieth century. I think that we should take another look at all they have written and decide to expand our tradition by including them, whether we consider them major or minor writers. I believe that Irish writing in English has become sufficiently autonomous to take that risk without fear of losing its individual identity when confronted with other literatures. It is now in a position to do so and to possess as ample a tradition as any other in the world.

The following study tries to perceive Mangan and Walsh's literary identities in a new light and analyses how their literary reputations have been formed by past generations. So, chapter two will speak of Edward Walsh as an Irish writer in English and of how he is characteristic of this new literature. Chapter three will analyse critical evaluations of the writer and how these have formed his literary reputation. In Chapter four I will discuss Mangan's literary fame and how it has been determined by the views of commentators. Chapter five puts a case for a refutation of some opinions discussed in the previous chapter which relegate Mangan to the status of minor writer by outlining the many aspects

of his writing and the fact that these have not always been appreciated by the Irish literary system.

In a previous study I identified factors which I see as affecting the establishment of a canon.¹ These are cultural factors hence the relevance of the above-mentioned theories. I will speak in particular about Mangan's 'set of translations' and their influence on Irish culture in Chapter six. I will also speak of the criteria used in canon-formation in our society and the problematic definitions of 'major' and 'minor' writing. These together with other cultural factors, such as the institution or nationalism, have adversely affected his literary reputation. The fact that I mention these does not exclude the possibility of other influential aspects being of importance. These are simply features which I feel are of most significance to the formation of new literatures. Lastly, I will examine in more detail a case in point which affected Mangan's literary fame for future generations, D. J. O'Donoghue's rewriting of the nineteenth-century poet.