Myles na gCopaleen's *Cruiskeen Lawn* (1940-66) and Irish Politics

La política irlandesa en *Cruiskeen Lawn* (1940-66), de Myles na gCopaleen

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Abstract

Irish writer Brian O'Nolan, also known by his pseudonyms Flann O'Brien and Myles na gCopaleen, has been lauded, alongside James Joyce and Samuel Beckett, as one of the central figures of Irish modernism. His novels *At Swim-Two-Birds* (1939) and *The Third Policeman* (1940, published posthumously in 1967) have consistently drawn scholarly attention due to their enigmatic and experimental narrative structures. For this reason, however, many of his other works have been neglected until recently. One such example is the newspaper column *Cruiskeen Lawn,* published as Myles na gCopaleen in the *Irish Times* on an almost daily basis from 1940 to 1966. *Cruiskeen Lawn* was a comic literary column devoted to offering a sharp and incisive portrait of mid-twentieth century Ireland. While dedicated scholarship on *Cruiskeen Lawn* has emerged in recent years, one of the aspects that most critics have failed to touch upon is the question of Irish politics. Brian O'Nolan was witness to tumultous changes to the social, cultural and political fabric of the country: from the creation of the Irish Free State in 1922 to the economic expansion of the 1960s, including the period of The Emergency (1939-45) and the years of economic stagnation and swelling emigration (1945-54). As such, his *Cruiskeen Lawn* column became a site of contention and political commentary on all aspects of Irish politics, ranging from the role of the country in international affairs to local minutiae. Conscious of the historical significance of twenty-six years' worth of political commentary by a renowned intellectual figure such as O'Nolan, this dissertation examines the total of 4,032 newspaper articles that compose *Cruiskeen Lawn* with a twofold aim: firstly, to understand Myles na gCopaleen's *Cruiskeen Lawn* as a work of political commentary and to view the column as an accurate account of mid-twentieth-century Ireland; and secondly, to determine O'Nolan's own political philosophy through a close reading of his opinions on the political events discussed throughout the dissertation.

Resumen

El escritor irlandés Brian O'Nolan, también conocido bajo sus seudónimos Flann O'Brien y Myles na gCopaleen, ha sido celebrado como una de las figuras centrales, junto a James Joyce y Samuel Beckett, del modernismo irlandés. Sus novelas *At Swim-Two-Birds* (1939) y *The Third Policeman* (1940, publicada de manera póstuma en 1967) han sido foco de una atención académica constante debido a sus estructuras narrativas enigmáticas y experimentales. Sin embargo, debido a ello se ha prestado poca atención a muchas de sus otras obras hasta ahora. Un ejemplo es *Cruiskeen Lawn,* una columna periodística que publicó como Myles na gCopaleen en el *Irish Times* casi diariamente desde 1940 hasta 1966. *Cruiskeen Lawn* era una columna literaria de tono cómico cuyo objetivo principal era ofrecer un retrato preciso e incisivo de la Irlanda de mediados de siglo XX. Aunque recientemente se ha comenzado a investigar sobre *Cruiskeen Lawn* con cierta seriedad, uno de los aspectos que muchos críticos han pasado por alto es la cuestión de la política irlandesa. Brian O'Nolan fue un observador directo de los muchos cambios sociales, culturales y políticos que sufrió la Irlanda de la época: desde la creación del Estado Libre Irlandés en 1922 hasta la época de expansión económica de los 60, pasando por el periodo de La Emergencia (1939-45) y los años de estancamiento ecónomico e inmigración pronunciada (1945-54). Por todo ello, *Cruiskeen Lawn* se convirtió en un espacio de conversación y de comentario político sobre todos los aspectos de la política irlandesa, desde las intervenciones internacionales del país hasta acontecimientos locales de naturaleza trivial. Siendo consciente de la importancia histórica de veintiséis años de comentarios políticos por parte de una figura intelectual reconocida como O'Nolan, la presente tesis doctoral examina el total de 4.032 artículos que componen la columna con dos objetivos principales: primero, entender *Cruiskeen Lawn* como una obra de comentario político, así como un retrato preciso de la Irlanda de mediados del siglo XX; y segundo, aventurar la filosofía política del propio O'Nolan a través de una lectura detallada de sus opiniones acerca de los eventos políticos que se discuten en este estudio.

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INTRODUCTION

Irish writer and journalist Brian O'Nolan (1911-66), better known by his pseudonyms Flann O'Brien and Myles na gCopaleen, was born in Strabane, County Tyrone (Northern Ireland) to a Catholic family, on the threshold of World War I (1914-8) and the Easter Rising (1916). On the covers of most of O'Nolan's books today, Edna O'Brien's grandiose verdict reads: "Along with Joyce and Beckett, Flann O'Brien constitutes our trinity of great Irish writers" (qtd. in O'Connell 2011). Despite being often placed in the company of fellow Irishmen James Joyce (1882-1941) and Samuel Beckett (1906-1989), on many occasions during his life and after his death critics would dismiss him as a Joycean copycat who lacked the determination to become the exiled artist. Although his life and artistic achievements will be examined in detail later in the dissertation, any analysis of O'Nolan's work must stem from an awareness of this duality: that of the Irish writer who, equipped as he was with wings and skill, refused to fly by the nets of "nationality, language and religion" and remained, save for brief periods of time, for his entire life in Ireland. Whether he actually was one of the farrows

eaten by the old sow is still a matter of dispute.[1] John Wyse Jackson has provided a succinct division of O'Nolan's literary career:

> The thirty-five years of O'Nolan's writing life can be divided into three parts. For the first ten years, say, between 1930 and 1940, he was seeking a voice. During the next ten years or so, he had found it. After about 1950, he had become that voice [...]. The things that changed were the tone, the style, the language, and the pseudonym, or pen-name. (Jackson 1988: 8)

He died of cancer at the age of 54, leaving behind a considerable output in Irish and English: six novels (four published, one posthumous and one unfinished), 18 short stories, 8 plays, 11 television and radio scripts and uncountable sporadic and serial publications in journals and newspapers, the most important of which, *Cruiskeen Lawn* in the *Irish Times,* spanned over two and a half decades (1940-66) and over 4,000 individual articles.

This doctoral dissertation is precisely devoted in its entirety to *Cruiskeen Lawn,* O'Nolan's—or, rather, Myles na gCopaleen's, later na Gopaleen, for that was the pen-name under which he signed it—major journalistic work.[2] R. M. "Bertie" Smyllie (1893-1954), editor of the *Irish Times* in 1940, and O'Nolan initially agreed on publishing a regular column written in the Irish language in order to attract readership of nationalist background. Irish was only used to a consistent degree until late 1943; from then onwards, an Irish *Cruiskeen Lawn* was rarely featured, which made the column unquestionably more popular. At a certain point in its 26-year lifespan, the column was to appear daily (except on Sundays, when there was no *Irish Times* at all) and deal in comic and satirical terms with a mind-dazzling number

[1] In Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), Stephen Dedalus, the main character, declares that "when the soul of a man is born in this country there are nets flung at it to hold it back from flight. You talk to me of nationality, language, religion. I shall try to fly by those nets" (1992: 220). After being reprimanded that Ireland, his country, should be his chief preoccupation, Stephen coldly responds that "Ireland is the old sow that eats her farrow" (*ibid*).

[2] This dissertation follows the naming system practiced by the International Flann O'Brien Society: when the man and his life are being discussed, the name used is Brian O'Nolan. When any of his particular works is under consideration, the pseudonym of publication is used instead. As *Cruiskeen Lawn* was signed by Myles na gCopaleen, the author will be henceforth referred to as "Myles" except in cases where I believe there exists a strong correlation between persona and author in ideological terms.

of topics of economic, social, political, scientific, religious and cultural nature from both a local and international perspective. One of the earliest critical profiles on the column, published by *Time* in 1943, described *Cruiskeen Lawn* and Myles na gCopaleen as follows:

> Erudite, ironic, he devotes many a column to the hilarious, systematic destruction of literary cliché, to parodies of Éire's leprechaun literature and the red-taped verbiage of Government service, to absurd home-economic hints. He is an unsparing, beloved critic of devotees of Irish, who overuse Éire's national tongue; a subtler critic of the clerics who are not unaware of his innuendo. (Lee Copper 1943: 90)

With the benefit of hindsight and the availability of the complete *Cruiskeen Lawn* through digital archives or fragments of it from the various published compilations, scholars have recently been able to offer more nuanced accounts of the nature of *Cruiskeen Lawn.* These accounts, however, have been largely, and until recently, biased by the long-running tradition within O'Nolan studies of marginalizing or de-canonizing *Cruiskeen Lawn* and the rest of his postwar production. A number of critics, contemporary or otherwise, have contributed to such a narrow view. The earliest example of this was Thomas Hogan's piece "Myles na gCopaleen", published in *The Bell* in 1947.[3] The piece reviewed O'Nolan's career so far and, like many of his contemporaries, praised *At Swim-Two-Birds* (1939), O'Nolan's first novel, in disproportionate opposition to the rest of his work, particularly *Cruiskeen Lawn*: "His best work, *At Swim-Two-Birds,* is far behind him and the line of his present work is brilliant but futile" (qtd. in Cronin 1990: 179). As Anthony Cronin, O'Nolan's biographer, indicates, Hogan's piece propounded "a view of the column as rather cantankerous and sterile which, in spite of the fact that they continued to read it, was becoming the accepted notion in such circles in the late 1940s" (*ibid*). In *A Colder Eye*, Hugh Kenner seemed to have inherited such a view as he pronounced his famous verdict on O'Nolan's literary career: "Was it the drink was his ruin, or was it the column? For ruin is the word. So much promise has seldom accomplished so little" (1983: 255). A few years later, Bernard Benstock would bluntly add

[3] Hogan's real name was Thomas Woods (1923-61). Woods was, like O'Nolan, a civil servant, and thus subject to writing under a pseudonym.

that "the death which soon after claimed James Joyce had its counterpart in the twenty-year suppression of the talented Flann by the irrepressible Myles" (1985: 59). More recent dismissals of the column include that of Declan Kiberd in *Inventing Ireland: The Literature of the Modern Nation* (1995). His chapter on O'Nolan's work, titled "Flann O'Brien, Myles and *The Poor Mouth*" is largely a study on *An Béal Bocht* (1941), O'Nolan's second published novel, but concludes with similar remarks:

> The persona to blame was not Myles na gCopaleen but Myles na Gopaleen. For he was the fatal clown, the licensed jester who lurked within O'Nolan, whom he roundly despised but whom he could never fully suppress. He offered his author the quick success and easy laughs which hold a deadly attraction for the Irish artist who knows he should express, but fears he may have to exploit, his material. (1996: 512)

The change from "gCopaleen" to "Gopaleen" took place in the early 1950s, which leads us to infer from Kiberd's argument that it was the longevity of the column and O'Nolan's exhaustion of literary energies on the project that thwarted the writer's flourishing career. The majority of assessments of the column's relevance in the writer's oeuvre have consistently remarked the potential distractions from writing novels naturally attached to a 26-year-long writing project: "Indeed, with the habitual snobbery that the academy has for journalistic literary production, O'Nolan's journalism, along with his alcoholism, has been faulted for diverting him from the really important business of writing fiction" (Kilroy 2014: 2). Irish literary historians have not exclusively identified this problem with O'Nolan, but rather with the Dublin milieu of the 1940s and 50s as a whole: "The only future that seemed open to the Irish writer in the late 1940s and early fifties was penury in his own country or an appeal to the wider public gallery through eccentricity, showmanship and bravado, that would distract both public and writer from the serious business of his art" (Brown 1989: 237). In so doing, some scholars have inadvertently seen *Cruiskeen Lawn* as an example of "minor literature" as opposed to the more traditional exercises of writing fiction and drama.

Appreciation of the column, however, has gained substance in recent times. Most of the recent studies on O'Nolan's work are laudatory of *Cruiskeen Lawn,* with some elevating

its importance within the O'Nolan canon over the towering novels *At Swim-Two-Birds* and *The Third Policeman* (1940, published posthumously in 1967). In contrast to the majority of O'Nolan scholarship during the 1970s, Anne Clissman's seminal work *Flann O'Brien: A Critical Introduction to his Writings* (1975) already acknowledged the importance of *Cruiskeen Lawn*:

> *Cruiskeen Lawn* covered most of O'Brien's life as a writer. It is important in a number of ways. As a substantial body of ephemeral, satirical writing it is almost unique in Irish literature. It emphasised and reflected themes and concerns which afterwards appeared as central aspects of his novels. Often the genesis of a novel can be traced to a *Cruiskeen Lawn* article written many years previously. The column is, in fact, a sort of notebook for the novels. Finally, it provides an invaluable insight into the events of O'Brien's own life, and it contains, often under the guise of mockery, a number of serious comments which enshrine his vision of life. (1975: 189)

Subsequent studies took over in shifting the academic focus to the column, especially propelled by the many different book and journal collections published toward the end of the 1990s until today. An early example is *Conjuring Complexities: Essays on Flann O'Brien* (1997), edited by Anne Clune (Clissman) and Tess Hurson. The preface equated the novels and the column in terms of metafictional experimentation: "Author analogues appear in both the novels and the column *Cruiskeen Lawn* as parodic versions of the Joycean deity poised above his own handiwork pairing his fingernails" (1997: ix). Furthermore, the collection included Steven Young's essay "Fact/Fiction: *Cruiskeen Lawn,* 1945-66", one of the first essay-length studies devoted to discussing the particulars of the column and to declare its encompassing importance.[4] Many other book-length studies and collections followed, all of which contributed to the revival of academic interest in the column: Joseph Brooker's *Flann O'Brien* (2005); Carol Taaffe's *Ireland Through the Looking-Glass: Flann O'Brien, Myles na gCopaleen and Irish Cultural Debate* (2008); *Flann O'Brien: Centenary Essays* (2011,

[4] Powell (1971) and Powell and Miles (1975) preceded Young with essays on the presence of Joyce in the column and a general description of the nature of *Cruiskeen Lawn,* respectively.

issue XXXI of *The Review of Contemporary Fiction*, guest edited by Neil Murphy and Keith Hopper); *'Is it About a Bicycle?' Flann O'Brien in the Twenty-First Century* (2011, edited by Jennika Baines); *Flann O'Brien and Modernism* (2014, edited by Julian Murphet, Rónán McDonald and Sascha Morrell); *Flann O'Brien: Contesting Legacies* (2014, edited by Ruben Borg, Paul Fagan and Werner Huber);[5] Maebh Long's *Assembling Flann O'Brien* (2014); and *Flann O'Brien: Problems with Authority* (2017, edited by Ruben Borg, Paul Fagan and John McCourt). Flore Coulouma has accentuated the importance of *Cruiskeen Lawn* in any analysis of O'Nolan's oeuvre:

> Far from being detrimental to his writing, the chronicles are part and parcel of Flann O'Brien's literary imagination and cannot be separated from his so-called major work [...]. *Cruiskeen Lawn* does not conform to the traditional format of great works of literature, meaning, implicitly, the voluminous novels of the English canon, including, ambiguously enough, Joyce's. Four decades down the line, the very structure and themes of *Cruiskeen Lawn* cannot be ignored as they are integral to Flann O'Brien's satirical genius. My hypothesis is that they are also essential to understanding O'Brien's writing as a whole. (2011: 163)

Today, the column is mostly observed through this lens. Scholars have reflected widely on the implications of a column amassing commentary on thousands of characters, events and locations, real or imagined, often left undeveloped. This is further complicated by the question of authorship. As Long puts it:

> Over the course of *Cruiskeen Lawn* Myles is rich and poor, handsome and repulsive, young and old, Irish and English, married and single, important and ignored, dead and alive, a scholar and a fool, an upstanding citizen and a thief. This narrative

[5] In their introduction to *Contesting Legacies,* Borg, Fagan and Huber wondered if "rather than the ruination of his immense talent in subservience to an inferior medium, the *Cruiskeen Lawn* columns represent O'Nolan's great modernist magnum opus in that most Benjaminian site of modernity, the newspaper?" (2014: 5).

> inconsistency is compounded by authorial ambiguity, as not all of the *Cruiskeen Lawn* articles were written by Brian O'Nolan. (2014: 160)

The generally accepted notion is that O’Nolan’s friend, Dublin architect and Beckett scholar Niall Montgomery (1915-87), was the major ghost-writer for the column, even though Cronin (1990: 199) also includes Niall Sheridan, one of O’Nolan’s friends, as part of the column’s authorship.[6] Aside from this, ambiguity and ambivalence are defining characteristics of the column. As Alana Gillespie has shrewdly pointed out, “Myles was expert at believing six times as many impossible—or possible—things within a single column and thousands more throughout the life of *Cruiskeen Lawn*” (2014: 180). The very nature of a newspaper column implies that the complete narrative is never fully available to the reader; instead, each instalment contributes to a whole which is by nature fragmentary and inconclusive, thus allowing the writer to distort, discredit or plainly dismiss previous narratives and shift focus when the circumstances demand it. As Myles was neither O’Nolan nor Montgomery (albeit, admittedly, he had more of the former than the latter), he becomes “the means through which an idea, pun, invention, argument, theory is voiced, and can provide whatever backdrop that theme requires” (Long 2014: 160). Such inconsistency is not only limited to the Myles persona, but also to the stories he tells and the people and places he references: “*Cruiskeen Lawn* is a literary column the hallmarks of which is the assimilation of such day-to-day specifics—events, characters, even the mood of the capital—into an imaginative context where fact is shaped by fantasy” (Curran 2001a: 354). In fact, aside from authorship and ambiguity, the question of literariness has also attracted the attention of scholars. Kilroy has wondered at how “Myles’s ‘little brimming jug’ is so overflowing that it is hard to quantify

[6] There is no evidence that Sheridan participated in any tangible way in writing *Cruiskeen Lawn,* even if John Garvin, O’Nolan’s superior in the civil service often defended the writer from accusations by claiming that Montgomery and Sheridan were also engaged in writing the column. Montgomery’s participation, however, is well documented. The Niall Montgomery Papers at the National Library of Ireland (MS 50,118/5) hold a considerable number of typescript *Cruiskeen Lawn* articles (17 folders) from 1948 to 1958, many of them marked with the word “rewrite”, which suggests that O’Nolan revised them before publication. The present author is indebted to Maebh Long’s kind assistance in locating the existence of these articles. Her plenary lecture “‘This is *not* about a bicycle’: Brian O’Nolan and the Politics of Friendship”, which I had the opportunity of attending at the Acting Out: IV International Flann O’Brien Conference—held at Salzburg University in July 2017—was also central in illuminating the degree to which Montgomery had a hand in the composition of the column. See also Taaffe (2008: 163-6) for further specifics on Montgomery’s role in the column. For these reasons, the “Myles” persona will not be equated with O’Nolan throughout this dissertation.

or categorize" (Kilroy 2014: 16). Genre-wise, *Cruiskeen Lawn* is technically journalism in the form of a newspaper column, but its many references to literary matters and criticism and the encapsulated narratives that often occur throughout its lifetime demand that the column be considered in terms of literary journalism. In fact, some scholars (Young, 1997; Vintaloro, 2017) have gone as far as to suggest that *Cruiskeen Lawn* can be seen as a novel due to the recurrent motifs, themes and characters throughout its history.

All in all, however, of all the academic progress made in the field of *Cruiskeen Lawn,* I believe that Taaffe's *Ireland Through the Looking Glass* stands as the most relevant advancement for a number of reasons, chief among which is the paramount importance given to the social, cultural and political dimension of the column and the treatment of *Cruiskeen Lawn* as a major text in the O'Nolan canon.[7] It has been previously stated that *Cruiskeen Lawn* is an example of comic and satirical writing. Throughout its history, *Cruiskeen Lawn* was used to mock, criticize and satirize various aspects of Irish social and political contemporary realities: "As journalism, this work remains rooted in its time and place, filled with the particulars of, and topical allusions to, daily life in Dublin" (Young 1997: 111). For this reason alone, *Cruiskeen Lawn* demands to be read alongside the very events and people on which it nurtured; that is, the Irish social, cultural and political context of the 1940s, 50s and 60s. Taaffe has emphasized the importance of contextualizing *Cruiskeen Lawn*: "Unmooring his work from its historical context obscures the degree to which his uneasy dissatisfaction with the status quo was complicated by a lingering sympathy for many of the tenets of the new State" (2008: 2). Furthermore, the regularity of the column and the initially specific, later widening, audience it was directed at indicate O'Nolan's desire to enter a dialogue with his readership, to communicate and make known a set of opinions which concerned the collective which would turn into The Plain People of Ireland: "His work appeared in a daily newspaper and was responsive to a wider audience. It was the work of a civil servant and a newspaperman who was professionally attuned to writing as something that is socially performative, a dialogue in the world" (2017: 25).

[7] Curran (2001a, 2001b), Gillespie (2014) and Flynn (2017) have also produced work in this specific line of research.

A dimension which by nature is "socially performative" and one in which the writer displayed a profound interest is the world of politics. Throughout this dissertation, the term "politics" will be understood in its professional and functional sense; that is, the world of Irish party politics at all levels: local, national and international. Many academics studying the column have rightly pointed out that Irish politics was among its chief interests. Describing the main topics dealt with in *Cruiskeen Lawn,* Joseph Brooker states that Myles "expounds and opines on architecture, painting, music, philosophy and politics as well as literature" (Brooker 2011: 27). Coulouma specifically remarks how "with Myles na gCopaleen, everything becomes anecdote material: limericks, overheard conversations, but also the great political story of the nation" while also adding that "Myles subverts the authority of political discourse in the same way as Flann O'Brien does in the novels, blurring the boundaries and hierarchy between narratives as a satirical device against linguistic and literary oppression" (2011: 170-1). Hopper has intelligently compared Myles and Jonathan Swift (1667-1745) and stated that his "comic, epiphanic narratives are ruthlessly underpinned by his acid critiques of the established order" (Hopper 2011: 31). Long speaks of how the *Cruiskeen Lawn* articles "mock and celebrate Ireland's emerging identities, offering alternative narratives of self to those proffered by the Church, State and stage" (2014: 159) and includes the Government and other state bodies as Myles's most frequent targets. In their introduction to the latest collection of essays on O'Nolan, Borg, Fagan and McCourt have also noticed how "there is a slow but noticeable turn, a levelling of temper and timbre from absurd flights to a (somewhat) more grounded focus on the local and the concretely political" (2017: 5).

Despite such a plethora of references to Irish politics in studies of O'Nolan's work and the column in particular, no systematic analysis of *Cruiskeen Lawn* and the "concretely political" has been carried out thus far, and this is the major object of study of the present study.[8] This dissertation takes over from Taaffe's (2008) political interpretation of the early

[8] Traditionally, *Cruiskeen Lawn* and the Irish language novel *An Béal Bocht* (1941) have been linked to Irish politics in terms of the political uses of the Irish language. As Taaffe has remarked, Irish was used as a political instrument after the attainment of Irish independence: "Cruiskeen Lawn shows a consistent alertness to the uses of culture: social, financial, or—in the case of the misguided Gaels—political" (Taaffe 2011: 118). This particular aspect of *Cruiskeen Lawn* and O'Nolan's work in particular has been comparatively well covered and is not the focus of this dissertation except for very specific cases.

period (1940-7) of *Cruiskeen Lawn* and offers a complete and thorough analysis of political commentary throughout the history of the column; that is, from October 4, 1940 to April 1, 1966. It is my contention that viewing *Cruiskeen Lawn* as a comic underachievement, mercenary work or disposable writing inadvertently obscures the true nature of the column: Myles was witness to 26 years of political development in Ireland, a country that had only recently been constituted as such and whose turbulent and ambiguous relationship with the United Kingdom implied the rupture of obsolete bureaucratic and institutional moulds and the creation of new political and ideological identities. Furthermore, I believe that Myles was far from a passive witness: propelled by his knowledge and experience of the political apparatus through his position as a civil servant, he actively participated as a public intellectual in the political discourse of the time, engaging in either neutral commentary, acid criticism or rare encomium of the political milieu of post-independence Ireland. Therefore, and as will be demonstrated throughout this dissertation, *Cruiskeen Lawn* unquestionably stands as one of the most meticulous and nuanced records of the history of mid-twentieth century Ireland and its social, political and economic realities.

Additionally, this approach is also illuminating in respect of the author (or authors) of the column: a secondary aim of this research is to examine Myles's political column as being, to a certain extent, revelatory of the writer's political ideology. This is, however, not necessarily so, and throughout this dissertation I have exercised caution in attributing Myles's opinions, except in circumstances when substantial evidence can back such claims, to O'Nolan himself—not only because of Montgomery's occasional interventions, but also due to the inconsistent nature of the Myles persona. There are a number of caveats which have to be heeded if one is to pinpoint O'Nolan's political ideology. For instance, Cronin defines O'Nolan as "apolitical", "unpolitical" or "anti-political" on a number of occasions (1990: 70, 73) and, perhaps more importantly, O'Nolan himself declared that "he [had] no politics" (Wale 1965: 49) when interviewed shortly before his death.[9] Kilroy contends that "the tone of the column, nevertheless, was not one that lent itself to obscenity, overt political partisanship or offence" (2014: 12), and both Long (2014) and Coulouma (2015) have warned that Myles's opinions should not be readily associated with those of O'Nolan's, or

[9] Interview with Michael Wale for *Town Magazine,* September 1965.

even Montgomery's, as O'Nolan's writing career in general and the Myles persona in particular were precisely shaped with inconsistency and ambiguity in mind. As he revealingly put it in autobiographical essay "De Me", published in *New Ireland* in 1964:

> The compartmentation of his personality for the purpose of literary utterance ensures that the fundamental individual will not be credited with a certain way of thinking, fixed attitudes, irreversible techniques of expression. No author should write under his own name nor under one permanent pen-name; a male writer should include in his impostures a female pen-name, and possibly vice versa. (1964: 41)[10]

While this dissertation does not claim any allegiance toward any particular party or philosophy on the part of Myles or O'Nolan, it is nevertheless true that one can perceive the presence, at times obvious, but mostly subtle, of political and social conservatism throughout the column and in O'Nolan's life as a whole. This has likewise been confirmed by a number of scholars[11] and is, in a way, explanatory in terms of the occasional ideological resonances between Myles and some of the main political figures or parties. While acknowledging the complexities of O'Nolan's politics as seen in *Cruiskeen Lawn,* this dissertation aims to explore the contradictions, intricacies, deviations and anomalies in an unequivocally conservative author.

As of today, the only way to access every single article in the column—other than the admittedly tedious task of manipulating microfilm material—is through the *Irish Times* paid digital archive, which is the preferred method used throughout this dissertation. Catherine Ahearn's *Cruiskeen Catalogued* (2019), an online compilation which tracks the date of publication, page in the newspaper and language of all published columns, has been thoroughly used as research support in order to determine the ratio of published articles per

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[10] I also consulted a carbon copy of the article available in the Flann O'Brien papers at the John J. Burns library (MS.1997.027, box 2, folder 38).

[11] Gillespie (2014: 180) speaks of O'Nolan's "tenacious conservatism in some matters" and Coulouma (2015: 171) remarks "how conservative O'Nolan was in real life". Speaking of Myles, Taaffe terms him a "conservative subversive" (2008: 158), a description which encompasses the persona's suspicion of all initiatives of progress and his own cantankerous nature.

year or when trying to locate a particular article. As for compilations published in physical format, *The Best of Myles* (1968) is the most popular, featuring articles published roughly from 1940 to 1947. Other compilations include *The Various Lives of Keats and Chapman and the Brother* (1976), *Cuttings from the Cruiskeen Lawn* (1976, later *Further Cuttings from Cruiskeen Lawn,* 2000), *The Hair of the Dogma: A Further Selection from Cruiskeen Lawn* (1977) and *Flann O'Brien at War: Myles na gCopaleen, 1940-1945)*. An early selection was published in 1942, titled *Cruiskeen Lawn: extracts from the daily labours of the wise man Myles na gCopaleen presented here safe from extinction and eternal loss through the kindly leave of the persons conducting the Irish Times,* as well as two selections, *Myles Before Myles: A Selection of the Earlier Writings of Brian O'Nolan* (1983) and *Myles Away From Dublin: being a selection from the column written for the Nationalist and Leinster times, Carlow, under the name of George Knowall* (1985), featuring articles from O'Nolan's university years (published in UCD's student journal *Comthrom Féinne* and his own journal, *Blather,* and in later life for the *Nationalist and Leinster Times,* respectively). Of all the compilations and selections mentioned above, none include the specific date of publication of any particular article except for *Flann O'Brien at War* and *Myles Before Myles,* both edited by John Wyse Jackson. Unfortunately, this makes most of the compilations acceptable for casual and thematic reading but essentially inadequate for research on the column, as they do not facilitate any type of social or historical contextualization. For this dissertation, a total of 212 columns have been selected for analysis on account of their being of thematic interest for the present dissertation. My criterion for selection is based on the presence of explicit or implicit political commentary in the columns after performing a close reading of all individual articles. My interest has been raised by columns which included specific mentions to political personalities, parties or events, or by those in which I could perceive the presence of political material being hinted at or allegorized.[12] My way of procedure has been to explore the fruitful tension that resulted from the interaction of these selected columns and the political events they referred to.

[12] The Works Cited section includes a list comprising the primary sources used throughout the present dissertation.

Following this introduction, the present dissertation is composed of five central chapters, a set of general conclusions and two appendices. Chapter 1 establishes the theoretical foundations for this dissertation. As the present study aims at detecting and evaluating the presence of political material in the form of satirical or ideological commentary informed by the historical context of *Cruiskeen Lawn,* I believe that the theories of cultural materialism can provide the most suitable framework to support this study of the column. As will be seen in detail later on, cultural materialism poses that the work of art cannot be separated or differentiated from the historical and political context of its production. Additionally, the work of leading scholars who have followed a similar pattern of analysis in their literary criticism will constitute the academic models to be mirrored throughout this dissertation: Declan Kiberd's *Inventing Ireland: The Literature of the Modern Nation* (1995), Terry Eagleton's *Heathcliff and the Great Hunger: Studies in Irish Culture* (1995) and Andrew Gibson and Len Platt's *Joyce, Ireland, Britain* (2006). Their studies on Irish literature as heavily shaped by, and dependent on, the historico-political realities of nineteenth and twentieth century Ireland have influenced this dissertation structurally as well as conceptually.

Chapter 2 provides a thorough historical background to O'Nolan's writing life and *Cruiskeen Lawn.* As O'Nolan's own circumstances in life, in both personal and professional terms, determined his journalistic endeavors considerably, Chapter 2 will include specific subsections briefly discussing O'Nolan's life and writings during the historical period of interest. Overall, chapter 2 encompasses four major periods in the history of twentieth-century Ireland: section 2.2, Independence in context (1916-39); section 2.3, The Emergency (1939-45); section 2.4, Years of Stagnation (1945-55); and section 2.5, Years of Expansion (1955-66). Except for section 2.2, which serves as an introductory context in order to better understand the main lines of development of twentieth-century Irish society and politics, these periods will be conflated in Chapters 3, 4 and 5, respectively, with the textual analysis of the *Cruiskeen Lawn* columns. Section 2.2 is specifically addressed to discussing pre- and post-independence Ireland and thus includes subsections on the 1916-22 period (Easter Rising, War of Independence, Irish Civil War), the Irish Free State (1922-37) and the early years of the two main Irish political parties, Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael, the drafting and enforcement of the Constitution of Ireland (1937) and O'Nolan's formative years. Section

2.3 is devoted to a discussion of the period of the Emergency (Second World War) in Ireland with a specific focus on the political background to, and development of, the state of emergency and the notion of neutrality, as well as an assessment of O'Nolan's literary achievements in the 1930s and early 40s—including the publication of *At Swim-Two-Birds* and the launch of *Cruiskeen Lawn*—and his professional fortunes as a civil servant. Section 2.4 takes up the period of social and economic stagnation following the Second World War by shifting the focus to the economic realities of postwar Ireland which engendered a decade of political inconsistency shaped by rapid changes of government. Special attention is given to the declaration of the Republic (1949) and the Mother and Child Scheme (1950-1), two key events that shaped the destinies of the first coalition government in the history of the country, as well as to O'Nolan's career during the 1950s, including his retirement from the civil service and his creative and economic frustrations. Finally, section 2.4 studies the background of the economic outburst of the early 1960s and its political origins with a discussion of the First Programme for Economic Expansion (1958) and the reinstatement of the Fianna Fáil political hegemony. The last phase in O'Nolan's writing career as well as his health problems and eventual death will also be covered in this closing section.

Chapter 3 is the first main chapter of analysis and comprehends the early years of *Cruiskeen Lawn,* coinciding with the Emergency. On the one hand, the chapter explores Myles's reactions to the causes and consequences of the Emergency, including his cautious commentary on neutrality, censorship and shortages in Ireland during the conflict; on the other hand, it also comprises Myles's examination of the internal political developments during the Emergency, including the 1943 and 1944 general elections and the 1945 presidential election. As explained in Chapter 2, the *Irish Times* was subject to considerable censorial persecution on account of its opposition to Irish neutrality and its open support of the Allied cause during this period. This inevitably implied that Myles's opinions were curtailed and subject to scrutiny, which prevented him from airing his views on the conflict and its ideological nuances. Consequently, this presents a number of interpretative difficulties and necessitates a more perceptive analysis of Myles's commentary in order to pinpoint his thoughts and allegiances. The question of the Irish language as a political tool and the writer's reaction to its uses and abuses permeates the entire chapter, as it was during

this period of cultural isolation that the government displayed a more earnest interest in spreading an ideology of a self-sufficient Gaelic Ireland.

Chapter 4 is the second main chapter of analysis and is devoted to the period of stagnation which followed the conflict. As opposed to mainland European countries, Ireland did not experience the economic boom and consequent growth expected from postwar societies. Instead, it persevered in its policy of neutrality and was on that account cold-shouldered by the victors. This chapter examines Myles's responses to both external and domestic affairs in this context. Internationally, Myles devoted much space to the San Francisco and Potsdam Conferences and to the reaffirmation of America as a global superpower through its Marshall policy; domestically, the different governments and their strategies of mimicking foreign economic and political developments as manifested in the introduction of welfare measures such as profound infrastructural expansion were perceived and duly discussed by Myles. Health and public welfare stand as recurrent motifs during this chapter through the introduction of the 1947 Health Act and the Mother and Child program of the early 1950s. Myles also participated in the discussion of the various general elections (1948, 1951, 1954) and the many changes in the political scene due to the issues of partition and clerical interference.

Chapter 5 is the final main chapter of analysis. It is centered around the 1960s, an era of economic expansion propelled by a renewal of the political scene and a drastic shift in economic perspective through an abandonment of protectionist policies and an embrace of foreign capital and industrial development. While this chapter evidences O'Nolan's decaying energies as a columnist on account of his alcoholism, recurring ailments and professional misfortunes, he still made fairly consistent use of the Myles persona to satirize, in a growingly aggressive tone, the different political events that took place during this period. Myles's analysis of the general election of 1954, which resulted in the formation of the energetic yet inefficient Second Inter-Party government, marks the start of the chapter. It is followed by the column's gradually decreasing coverage of the 1957, 1961 and 1965 general elections. Due attention is also given to key events of the period including, among others, the IRA border campaign of the late 1950s, the pre and post-expansion state of the economy, the

Fianna Fáil change in leadership after the 1959 presidential election, the referendum on Proportional Representation and John F. Kennedy's diplomatic visit to Ireland.

This dissertation closes with a set of general conclusions on the entire study, a list of the primary and secondary bibliographical references and material used throughout and two appendices. Appendix 1 offers an itemized list of all the Irish cabinets from 1940 to 1966, including ministerial changes. Appendix 2 traces the number of *Cruiskeen Lawn* columns published per month and year with the intention of providing reference and a sense of scale to the reader in order to better understand the chronology and history of publication of the column.

CHAPTER 1. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The present study analyzes the *Cruiskeen Lawn* columns published in the *Irish Times* from 1940 to 1966, with a special focus on Myles's commentary on the socio-political situation of Ireland at the time. Before proceeding with such analysis, however, it is important to establish a sound framework in the shape of theoretical and intellectual contributions in order to provide structure and focus to our study. The basis for this dissertation is the fact that, leaving aside his bombastic and humorous rhetoric which so pleased the audience of the newspaper and, to some extent, the Dublin intellectual court, O'Nolan was a politically-committed writer and thinker who was deeply concerned about the post-constitutional approach to policy-making taken by the Irish government. His journalistic endeavors at destabilizing and exposing such pretenses, however, were at first drastically halted by the reinforcement of the Irish censorship system. Consequently, at least for the duration of the Emergency and to a lesser extent throughout his career as a journalist, he had to devise subtle and surreptitious ways of writing under the radar and shedding some subversive light on the goings-on. Since this study deals with relevant political commentary in the shape of comic and satirical

literature within a changing social and historical context—that is, from postwar, hermetic Ireland in 1940 to the more open, European-focused version of the country in 1966—it is then necessary to find a theoretical framework which fits the necessities of the present study and contributes to a better understanding of the existing relation between O'Nolan, his Myles persona and Irish politics as a whole. I believe that the methodological approach which best fits the needs for the present research is cultural materialism, which is outlined in the pages that follow. After discussing cultural materialism, I will briefly overview three key cultural materialist texts with a particular focus on the Irish literary context which serve as models for this dissertation: Kiberd's *Inventing Ireland: The Literature of the Modern Nation* (1995), Eagleton's *Heathcliff and the Great Hunger: Studies in Irish Culture* (1995) and Gibson and Platt's, eds., *Joyce, Ireland, Britain* (2006).

1.1 Cultural materialism

The 1980s prompted the emergence of the theoretical models of cultural materialism and new historicism, none of which are specifically restricted to literary analysis but are, however, particularly suitable for the kind of study to be carried out throughout this dissertation. While I mainly draw from the theoretical precepts of the former, they seem to have reached a status of critical co-existence, to the point that it seems to be "impossible to discern beneath the diversity of new historicist or cultural materialist practice a single, unifying theory or consistent critical method" (Ryan 1996: x). New historicism is not explored in detail in this dissertation due to our preference for the more contemporary focused approach of cultural materialism: "where new historicists deal with the power relations of past societies, cultural materialists explore literary texts within the context of contemporary power relations (Brannigan 1998: 9).[1]

Raymond Williams gave the first definition of cultural materialism as being "the analysis of all forms of signification, including quite centrally writing, within the actual means and conditions of their production" (1983: 210). This definition was later expanded

[1] For further information on new historicism, see Greenblatt (1987), Veeser (1989) or Gallagher and Greenblatt (2000), among many others.

by British critics Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield in the seminal work *Political Shakespeare: Essays in Cultural Materialism.* Their definition of the terms consisted of "a combination of historical context, theoretical method, political commitment and textual analysis [which] offers the strongest challenge and has already contributed substantial work […]. We call this 'cultural materialism'" (1994: vii). This dissertation advocates, therefore, an understanding of the term which places more emphasis on a politically committed approach to the literary text dependent, at the same time, on the historical context within which it was produced. It is made clear later, however, that the main aim of cultural materialism is to study "the implication of literary texts in history" and that "it registers its commitment to the transformation of a social order which exploits people on grounds of race and class" (1994: viii). This process of transformation first requires of the four elements central to cultural materialism outlined by Dollimore and Sinfield in order to pinpoint the social problems which may exist within the literary work but which also extrapolate to present-day society. Sinfield's claims in this regard elucidate the origins of the movement: "For many British literary critics […], the breakthrough of the late 1970s was less into theory and more away from formalism, in response to the disintegration of postwar political consensus, it was into the possibility of relating English teaching and writing to left-wing political concerns" (1992: 8). Advocates of cultural materialism see the Renaissance, but most particularly the works of William Shakespeare (1564-1616), as the most fruitful breeding ground to put their theories into practice. While this is due to many reasons, it has been argued that one of the possible answers is the fact that the Renaissance was the cradle of subjectivity and individualism and the end of medieval oppression (Veeser 1994: 13). The historical context of the emerging bourgeoisie as a social class seemed very attractive to test the responses of the powerful and dominant. Terry Eagleton also acknowledges this fact: "Closer attention has been paid to the material contexts of such art-works, and of how so much culture and civility have had their roots in unhappiness and exploitation" (2003: 97). Instead of seeing *Romeo and Juliet* (1597) as a feat in lyricism and dramatism, a cultural materialist critic would examine the social and political interstices that evidently exist in the play and explore the structures of power at the level of family and social class and patriarchal oppression. Despite this, cultural materialism should not be readily and exclusively associated with detecting the presence of subversive political material in works of art; as

Brannigan indicates, "cultural materialists see literary and cultural criticism as participating in politics, active in *reinforcing*, dissenting from, or opposing, conservative ideologies" (1998: 105) [My emphasis]. Throughout this dissertation, I will argue that *Cruiskeen Lawn* dissents from the post-independence model of state crystallized in the Constitution of Ireland in 1937 on a number of levels yet ultimately supports a conservative blueprint in socio-economic matters not necessarily dissonant with that propounded by the official administration.

Cultural materialism is indeed the main theoretical body of reference when approaching O'Nolan's work throughout this dissertation. In doing that, I have decided to peruse three seminal works by renowned academics which are related to cultural materialist theories to a greater or lesser extent, being at the same time situated within the centrality of Irish literature and history as a whole. I will briefly engage with these books and acknowledge them as a source of inspiration and theoretical models upon which my dissertation is based. These texts have been selected on several grounds; namely, their status as groundbreaking landmarks in their field of study, the academic respectability and accountability of the authors and their advocacy of an intimate connection between literature and history. The introductions to the books written by the authors are of particular interest since they stand as explicit statements of their theoretical modus operandi throughout the book, as well as the ways they frame the literary narratives they examine within the socio-political context in which they were produced. As mentioned above, these are Kiberd's *Inventing Ireland: The Literature of the Modern Nation* (1995), Eagleton's *Heathcliff and the Great Hunger: Studies in Irish Culture* (1995) and Gibson and Platt's, eds., *Joyce, Ireland, Britain* (2006).

Firstly, Kiberd's *Inventing Ireland: The Literature of the Modern Nation* is devoted to locating the spirit of Ireland as a modern nation within the most exemplary literary works created from the close of the nineteenth century onwards. This time frame is telling in itself in that it situates its analysis around a period of tense turmoil and conflict which would rapidly lead to the 1916 Easter Rising. Early reviewers praised Kiberd for his lucid examination of "the competing elements that have shaped Irish history and cultural identities, while also representing the making of those identities as a process of ongoing contestation" (Corbett 1998: 679) and his "confident and welcome assertion of political-

cultural identity" (Quinlan 1997: 160). Indeed, his revision of names such as Oscar Wilde (1854-1900) and George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) as paramount figures within the Irish literary and social context of the late nineteenth century as opposed to their more traditional association with British circles, for instance, merits such commendation. Kiberd's approach is to draw from the realms of the social and the literary in equal measure in order to provide a nuanced and sharper understanding of the selected corpus of authors and literary works. His introduction to the book is revelatory in this regard:

> My concern has been to trace the links between high art and popular expression in the decades before and after independence, and to situate revered masterpieces in the wider context out of which they came. Hence, chapters of political and cultural history, analyses of urbanization, of vernacular, of debates about national culture and the programme of the Gaelic League, take their place alongside detailed reexaminations of major texts […]. I have tried in what follows to see works of art as products of their age; to view them not in splendid isolation but in relation to one another; and, above all, to celebrate that phase in their existence when they transcend the field of force out of which they came […]. The imagination of these works of art has always been notable for its engagement with society and for its prophetic reading of the forces at work in their time. (1996: 3-4)

Even though Kiberd does not acknowledge the influence of cultural materialist theories or sources anywhere throughout the text—indeed, the book seems to be geared towards the problematics of postcolonialism—the main tenets of the movement are transparently visible in his introduction. Furthermore, he informs the reader that "each section of my narrative opens with an italicized 'Interchapter' which briefly sketches political developments, so that readers who wish can map literature against the blunter realities of history" (*ibid*: 7). It is precisely this point in Kiberd's approach which is most valuable for my dissertation. For instance, the chapter on O'Nolan entitled "Flann O'Brien, Myles and *The Poor Mouth*" is preceded by a historical chapter entitled "Underdevelopment" which introduces the simultaneity of economic stagnation and revivalist furor in the Irish socio-political context. This historical rigor demonstrates that Kiberd felt the need for explaining the context

alongside literary analysis. As he said himself in an interview: “I think that the really great examples of a form carry so much of life within them that they have to teach us more about the world we are in” (Pushkarevskaya-Naughton 2010: 130). For Kiberd, the relationship between the socio-political milieu and literary activities taking place simultaneously during a certain period is mutually beneficial. He notes, for example, how “less often remarked has been the extent to which political leaders from Pearse to Connolly, from de Valera to Collins, drew on the ideas of poets and playwrights” (1996: 4). This becomes relevant when one thinks of how Myles treated politicians, especially Fianna Fáil figures, as pretentious philistines on account of their abuse of the literary motifs of the Gaelic revivalists and Irish mythology.

In *The Irish Writer and the World* (2005), Kiberd expands on these ideas, also in regards to O’Nolan himself. Speaking of his second novel, *An Béal Bocht,* Kiberd detects how the author “is emphasising the plight of a peasantry which has had a false romantic identity foisted upon it. If a revolution is truly a fight for faces rather than masks” (34), he later adds, “O’Brien clearly feels that the new Irish state has failed to disclose to the people its own face—it has merely tricked them into exchanging one mask for another” (*ibid*). This dovetails with the question of postcolonialism, to which Kiberd’s studies are heavily drawn.[2] It is difficult to disassociate the colonial question from O’Nolan’s work as a whole: he was an active member of the state insofar as he worked as a civil servant contributing to the internal structure of a recently decolonized country. As Hopper (2009: xv) suggests, a fully-fledged study on O’Nolan and postcolonialism is still severely needed, although a number of minor studies have been carried out covering not only *An Béal Bocht,* but the majority of his narrative works.[3] Reviewers of Kiberd’s work have pointed out his dual interest in a historicist approach supported by the politics of postcolonialism (Bagghee 1997; Stewart 1998); this dissertation, however, is only interested in understanding O’Brien from Kiberd’s historicist perspective for a number of reasons, chief among which is the centrality of the

[2] In his introduction to *Inventing Ireland,* Kiberd laments how postcolonial theory—instancing *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literature* (1989)—has failed to see the Irish case as one susceptible for analysis from a postcolonial perspective: “I hope that his book might prompt a reassessment. All cases are complex, but it is precisely the ‘mixed’ nature of the experience of Irish people, as both exponents and victims of British imperialism, which makes them so representative of the underlying process” (1996: 5).
[3] See, for instance, Esty (1995), Brooker (2004), Booker (2005) and Long (2014, 2017b).

questions of locality and autonomy in the construction and development of the Irish state. I understand *Cruiskeen Lawn* as being one of the earliest texts in the history of the state to engage with Ireland as an individual political entity with its own particulars and specificities, no longer tied to, or dependent on, the United Kingdom. In fact, when the colonial power is featured in the column, it is usually in opposition to, and not in conjunction with, the Irish state. Examples of this abound throughout *Cruiskeen Lawn,* but particularly remarkable instances can be found in Myles's discussion of British postwar welfarism, which O'Nolan unequivocally found repugnant to Irish social and economic realities.[4]

In general, and especially in his postcolonial approach, what one perceives in Kiberd's study is a staunch advocacy against a sentimental, falsified, idealized view of Ireland and an oversimplified explanation of the country's literature: "I have tried, in teasing out some analogies, to render the cultural differences as well as the often-forgotten similarities" (1996: 5). In what follows, I have tried to read O'Nolan's view of the Irish political environment precisely in this regard: there is no streamlined, systematic way of understanding his political position as a whole. Not only is the caveat of Myles being merely a journalistic persona necessary to bear in mind, but also O'Nolan's personal connection to the political world—which he abhorred yet was financially dependent on—and his own changing attitudes to commentary on the public sphere during his life. Depending on the cause, event or personality discussed in the column, Myles can be both executioner and paladin, moving whimsically and remorselessly from one position to the other as the column went on. In his book, Kiberd traces the divergent development of Irish literature in a changing context of turmoil; in my dissertation, I will particularize Kiberd's approach to *Cruiskeen Lawn* in order to trace the multilayered growth of the author's political thought. Overall, Kiberd's text is an attractive and valuable academic source for this dissertation because of the way it treats historical events and political action as actively shaping, and being shaped by, the artistic and the literary. Irish history and politics will inform the chapters that follow in much the same way as in Kiberd's book: a comprehensive and specialized historical section or "Interchapter", as Kiberd terms it, will thus precede the three main chapters devoted to the

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[4] See chapter 3, section 3.2.3.2 for a detailed analysis of this issue.

analysis of the columns themselves. In this way, the analysis of their political references will be duly contextualized.

Secondly, Eagleton's *Heathcliff and the Great Hunger: Studies in Irish Culture* must be treated differently because its author is openly Marxist. As such, his discourse is observably more politicized and consonant with cultural materialism as a whole. Eagleton's work is substantially influenced by postcolonial theoretical backgrounds while also intentionally retaining Marxist undertones. That explains why reviewers described it as being "an impressive attempt to use Marxist theory to explore cultural production in a specific colonial situation" (Daly 1996: 249). This is not to say that literature is left out or outweighed by historical or socio-political considerations on Irish history. Some chapters, such as "Ascendancy and Hegemony" engage deeply with political and historical questions; others, such as "Oscar and George" are comparatively more "literary".

As is the case with Kiberd's text, *Heathcliff and the Great Hunger: Studies in Irish Culture* contains an invaluable preface which offers ample insight into the theoretical direction followed by the entire book. Eagleton starts off by ironically acknowledging that "[t]his is a work of theory and history, couched in an appropriately impersonal style" (1995: xi). The style is, however, hardly impersonal: not only do his political opinions surface more often than not, but he also admits that "it is also written out of my affection for Ireland and its people" (*ibid*). It is, however, a work of theory and history: colonial Ireland as seen through a Marxist lens. In fact, Eagleton rapidly betrays his historicist intentions when he comments that "[a] nation, like an individual, has to be able to recount a reasonable story of itself, one without either despair or presumption" (*ibid:* ix). The politics of nationhood are of central importance for this dissertation, and the way it contests and contrasts with literary interpretations throughout Eagleton's book in chapters like "Culture and Politics from Davis to Joyce" constitutes a reliable model for what I intend to do in the chapters that follow. The author sees Ireland as a place where the symbols of religion or sexuality abandon their ethereal constitution and clash violently and perceptibly: "the sexual nonconformism of a George Moore, Oscar Wilde or James Joyce becomes a more politically charged affair than the emancipated talk of the English *fin de siècle* sexologists or Bloomsbury bohemians" (*ibid:* 227). He later argues:

> The art of nineteenth-century Ireland moves under the shadow of the political as surely as sexuality remains embedded within the economic. If culture in Britain was increasingly a bulwark against social unrest, in Ireland it was a powerful contributor to it. In the metropolitan country, culture was largely a spiritual affair; in the colony it could prove a formidable *material force.* It would be hard to underestimate the political impact of Thomas Moore's *Irish Melodies,* the Young Ireland poetry anthology *The Spirit of the Nation* […]. (*Ibid*)

For Eagleton, in short, culture is congenitally related to socio-political realities. This fact is a trademark of Marxist thought: history, culture, language and society are no longer ethereal categories; instead, they are endowed with material existence. This is one of the main tenets of cultural materialism: "the analysis of all forms of composition in relation to their means and conditions of existence" (Higgins 1995: 127). Furthermore, the concept of hegemony as applied to the Irish case (more particularly, to British rule and the Ascendancy) in the chapter "Ascendancy and Hegemony" is central to understanding the development of Irish politics into the twentieth century. While my examination of Irish history explores a different period, from the 1940s to the 1960s, hegemony certainly plays an important role in it. Consequently, Eagleton's approach to the hegemonic forces at work in nineteenth-century Ireland will also stand as a model susceptible of imitation throughout this dissertation.

Eagleton is also shrewd to point out that "what helped to produce much of the major art of the early twentieth century was political reaction" (1995: 301). He instances many of the modernists, with a special emphasis on Yeats and Joyce in the Irish case. I believe this is also true of *Cruiskeen Lawn* and O'Nolan's work as a whole. M. Keith Booker (1995, 2005) has produced work on *At Swim-Two-Birds* and *The Poor Mouth* in this vein, while others have explored *The Third Policeman* as a critique of the Irish Free State (Maslen 2017; Lovejoy 2018), to mention but a few. As far as this dissertation is concerned, *Cruiskeen Lawn* can be seen as a reaction to political developments in the country, both pre and post-independence. Despite the ample variety of topics covered by the column in its twenty-six-year lifespan, political commentary was doubtlessly among the most recurrent and

contextualized; so much so that the column as understood by his author—a self-styled "senior commentator to the Irish nation" (*CL,* February 24, 1961)—would no longer be conceivable as such. This, in turn, has wide-ranging implications in terms of the author's ideology as it relates to the socio-political realities experienced by his audience. In his conclusion to *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (1983), Eagleton comes to see literature as an ideological discourse and expresses an interest in how literary discourse transcends its very medium: "What would be specific to the kind of study I have in mind [...] would be its concern for the kinds of *effects* which discourses produce, and how they produce them" (1995: 205). This implies that, far from remaining detached and intangible, literature intervenes on, and produces ideology: "The meanings and perceptions produced in the text are a reworking of ideology's own working of reality" (Selden et al, 1993: 92). Admittedly, the circulation of the *Irish Times* during O'Nolan's time was reduced (estimates speak of around 35,000 towards the mid-1960s)[5] and, as Tom Garvin (2015: 61) indicates, the newspaper had a meticulously targeted audience: Dublin-based, mostly Protestant, mid-upper-class white-collar professionals, businessmen and intellectuals. Nevertheless, the *Irish Times* was known for offering a brand of professional, reliable and independent journalism virtually unavailable elsewhere (the *Irish Press,* for instance, was Fianna Fáil-funded), which rapidly attracted readers of different social strata. The popularity of the column would have certainly allowed for Eagleton's notion of a literary dissemination of ideology, which renders O'Nolan's interpretation of political events all the more important; especially bearing in mind the fact that "Ireland gave birth to a distinctly conservative modernism" (Eagleton 1995: 301) and how this relates to O'Nolan's personal ideology, which I maintain was conservative in social and political terms.

Thirdly, the introduction to *Joyce, Ireland, Britain,* edited by Gibson and Platt, is equally relevant for this dissertation in terms of the centrality given to a historical reading of Joyce's works. The approach taken by Gibson and Platt in collecting essays for their book is one which, as stated in the foreword to the collection, connects "the reality of Joyce's experience with the record of that experience in his created work" (Knowles 2006: no pagination). Applying this viewpoint to O'Nolan is precisely the focus of the present

[5] See obituary for former Editor of the *Irish Times* Douglas Gageby (*IT,* June 28, 2004).

dissertation; that is, to see Myles's *Cruiskeen Lawn* in light of O'Nolan's reality of experience living and working as part of the political administration of post-independence Ireland and how his observations and concerns, both as a citizen and as a member of the state, are reflected in his journalism. Gibson and Platt believe that purely theoretical approaches to Joyce's work, especially deconstructive analyses, "obstinately refused to localize Joyce's work. It kept Joyce and his work in a rarefied, abstract ether" (*ibid*: 3). They also speak of "the high abstraction of theoretical discourse" (*ibid*) and how, upon perceiving Joyce's political radicalism, deconstructionists "had failed to determine the objects and targets of his radicalism with any precision" (*ibid:* 4). This is to some extent the case in O'Nolan studies, as scholars have recently spoken of O'Nolan's "embittered critique of institutional power" and the "practical, down-to-earth idealism" of the politics of *Cruiskeen Lawn* (Borg et al 2017: 6). What they point out is rightly so, but one is often left wondering from whence does this anti-authoritarian drive stem or what causes or factors trigger it. As in Joyce studies, the matter is one of "[calling] universals into question" and reading the given work "in terms of particularisms" (Gibson and Platt 2006: 1). These particularisms, I believe, have to take the form of highly specific historico-political material in order to fully complement any contextual reading of the column. Curran (2001), Taaffe (2008), Long (2014), Mittermaier (2014) and Flynn (2017), among others, have produced some work along these lines. Following these scholars and expanding upon their work and related gaps in the vein of historical particularisms stipulated by Gibson and Platt is a central part of the methodological roadmap of this dissertation.

Later in the introduction, the authors outline the problems inherent in previous Joycean scholarship in terms of literary contextualization: "The critic could provide the context or contexts, could pay close attention to the text. The problem was how to articulate the two kinds of work together, how to establish the appropriate historico-literary relation" (2006: 11). Their aim is to understand Joyce's complexities as a response to, and not detached from, the very complexities of British and Irish history at the turn of the twentieth century. This, they feel, Joycean criticism had failed to duly consider until the new school of Irish critics undertook the task of resituating Joyce within the context of pre-independence Ireland: "they saw his work as everywhere involved in the treatment of Irish historical, political and cultural themes" (*ibid*: 13). While there is hardly any need to re-territorialize O'Nolan's

credentials as an Irish writer—he has traditionally been implanted "on the spectrum from parochial conservatism to international experimentalism" (Borg et al 2014: 5)—this dissertation unequivocally sustains that *Cruiskeen Lawn*, following Gibson and Platt's argument, is inherently ingrained into the Irish historical, political and cultural context; even when the column transcends the national boundaries and comments on international matters, it is always in connection to Irish realities.[6] Thus, it is upon readings of Joyce against nineteenth- and twentieth-century Anglo-Irish history that the editors of *Joyce, Ireland, Britain* construe their theoretical approach, which is based on historical materialism:

> The work in question is historical and materialist in its orientation. It is influenced by the empiricism of some of the best British and Irish historians but also by continental philosophy, literary and cultural theory, Marxist analysis, cultural studies and even practical criticism [...]. It also relies on a practice of historical saturation: that is, a specifically Joycean historical materialism seeks to support and/or complicate its case by introducing as much historical information as is relevant and practicable. This information has priority over everything else except the texts [...]. Historical materialism suggests, for example, that Joyce is better understood if we place him in relation to an extremely detailed knowledge of actual relations between classes and races in Irish and British culture in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. (2006: 18)

This fragment is paramount for this dissertation in terms of the theoretical and methodological approach taken throughout. As with Gibson and Platt, I will be concerned, in a way, with a "Mylesian" historical materialism; that is, an understanding of the column and the author as completely submerged in the early development of the Irish state as we know it today. Twentieth-century Irish history, in other words, is as much a protagonist of this dissertation as is Myles himself, or his column. The connection between Irish history and politics and the column itself is so inherently strong that *Cruiskeen Lawn* is often seen to

[6] See chapter 4, sections 4.2.1.1 and 4.2.1.2 for discussions of *Cruiskeen Lawn* columns on the San Francisco and Potsdam conferences and the Marshall Plan, respectively, as instances of this phenomenon.

transcend the ink-and-paper boundaries imposed by the newspaper format. As Young has put it: “The newspaper may have provided the forms of discourse, but the objective was the follies and vices, both venial and mortal, of the world the newspaper expressed” (Young 1997: 118). This necessitates, as previously quoted from Kiberd, a resistance to seeing the text in “splendid isolation”; instead, it requires, as Gibson and Platt insist, a “practice of historical saturation”. As far as this dissertation is concerned, history is seen alongside the column and given its own towering space in the shape of a detailed historical background (Chapter 2). Nevertheless, I also follow *Joyce, Ireland, Britain* in terms of its methodological caution and rebuke of theoretical absolutism, as well as in their acknowledgment that historical readings of Joyce seek to deliberately complicate the general understanding of such a multifaceted writer: “we don’t see the approach that most interests us as providing any grand solutions to the Joycean enigma [...]. Complication is what partly emerges from this collection as a whole” (2006: 17-20).

All in all, the three texts discussed above stand as the main theoretical pillars for the present dissertation. Granting the obvious differences in terms of context and content, it is rather the general line of thought and approach followed by these books that I am interested in applying to my study of *Cruiskeen Lawn* and Irish politics.

CHAPTER 2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

Since this dissertation is as equally concerned with Irish history as with *Cruiskeen Lawn*, I believe that a joint revision of the life and times of this writer is necessary to better understand the contextual magnitude of the column. This task is rendered all the more ineluctable by reflecting upon O'Nolan's status as a journalist. Steven Young writes that "as journalism, this work remains rooted in its time and place, filled with the particulars of, and topical allusions to, daily life in Dublin" (1997: 111). If this is so, *Cruiskeen Lawn* inevitably encompasses, to some extent, the zeitgeist of mid-twentieth-century Ireland. Its historical scope does not only comprise chronological and topographical dimensions but also extends to individual, human ones: "In its twenty-six-year history, his column became a collective monologue of what he called the PPI (the 'Plain People of Ireland')—a mosaic portrait of the Irish Free State in the post-colonial era" (Hopper 2009: 31). *Cruiskeen Lawn* thus witnessed three decades of postwar Ireland which are, coincidentally, of paramount historical importance for the Ireland we know today. Firstly, it has been widely recognized that the

1940s—and, more particularly, The Emergency—were central to the self-assertion of both an Irish nation and state. Neutrality simultaneously offered protection and a *de facto* demonstration that Ireland could be independent at all costs, even in the event of war. If already virtually achieved, independence from Britain was firmly and officially confirmed when the country acquired the denomination of Republic of Ireland in 1949. Secondly, while the postwar period kick-started simultaneous economic booms in countries such as the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, Greece or Japan, to mention but a few, there was no such miraculous growth in Ireland. In fact, the mid-1940s saw the beginning of a period of economic deterioration which was to last until the late 1950s. This period of economic uncertainty generated in turn its own brand of political instability: in 1948, for the first time in two decades, Éamon de Valera's (1882-1975) Fianna Fáil fell from power with the formation of a coalition government led by Fine Gael but also including the Labour Party, Clann na Poblachta, Clann na Talmhan and the National Labour Party.[1] De Valera returned to power in 1951, only to lose hold again in 1954. This fluctuating political commutation took place against a backdrop of piercing emigration and a lethargic economy. Thirdly, the period of economic growth that ensued brought about de Valera's retirement from first-line politics in 1959 and Seán Lemass's (1891-1971) rise as Taoiseach can be seen, incidentally, as the antithesis to O'Nolan's situation at the time. With Lemass in power, the country made palpable efforts to open up after joining the United Nations in 1955 and designing the "First Programme for Economic Expansion". Those years were promising for the future of Ireland, but they would mark O'Nolan's early demise: from 1958 onwards, O'Nolan growing dependence on alcohol (*Cruiskeen Lawn* ran steadily until 1966, and he also published as George Knowall in *The National and Leinster Times*[2] but most of those articles were largely rehashes from earlier *Cruiskeen Lawn* columns) was unstoppable. He wrote two and a half novels and died on the threshold of the Troubles, the bloodiest domestic crisis ever since the Irish Civil War.

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[1] Founded in 1912, 1946, 1939 and 1944, respectively. Whereas Labour, for instance, was an active party even during pre-independence times, Clann na Poblachta, Clann na Talmhan and the National Labour Party were products of post-constitutional Ireland and were spawned from other major parties; i.e, Clann na Poblachta comprised the more revolutionary and republican-minded wing of the former Sinn Féin whereas disillusioned members of Labour formed the National Labour Party, only to return to Labour in 1950.

[2] A comprehensive selection of the articles written for *The National and Leinster Times* as George Knowall in the column "Bones of Contention" has been published in the volume *Myles away from Dublin* (1985).

Before engaging with the textual and political analysis of the columns, it is necessary to linger in the realm of history and politics to have a sharper focus on the social, cultural and political context in which O’Nolan did his work. In order to do this, I will follow a tetrapartite structure, dividing the present section into four main chapters: independence in context, The Emergency, the years of stagnation and the process of opening up to the world. Additionally, in order to have a clearer insight into the personal and professional implications of these historical events for O’Nolan, I have thus decided to include a subsection at the end of each period to cross-reference historical and biographical facts.

2.2 Independence in context

This section tackles the years leading up to the formal constitution of Ireland as an independent nation in 1937 and the main events that shaped the period; that is, the Easter Rising (1916), the War of Independence (1919-21), the Anglo-Irish Treaty (1921), the Irish Civil War (1921-2) and the socio-political development of the Irish Free State (1922-37). Additionally, O’Nolan’s early life and career, including his university activities and the publication of *At Swim-Two-Birds,* will be briefly discussed in relation to the reality of the times.

2.2.1 1916-22

On April 23, 1933, de Valera gave a speech beside the graves of the Easter Rising leaders at Arbour Hill Barracks, Dublin:

> No words can fittingly commemorate the sacrifice of these men, except, indeed, the words of a new proclamation restoring the Republic they proclaimed and gave their lives to defend. But the time has not come for that, and we must content ourselves today with the declaration that it is for that goal we strive and that we shall not rest until we have reached it. So I ask you all, as we stand on this hallowed ground, to resolve in your hearts to do your part to complete the task of the men of Easter Week. (Qtd. in Moynihan 1980: 237)

Fearghal McGarry has stated that "few events in Irish history have been so remembered, reenacted, and re-imagined" (2010: 4) as the Easter Rising. It was, much like other subsequent violent events in pursuit of independence, short-lived and to some extent the product of political exaltation and euphoria rather than a well-thought and cohesive maneuver. In fact, Thomas Bartlett stresses the fact that the leaders, Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) echelons,[3] were "a mixture of poets, playwrights, socialists, educationalists, mystics and professional revolutionaries" (2010: 386), whose military training was mostly limited to drills carried out in secret during weekends or public holidays. The facts go as follows: beginning on Easter Monday and lasting 6 days—and in spite of Eoin McNeill's (leader of the Irish Volunteers) order to cancel mobilizations—the Rising commenced when thirty members of the Irish Citizen Army (ICA), a subdivision of the IRB led by Connolly, approached Dublin Castle—the epicenter of British political activity in Ireland—in a military fashion and raided it with surprising ease, only to quickly lose it to the Crown forces hours later. The over 1900 rebels (counting both IRB and ICA forces) then proceeded to occupy different key buildings in and around the city center; for instance, de Valera's 500-man garrison established Bolands Mill on Grand Canal Street as their headquarters.[4] Most importantly, Pearse took hold of the General Post Office in O'Connell Street, where he delivered his Proclamation of the Provisional Government of the Irish Republic. By all accounts, however, the Rising was essentially a chaotic and hasty affair which suffered from a lack of proper military background and vision; it was also highly dependent from a tactical standpoint on the element of surprise and Britain's involvement in the First World War. Its participants lacked proper equipment due to the Germans' failure to smuggle weapons into Kerry days prior to the Rising. It seemed to rely too heavily, as Roy Foster suggests, on "the idea of a revolution in consciousness brought about by a symbolic

[3] The Proclamation manifesto was signed by Thomas J. Clarke, Sean Mac Diarmada, Thomas MacDonagh, Patrick H. Pearse, Eamonn Ceannt, James Connolly and Joseph Plunkett. Members of the Irish Volunteers (IV) and the IRB, they were all apprehended and subsequently executed for their part in the Rising.
[4] Interestingly, both Thomas Bartlett (2010: 497) and Fanning (2015: 36) recount de Valera's meticulousness and careful planning regarding reconnaissance which, in turn, did not translate into tactical success since his decisions on the spot were mostly unfortunate.

and willed loss of life" (1989: 477), mostly instigated and marketed by Pearse through a finely crafted literary discourse.[5]

1917 was simultaneously a time for political reflection and secretive military reconstruction. The Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP), previously in charge of representing Ireland in Westminster, gradually lost power as the radicalization of Irish society grew stronger (Bartlett 2010: 399). The December 1918 elections signified a complete overhaul in Irish political history: The IPP fell from 68 to 6 seats whereas De Valera's Sinn Féin, who entered the election with just 7 seats, rose up to 73. Instead of taking their seats at Westminster as expected, they unilaterally decided to gather in the Mansion House in Dublin on 21 January 1919, constitute a Dáil and, following their Easter Rising fallen comrades, proclaim independence from Britain. This, together with the killing of two members of the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) on that same day by divergent IV members (who would soon be known as the Irish Republican Army), marked the beginning of the Irish War of Independence, also known as the "Anglo-Irish War".

Foster writes that the Irish War of Independence "was the logical result of the politics of exaltation" (1989: 494) which had been relentlessly at work ever since the execution of the leaders of the Rising and Great Britain's threat of conscription in 1918. The constant military training that the IRB and the Volunteers had undergone pre- and post-1916 resulted in a tactical U-turn: "It was of pivotal importance to expand opposition to British rule into an all-out war, both political and military. It was the culmination of a strategy which, directly at odds with the approach of 1916, placed a premium on killing rather than dying for Ireland" (Ferriter 2005: 220). The Rising, with all its faults and inconsistencies, had served as a sort of testing ground for the more politically and militarily based uprising at the beginning of the War of Independence. The Republican militia favored guerrilla tactics which were particularly unsuitable for the RIC. These, unable to contain the ever-increasing Irish rebels, had to call in a special paramilitary force of former First World War combatants known, on account of their bicolor outfit, as the "Black and Tans".[6] As often happens with combatants

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[5] For more on the Rising, see O'Donnell (2008), Wills (2009), Kennedy (2010), Townshend (2015), Ferriter (2015), Allen (2016), Grayson and McGarry (2016) or O'Driscoll (2017), among many others.

[6] Richard Bennett expands on how the few fledgling IRA members became an impending threat for the RIC as 1919 drew closer: "the British Army was not at war with the few hundred poorly-armed shop assistants and farm boys of the I.R.A. who began to raid police barracks more boldly. The object of these attacks was to obtain

in wars, neither of the sides demonstrated any kind of moral temperament toward the opponent or its perceived allies:

> The new police reinforcement, nicknamed 'Black and Tans' and 'Auxies', behaved more like independent mercenaries; their brutal regime followed the IRA's policy of killing policemen, and was taken by many to vindicate it. Intimidation never slackened; IRA 'executions continued, including, for instance, shooting farmers' sons who refused to help dig trenches. (Foster 1989: 498)

Some of the Sinn Féin high echelons thought that, for the rebellion to be successful, further tactics extending beyond the military, such as international propaganda, should be considered. For his part, de Valera traveled around America for eighteen months aiming "to seek official recognition of the Republic, to dissuade the US government from pledging to maintain Ireland as an integral part of the United Kingdom, and to spearhead the launch of an external loan" (Fanning 2015: 82-83). While being critical of de Valera's long absence, Collins, then Minister for Finance, similarly believed in the importance of propaganda and issued proposals to imitate propagandist use of cinema and posters in Germany and Britain (Pat Coogan 2002: 395). In the end, de Valera's American campaign proved economically successful: he raised almost single-handedly the unexpected amount of nearly $6 million.[7]

In the end, civilian involvement played an important role while simultaneously sustaining the heaviest losses.[8] There were a number of bloody events which best capture the cloak-and-dagger and nefarious atmosphere of those years. Some instances are the 1920 Bloody Sunday, when the execution of twelve alleged British intelligence officers led to the killing of fourteen civilians at a sporting event in Croke Park; an IRA ambush in Kilmichael

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the arms and ammunition that were needed to extend the struggle" (2010: 21). According to Diarmaid Ferriter, the RIC was on the losing end from the beginning: "the RIC's methods became outdated and underfinanced" (2015: 191)

[7] For more on De Valera's American mission, see O'Doherty (1957) and especially Hannigan (2008). See McCartan (1932) for a biographical account of the event.

[8] Ferriter (2005: 220) tentatively claims that "the War of Independence led to the death of roughly 1,200 people" but he acknowledges that "there are no reliable figures for civilian deaths". More recently, Eunan O'Halpin (2012: 141-58) has offered a far more precise statistical account of deaths during the War of Independence, recording 2,141 fatalities.

which ended up with seventeen Auxiliaries killed; or even the execution of eighteen-year-old IRA-volunteer Kevin Barry (Ferriter 2015: 200). Further tensions ensued and this led both sides to duly consider the possibility of a truce, which was called in July 1921. An Irish delegation, which was not led by de Valera but by Collins and Arthur Griffith (among others) as plenipotentiaries, was sent to London and spent six months in unremitting negotiations with the then Prime Minister David Lloyd George. In the end, the Anglo-Irish Treaty was signed in London on 6 December—and narrowly approved by the Dáil on 7 January, 1922—and provided "complete independence in domestic affairs, including full fiscal autonomy [...]. 'External' freedoms were also, given the altering status of the dominion, implicitly wide" (Foster 1989: 507). Another key aspect included in the Treaty was the swearing of allegiance to the British Crown, one which the most diehard Republicans utterly despised. The oath that Members of the Parliament in the Free State had to take went as follows: "I ...... do solemnly swear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution of the Irish Free State as by law established and that I will be faithful to H.M. King George V., his heirs and successors by law" (qtd. in Coogan 2002: 267). [9] In essence, it created what came to be known as the Irish Free State, which would last from 1922 to 1937, with the signing of the Constitution of Ireland. That Collins, Griffith and others had casually agreed to unilaterally sign the Treaty without previous consultation to the Dáil enraged de Valera, among many others. Fanning illuminatingly observes that "he opposed the Treaty not because it was a compromise, but because it was *not* his compromise" (2015: 126-7) [italics in original].[10] This caused a stark division within the Dáil between pro-Treaty and anti-Treaty members, a rupture which the passing months did only accentuate, resulting in the outbreak of the Irish Civil War (1922-3) on 28 June.

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[9] For more on the Anglo-Irish Treaty see, among many others, Gallagher (1965), Costello (2003), Hopkinson (2004) and Knirck (2006a, 2006b, 2007).

[10] Foster (1989: 509-10) intelligently comments on how de Valera and Collins changed roles after the signing of the Treaty: on the one hand, de Valera, who was keen on pushing his idea of "external association" through what he named "document no. 2", became more emphatic on the need of absolute secession; on the other hand, Collins, whose revolutionary tone had previously been far more intense than de Valera's, became convinced of the conciliatory benefits of the Treaty and proceeded to pursue negotiations with anti-Treaty forces.

Rejections of the Treaty tended to arise from military factions rather than political ones.[11] Sinn Féin, in charge of maintaining a provisional government since 14 January and led by Arthur Griffith, was increasingly fractioned from within. The anti-Treaty IRA quickly noticed their weakness and took over the Four Courts[12] in April. These mounting tensions forced Collins, Commander-in-Chief of the Free State Army, to shell the over 150 republicans fortified inside the Four Courts on June 28. This event has been officially recognized as the outburst of the Irish Civil War. Their victory, alongside other extramural maneuvers, meant that the Free State Government had "succeeded in driving republican forces from all the sizeable towns in their former strongholds of the south and west by the end of the summer" (Foster 2015: 5). Presently forced to retreat to its natural guerrilla habitat, the IRA felt more at ease to carry out assassinations and ambushes, such as the one which resulted in Collins' death on August 22. But while IRA victories were small and disperse, "a large [Free State] army of some 40,000 men was mobilized and equipped from British arsenals, and slowly the areas of the country held by anti-Treaty forces were squeezed. Cork and Kerry, Limerick and Clare were all occupied by December 1922" (Bartlett 2010: 419). In April 1923 Liam Lynch, commander-in-chief of the IRA, died as a result of a skirmish and his successor, Frank Aiken surrendered to avoid further human and material devastation.[13]

2.2.2 The Irish Free State

Ireland was finally free, to some extent, from the economic and political grip of Britain; furthermore, the republican forces had been subdued. While institutional and social change was to be expected, this was not particularly the case. As Kiberd writes:

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[11] As demonstrated by the active participation of Cumann na mBan ("the Irishwomen's Council", a Republican paramilitary organization created in 1914 and adjacent to the IV) and the Fianna Éireann ("the Warriors of Ireland", an independent Republican paramilitary youth group founded in 1909) on the Republican side.

[12] The Four Courts building, located on Inns Quay in Dublin, is one of the main historical and administrative buildings in the city. Originally built in 1786, it has hosted a number of courts throughout history.

[13] Frank Aiken (1898-1983, Fianna Fáil) was commander-in-chief of the IRA but then became a member of Sinn Féin. After Sinn Féin split, he became one of the founding members of Fianna Fáil. He was Minister for Lands and Fisheries (1936), Minister for Defence (1932-9), Minister for the Co-ordination of Defensive Measures (1939-1945), Minister for Finance (1945-8), Minister for External Affairs (1957-69) and Tánaiste (1965-9).

> Soon judges and lawyers would once again be donning the gowns and wigs of the British system; and the newly liberated people would be employing the unmodified devices of the old régime upon themselves. War and civil war appeared to have drained all energy and imagination away: there was precious little left with which to reimagine the national condition. (1996: 263)

The challenge of the new Ireland was thus to reconcile the burning desire for independence which had brought her to the Free State and the actuality of its changes. It was a case, as Terence Brown puts it, of "the dissipation of revolutionary aspiration in post-revolutionary disillusionment" (1981: 14). Contrary to the wishes of anti-Treaty politicians, the Free State was not a new state nor was built from scratch. There was, in fact, "absolutely no plan to transform Ireland socially or economically; if anything, the reverse" (Bartlett 2010: 420).[14] This is not to say that anti-Treaty forces would have steered the State in a totally different direction, economy-wise. Knirck states that

> in many ways, the dispute between pro-Treatyites and anti-Treatyites was mostly about language, since there was a broad socioeconomic consensus between the two sides. Pro- and anti-Treatyites differed over the meaning of words—self-determination, sovereignty, Saorstát, freedom, Commonwealth—more than they differed over fundamental social or economic issues (2014: 16).

The pro-Treaty government that rose to power after the Civil War was led by W. T. Cosgrave (1880-1965), President of the Executive Council (the office of Taoiseach would not be created until 1937) under the political banner of Cumann na nGaedheal,[15] a conservative

[14] Institutionally speaking, the Free State adopted a policy of continuity with respect to British rule. It retained 21,000 out of 28,000 of its civil servants (Bartlett 2010: 420), who fell under the control of the newly appointed Minister for Finance Ernest Blythe (1889-1975) after the passing of the Civil Service Regulation Act of 1924 and the creation of the Civil Service Commission. See Maguire (2008) for further insight on this issue.

[15] As a political party, Cumann na nGaedheal was short lived. Its political activity lasted from 1923 to 1933 when, in response to de Valera's Fianna Fáil and their triumph in the 1932 elections, it dissolved and merged with the National Centre Party and the National Guard to form Fine Gael.

party which spawned from Pro-Treaty Sinn Féiners upon the creation of the Free State. Its main aim was cultural self-definition against Britain; this policy would be aggressively continued by de Valera in the following decades, thus proving that the political agendas of both Cumann na nGaedheal and Sinn Féin—and, in upcoming years, of Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael—were essentially similar but for questions of self-determination.[16] This markedly cultural turn was evidenced in the Provisional Government's emphasis on the Gaelic language as being the main differentiating cultural factor with Britain, both inside and outside the educational system. Foster observes that "during the 1920s, therefore, the regime necessarily laid heavy emphasis on the 'Gaelic' nature of the new state. The Dáil and Senate paid lip-service to 'traditional' Irish forms" (1989: 518). Irish became compulsory in schools from 1924 onwards and it was in most cases a compelling requirement when applying for certain jobs. This, along with the Shannon Electricity Act, 1925,[17] were some of the measures which defined what came to be generally perceived as a strikingly conservative term of office.[18] Knirck remarks in this regard that "the Cumann na nGaedheal government unquestionably disappointed many, but there were policy initiatives pursued and stances taken that had obvious revolutionary pedigrees (2013: 11). In any case, Cumann na nGaedheal was essentially free to pursue any line of policy since Republicans were intent on abstaining from voting on account of the Oath of Allegiance.

Meanwhile, de Valera was biding his time. His strategic mindset and Machiavellian self-education made him realize that Cumann na nGaedheal had "the shield of popular approval and we must get inside before we can hope to make any real progress" (qtd. in Laffan 1999: 438). He was elected as candidate for Clare in 1923 but was arrested at a

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[16] Mel Farrell (2017: 294) has, however, remarked some initial differences between Fianna Fáil and Cumann na nGaedheal: "Cumann na nGaedheal believed that prudent management of the economy was of paramount importance. Employment, development, international credibility and an end to partition would only be possible if the Free State balanced its budget and kept taxation low. Fianna Fáil, on the other hand, evolved as the party of the underdog, appealing to voters who had not seen any material benefits since 1922. Its policy of protectionism offered hope that a new industrial class would be created while offering the prospect of better pay and conditions as well as progress on the 'national question'".

[17] The Shannon Electricity Act officialized the Shannon hydroelectric scheme, which proposed to generate electricity by harnessing the power of the River Shannon. The Ardnacrusha Power Plant was built and put into operation in 1929 after the Act was passed. However, as Foster remarks, "it remained exceptional" and its success was clouded amidst a general "failure of public investment" (Foster 1989: 521).

[18] On March 1, 1923, Kevin O'Higgins, Free State Minister for Home Affairs and later appointed Minister for Justice, declared in reference to himself and the Pro-Treaty elite that they "were probably the most conservative revolutionaries that ever put across a successful revolution" (qtd. in Ferriter 2005: 296).

meeting—he predicted the public arrest and his subsequent spike in popularity (Fanning 2015: 145). He was released the following year and, in 1926, he founded his flagship party, Fianna Fáil, after he and some followers split from Sinn Féin. By then he had dismissed any possibility of military action and was instead purely devoted to political and democratic reform. De Valera's Fianna Fáil thus decided to enter the Dáil and swear the Oath of Fidelity on the grounds that it was mere paperwork necessary to contest the elections. The new members of Fianna Fáil were Republican in ideology—in actual fact, most of them were veterans of the War of Independence, Civil War and even of the Easter Rising—but rejected Sinn Féin's abstentionism. After gaining 44 seats in the 1927 general election and positioning themselves as the prime members of the opposition, they achieved 72 seats in the 1932 election as opposed to Cumann na nGaedheal's 57, and thus came to power in coalition with Labour. A year later, the Cumann na nGaedheal-National Centre Party-National Guard[19] merger gave birth to Fine Gael. From 1933 to the present day, Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil have remained as the major political parties in Ireland.[20]

For Bartlett, "Fianna Fáil appealed to those who had not done well out of the new state—the small farmer, the town laborer, women and the poor—to all those who looked for more radical social and economic policies" (2010: 433). Except for their tireless and eventually unfruitful pursuit of the language question, these radical social and economic policies were initially conspicuous by their absence. Instead, a solid economic barrier was built between the Free State and the United Kingdom, which escalated into what came to be known as the Anglo-Irish Trade War, or Economic War.[21] In its February 9, 1932 Election Manifesto, Fianna Fáil listed what follows as one of its primary aims: "(2) To retain the land annuities in the State treasury. There is no contractual obligation binding us to hand these annuities over to Britain. The British Government is neither legally nor justly entitled to

[19] The National Guard was popularly known as the Blueshirts, a fascist-like organization led by former head of the police Eoin O'Duffy. It spawned from "the spectre of extreme republicanism raised by the Fianna Fáil victory in 1932 and the polarised climate of the 1930s" (Coakley 1999: 17). The Blueshirts shared all the traits of other European fascist movements, these being, among others, the use of special uniforms and the upholding of values related to authoritarianism, anti-communism and extreme nationalism.

[20] In the 2019 general election, however, Sinn Féin (under the leadership of Mary Lou McDonald) obtained 37 seats, polling over Fine Gael (35) and one seat short (Fianna Fáil gained 38 seats) of being the largest party in the Dáil.

[21] For more on the Anglo-Irish Trade War, see Meenan (1970), McMahon (1984), O'Rourke (1991), Neary and Ó Gráda (1991) or Ó Gráda (1997), among others.

receive them" (qtd. in Moynihan 1980: 189).[22] Later in the manifesto, de Valera concedes that "the aim would be to make ourselves as independent of foreign imports as possible [...]. Suitable fiscal laws would be passed to give the protection necessary against unfair foreign competition" (*ibid*). De Valera was true to his word and decided to retain these land annuities upon his ascension to power. This prompted a quick and bold response from Britain by establishing heavy taxation on exported goods—coal in particular being sorely affected—and this was to last up until the beginning of the Second World War. Fianna Fáil's diversionary tactics, however, eventually proved successful with the Irish people. De Valera reinforced his ideological commitment to a Catholic and frugal Ireland and placated an economic backslash with, for instance, the Eucharistic Congress[23] and radio addresses such as on the occasion of the opening of Radio Eireann's Athlone Station in 1933, where he justified that "the Irish genius has always stressed spiritual and intellectual rather than material values" (qtd. in Moynihan 1980: 233). "In this sense", Fanning (2015: 168) argues, "the economic war was a godsend to de Valera because it enabled him to tell Irish voters that the 'frugal fare' [...] was the price they must pay for political freedom". All this helped de Valera to gain support among the Catholic middle and lower classes—which earned him two consecutive victories (as a minority) in the 1933 and 1937 elections, filling 77 and 69 seats respectively—and thus was the road paved for the 1937 Constitution.

2.2.3 The 1937 Constitution

As de Valera's grip on power grew firmer, the necessity to sever remaining connections with the Commonwealth became clearer and increasingly attainable. As explained above, recourse

[22] While de Valera's claims that the text of the Anglo-Irish Treaty does not dictate Ireland's obligation to pay the annuities *per se,* it does actually determine that "the law, practice and constitutional usage governing the relationship of the Crown or the representative of the Crown and of the Imperial Parliament to the Dominion of Canada shall govern their relationship to the Irish Free State" (qtd. in Mohr 2005). In the Dominion of Canada, the Dominion Lands Act of 1872 gave the Crown the power to distribute the lands freely and receive land annuities in exchange.

[23] The Eucharistic Congress was held in Dublin in 1932—immediately after de Valera's rise to power—to mark the 1500th anniversary of Saint Patrick's arrival in Ireland. Its triumphalist and all-encompassing tone embodied the Free State with a Catholic identity, later enshrined and officialized in the 1937 Constitution. It contributed alongside de Valera's relentless activity in the League of Nations to placing the Free State in the international sphere. For further reading on the Eucharistic Congress see Holmes (2000), Kane (2007), Boyd (2007) and O'Dwyer (2009), among others.

to violence and civil war was no longer a possibility in de Valera's mind, whose appeal to democracy was stressed in virtually every speech given after his ascension to power in 1932. The economic war affected both Ireland and Great Britain, but the swelling push of fascism and Nazism evidenced an upcoming war. This, together with growing disenchantment in other Dominions, forced the British to look anxiously for a settlement. This settlement cost the Irish dearly—£10 million and no guarantees on partition—but in exchange the Free State was effectively dissolved: Ireland got to retain their ports, the figure of Governor-General was struck down and the complete self-determination of Ireland was finally possible.

Fanning (2015: 169) reveals that de Valera had instructed legal advisers to begin drafting the future constitution as early as 1935. What came to be known as the 1937 Constitution of Ireland, approved by 56.52% of the Irish people, consisted of 63 articles. Some still see the Constitution as a "risk-laden political strategy" (Keogh 1994: 102) while others have defined it as a "cautious document" (Brown 1981: 165) but also one which "contained scope for renewal and change" (Ferriter 2005: 370). In effect, however, the Constitution displayed and officialized de Valera's personal ideology at all levels. This is clearly seen in articles 8 and 44, which determine the position of the Irish language and the Catholic Church, respectively. Article 8 states Irish is the first, official language while English is relegated to being the second; similarly, Article 44 recognizes "the special position of the Holy Catholic Apostolic and Roman Church as the guardian of the Faith professed by the great majority of the citizens".[24] In this respect, Fanning is right to claim that "the embodiment of Catholicism in the constitution was mirrored by de Valera's treatment of the Irish language" (Fanning 2015: 202); that is, while both elements were primordial to de Valera and Fianna Fáil's ideology, he refused to grant them total centrality in an act of pragmatism.[25] In particular, Article 44 bothered some of the more loyalist Catholics, especially those who had helped de Valera with consultations during the drafting process, most famously Father John Charles McQuaid.[26] The Catholic Church dogma permeated the

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[24] When not indicated otherwise, all pieces of Irish legislation quoted in this dissertation have been extracted from the Electronic Irish Statute Book (ISB).

[25] In fact, the government's use of the Irish language after the Constitution remained secondary and essentially ceremonial.

[26] John Charles McQuaid (1895-1973) was Dean and President of Blackrock College (where the O'Nolan brothers were educated during adolescence) from 1925 to 1939, when he was appointed Archbishop of Dublin. He played a prominent role in shaping the social and religious articles of the Irish Constitution and also in

entire document but failed to rule supreme over the rest of religious denominations: "The State also recognises the Church of Ireland, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, the Methodist Church in Ireland, the Religious Society of Friends in Ireland, as well as the Jewish Congregations and the other religious denominations". Additionally, Article 41 dealing with the family and the position of women within the social apparatus was initially met with alarm and rejection on the part of organized groups such as the National University Women Graduates' Association, the Irish Women Workers' Union or the Joint Committee of Women's Societies and Social Workers, among others (Daly 2010: 84). Said article stated that "the State recognises that by her life within the home, woman gives to the State a support without which the common good cannot be achieved" as well as that "the State shall, therefore, endeavour to ensure that mothers shall not be obliged by economic necessity to engage in labour to the neglect of their duties in the home"**.** Despite facing ample opposition, Article 41 was finally enforced and its wording remains unchanged to date.

All in all, the Constitution gave way to a regime which "took on the trappings of the old, while adapting the rhetoric" (Foster 1989: 543). Partition remained in the background and Cumann na nGaedheal's policy of language revival was pursued with the same degree of ineffectiveness. The ensuing Dáil was composed of essentially the same members of the Executive Council and both the new Seanad Éireann and the office of the President of Ireland were in effect ceremonial and powerless institutions. The Anglo-Irish Economic War and the Emergency would prevent European-like economic growth and thus Ireland would enter a period of stasis and—largely rural—underdevelopment which would not recede until the late 1960s.

2.2.4 O'Nolan's early years

Upon the advent of the new state, intellectuals responded to its fervently Catholic-nationalist outlook with "cynicism and disillusion", which "would soon become the fashionable modes

impeding the enforcement of the original Mother and Child Scheme (1950-1), put forward by Clann na Poblachta's Minister for Health Nöel Browne.

among writers and intellectuals" (Cronin 1990: 24). Brown recounts the situation more specifically:

> Irish writers of the 1920s had cause to take alarm in part because of the source of the demands for censorship (the Catholic Vigilance Association and the Catholic Truth Society) and in part because of the atmosphere of national self-righteousness and cultural exclusiveness in which a Censorship Bill would be enacted. (1981: 74)

Contrary to the general line of international isolationism pursued by politicians at the time, culture and the arts in Ireland stood their ground during the Free State. Sean O'Casey's (1880-1964) best known dramatic works—*Juno and the Paycock* (1924) and *The Plough and the Stars* (1926), Denis Johnston's *The Old Lady Says No* (1928), William Butler Yeats' *The Tower* (1928) or Tomás Ó Criomhthain's *An t-Oileánach* (The Islandman, 1929) are but a few examples of the rich literary atmosphere that pervaded the early years of the Free State. However, the 1920s would also see the creation of the long-running and infamous Censorship of Publications Board, established by the Censorship of Publications Act, 1929, whose aim was to impede printing of "any indecent matter, the publication of which would be calculated to injure public morals"; that is, those works which would not adhere to a strict Catholic view of the world. The Act ravaged both national and international literary works by authors as diverse as Aldous Huxley (1894-1963), James Joyce, Samuel Beckett, George Bernard Shaw, Francis Scott Fitzgerald (1896-1940), Ernest Hemingway (1899-1961), Sean O'Casey, Sean O Faolain (1900-91), Frank O'Connor (1903-66) or Kate O'Brien (1897-1974), to mention but a few. Furthermore, as Donal Ó Drisceoil (2005: 148) points out, "the sporadic protests of the 1930s made no impact on the operation of the censorship in relation to either Irish or international literature". With the advent of Fianna Fáil in 1932 and their emphasis on a officialized Catholic ethos, the Board gained even more prominence and thus became the main obstacle to overcome for writers wanting to have their works published in Ireland. Other than that, cultural life in Ireland was dominated by an official trend of Gaelicization which

was reflected, for instance, in the debates surrounding education through the medium of Irish or in the celebration of traditional Gaelic sporting events.[27]

It is in this cultural context that O'Nolan was born and did his early work. Born on October 5, 1911 to a middle-class family, his parents—Michael Victor Nolan, a civil servant; and his mother, Agnes Gormly, daughter of a decreasingly prosperous Catholic shopkeeper—met in Strabane, County Tyrone, where Michael worked and taught Irish in the evenings. However, the Nolans and their twelve children were forced to move whenever Michael was transferred: they lived in Strabane, Dublin (Inchicore), Glasgow (Scotland), Strabane again and Tullamore before settling down in Dublin (Blackrock) for good. The effect of this definitive move, as Cronin rightly notes, "was to make Brian a Dubliner, something he was proudly to remain for the rest of his life" (1990: 26). It was as a Dubliner that he was first sent to school at the age of twelve. Before being in Dublin, the geographical instability of the Nolans had impeded the constancy that is often necessary during early education, so Michael decided to teach his twelve children at home, or by post when he was away. At some point schoolteachers were hired to come and teach at the Nolan family house but their ineffectiveness eventually became apparent. In any case the children knew how to read both Irish and English and Michael, according to Brian's brother Ciarán, "was a regular buyer of books [whose] collection was not very large but it was broad and varied" (1998: 42). In the end, the Nolan children were first sent to the Christian Brothers School in Synge Street, where they were viciously bullied by their schoolmates. Brian and his brothers had previously had little if no contact with other children their age so, at least initially, they felt overwhelmed by life at school. More than half a century later, Ciarán reflected on the shocking experience of being suddenly sent to school after an infancy of freedom:

> It is very difficult to give an accurate account of the pain we suffered from the huge upheaval in our lives. After the years of complete freedom—with little association with other boys, with no precedent for a stranger having the right to threaten us or give us

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[27] Mike Cronin (2003) examines this issue by looking at the Aonach Tailteann events, which were sporting and artistic festivities organized by the Cumann na nGaedheal government in 1924, 1928 and 1932. As for Cumann na nGaedheal's linguistic policies, see Meehan (2010), Knirck (2014) or Farrell (2017), to mention but a few.

> homework to do, with no habit of preparing lessons or a need to get them right—there are no words to describe the hardship we suffered. (*Ibid*: 62)

In spite of such a rough start, the Nolan boys soon overcame these hardships and were later sent to Blackrock College where, among others, they were taught English by Father McQuaid. Contrary to the Christian Brothers School, Blackrock College had a loosened stand on the use of Irish for teaching purposes, so lessons were mainly conducted in English. Not that this posed any sort of obstacle for Brian and his brothers, for all of them spoke Irish and English fluently. In fact, Irish was their mother tongue and it was the language spoken at home unless some member of their mother's side of the family was present. This, Cronin asserts, was mainly due to the fact that "Michael Nolan was a nationalist [whose] job as a civil servant prevented his giving political expression to his views" (1990: 6). Coincidentally enough, the Nolan children were first sent to school in 1923, when Cumann na nGaedheal's linguistic policies were already underway and the children were likely to receive a sound education through the medium of Irish. This was nevertheless difficult, since "by 1931, 38 per cent of teachers still had no formal qualification in Irish, while only 30 per cent were qualified to use Irish as a medium of instruction" (Ferriter 2005: 353).

O'Nolan first set foot in University College, Dublin in 1929; it was there that his literary career truly began. He took English, German and Irish, the latter being taught by renowned Gaelic League scholar Douglas Hyde, who was to become the first President of Ireland in 1937. He spent most of his university time, however, frequenting nearby pubs and, most famously, contributing substantially to the Literary and Historical Society, as Joyce himself had done thirty years earlier. His contributions were much in the line of what Myles na gCopaleen was to become later; a past Auditor of the Society, R.N. Coake, labeled him as "the best humorous speaker of [his] time" while P.J. Donovan remarked "the debating genius of Brian O'Nolan who was the best impromptu speaker the Society knew in those days" (qtd. in Ó Nualláin 1998: 93). His interest in serialized publications also became apparent during his university years, becoming a recurrent contributor to a university journal called *Comhthrom Féinne*. One of his most brilliant early pieces, the short story "Scenes in a Novel", was published in said journal under the pseudonym Brother Barnabas in 1934. He

also submitted a MA thesis in Irish on "Nature in Irish Poetry" in 1934, which "consisted merely of an anthology of Irish poems with a somewhat obvious critical commentary" (Cronin 1990: 73). It was initially rejected, so he had to revise and expand it before it eventually got accepted in 1935.

1934 also marked the start of his most entrepreneurial "literary" efforts to date alongside his brother Ciarán and close friend Niall Sheridan: the creation of a humorous magazine, *Blather,* and the birth of a new pseudonym: the Count O'Blather. This periodical had as its aims "the fostering of graft and corruption in public life, the furtherance of cant and hypocrisy, the encouragement of humbug and hysteria, the glorification of greed and gombeenism" (O'Brien 1988: 97). Incidentally, *Blather* stands as the first instance where O'Nolan tackled the issue of Irish politics. In the first editorial, Count O'Blather remarks that "in regard to politics, all our rat-like cunning will be directed toward making Ireland fit for the depraved readers of *Blather* to live in […]. We have de Valera and the entire Fianna Fail Cabinet in our pocket; we have O'Duffy in a sack" (*ibid*). Unlike *Cruiskeen Lawn,* however, *Blather* shows no examples of serious political commentary; apart from a mocking illustration of de Valera's head pasted onto the body of an athlete, Count O'Blather did not linger much in the realm of politics. John Wyse Jackson rightly claims, however, that "nothing within *Blather's* pages can be taken at face value" and that "the editorials are pre-Mylesian flights of fancy" (1988: 96); indeed, *Blather,* which only run for five months due to financial impediments, seems to have served as a breeding ground for the more mature and sophisticated Myles na gCopaleen.

He entered the Civil Service in 1935 and, upon the sudden death of his father in 1937, he basically became the family's breadwinner. This moment signaled a watershed not only in his personal career, but also in his literary and professional sphere. As Cronin has remarked:

> Now, in accepting responsibility for the family's welfare, he was, consciously or not, divorcing himself from one of the great myths of the 19th and 20th centuries; and one which James Joyce was said to have lived by. This was the perception of the artist as one whose primary concern is to find the mode of life which will best serve his art;

> even one who may, if he is thoroughgoing enough, acknowledge no duty but to his art. (1990: 89)

2.3 The Emergency: 1939-45

This section traces the development of the period in Irish history known as The Emergency, the denomination given in Ireland at the time to the broader conflict of the Second World War. Firstly, a brief political, social and economic background to the Second World War, with a particular focus on Ireland and the international scene during the years leading up to the conflict, will be presented. Secondly, the state of the country during The Emergency will be discussed in further detail, placing special emphasis on how the governing political body decided to adopt an unyielding policy of neutrality during the conflict and the domestic and international consequences derived from it. This section will also include a brief discussion of the set of pieces of emergency legislation which came to be known as The Emergency Powers Act of 1939, devoting particular attention to social and cultural questions such as censorship of publications and rationing of basic goods, aspects which were frequently brought up and discussed in *Cruiskeen Lawn.* Finally, the importance of The Emergency in O'Nolan's life and career will be also taken into account so as to reinforce the association between the author's work and the context in which it emerged.

2.3.1 Background

The Emergency was the product of both national and international circumstances; it essentially sprang from the clash of national self-assertion and international pressure—particularly on the part of Britain—to partake directly in the conflict. As Foster puts it: "Irish neutrality in the Second World War should be seen against the background of international politics between the wars, as well as of Anglo-Irish relations" (1989: 559).

On 2 July 1936, being still restrained by the political limitations of the Free State but with the Constitution already in the works, de Valera expounded to the League of Nations his views on how smaller states should act in response to warmongering greater nations:

> Peace is dependent upon the will of the great states. All the small states can do, if the statesmen of the greater states fail in their duty, is resolutely to determine that they will not become the tools of any great power, and that they will resist with whatever strength that they may possess any attempt to force them into a war against their will. (Qtd. in Moynihan 1980: 285)

Neutrality had been Ireland's official predisposition ever since the end of the War of Independence,[28] when the signatories of the treaty provided for the inclusion of Article 49, which stated that "save in the case of actual invasion, the Irish Free State (Saorstát Eireann) shall not be committed to active participation in any war without the assent of the Oireachtas"; that is, English wars were no longer Irish wars.[29] Be that as it may, the Economic War against Britain unleashed protectionist policies which resulted in a boost to national industry and a reinforcement of the value of farming; overall, ideals of economic and cultural self-sufficiency and introspectiveness were stressed and a turn to a "complete state centralization on the part of Irish governments" (Ferriter 2005: 359) was perceptible.[30] These were the first signs of neutrality for the easily predictable Second World War, which de Valera soon foresaw: "mindful of the war clouds gathering over Europe, his principal preoccupation was those elements in the Treaty providing that the British would retain the

[28] John A. Murphy (2000: 9) goes even further back in time to suggest that Ireland had always attempted to pursue neutral stances regarding international conflicts: "slogans such as 'Neither King nor Kaiser but Ireland' and organisations like the Irish Neutrality League (1914) seem to indicate a neutrality lineage in the early revolutionary period [as well as] Sir Roger Casement's proposal (1913) for the neutralisation of an independent Ireland".

[29] Notwithstanding this, Irish voluntary participation in the Second World War was substancial, both in terms of military and labor force. According to O'Connor (2014), Irish soldiers who volunteered to fight for Britain during the war amount to 42,665; Doherty (1999) offers the slightly higher of around 60,000 soldiers. Ó Drisceoil (2004) adds that the amount of Irish soldiers and civilians who traveled and stayed in Britain during the war amounted to about 200,000 people.

[30] Even after the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War (1936), the Fianna Fáil executive was encouraged by Fine Gael to officially recognize Franco's Government as legitimate since he stood for the defeat of Communism and the affirmance of Christian values. To this, de Valera responded that "if you recognise a new government, you should recognise it when there is some clear indication of stability […]. The question of our sympathies does not enter into this matter; it is a question of what is the usual practice, what is our right in the matter and what is our duty" (qtd. in Moynihan 1980: 288). He also pointed out that Franco's upholding of Christian values was not altogether a valid reason for Ireland to intervene militarily or otherwise, as even the Vatican had refused to take sides.

right to harbor and other facilities" (Fanning 2015: 172-173). He made this his political priority, both at a national and international level, and bluntly expressed his concerns in front of the Dáil on 18 June 1936:

> Our position is particularly complicated. If we held the whole of our territory […] we would strengthen ourselves so as to maintain our neutrality. We would strengthen ourselves so that we might resist any attempt to make use of our territory for attack upon any other nation […] But we are in this position, that some of our ports are occupied, and, although we cannot be actively committed in any way, the occupation of those ports will give, to any foreign country that may desire a pretext, an opportunity of ignoring our neutrality. (Qtd. in Moynihan 1980: 270)

In saying this, he also hinted at how partition was a double-edged sword that could cause damage to Ireland and England in equal measure: on the one hand, Ireland would be at the mercy of the Germans if Northern Ireland fell; on the other, if Ireland was invaded, it would no longer be able to act as Britain's rearguard and would turn into the backdoor through which the Germans could slip into the heart of the Allied power. De Valera's response was the hastening of the Constitution, in which he made sure to allocate a space for neutrality. Murphy (2000: 11) intelligently points out that the Constitution "did not, it is true, enshrine neutrality as a fundamental principle but it could be argued that it was hinted here and there". One of such hints was Article 28: "War shall not be declared and the State shall not participate in any war save with the assent of Dáil Éireann". By enacting the Constitution before the war actually broke out, de Valera was able, as Taoiseach, to determine Ireland's position within, or without, the war with total precision. At the same time, he was able to prevent a potential German invasion given the fact that, at least by the book, Ireland would be neutral—not only militarily but also territorially speaking—and would consequently offer no special support whatsoever to any of the belligerent sides. The recovery of the ports previously held by the British on 11 July 1938 signaled the success of de Valera's strive for independence and right for self-assertion in exchange for the famous one-off payment of £10 million to Britain; as Robert Cole indicates, "the only concession was that if the British agreed to relinquish all

claims to the ports, the Irish *might* feel more benevolent towards them if war came" (2006: 6). The ports were never again under British control; Irish national sovereignty, and its claim for neutrality, reigned supreme during the war.

2.3.2 The State of Emergency and Neutrality

On 1 September 1939, Germany invaded Poland. In response, the then British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain declared war on Germany on 3 September. On 2 September, de Valera summoned the Dáil for a hurried emergency session. In a short speech given during said session, he claimed that "it is necessary at every step to protect our own interests in that regard, to avoid giving to any of the belligerents any due cause, and proper cause, of complaint" (qtd. in Moynihan 1980: 418). To ensure full neutrality during the course of the war and the protection of the Irish people, the Taoiseach put forward two individual measures during that session: on the one hand, he proposed an amendment to the Constitution whereby Article 28 (3.3)[31] now specified that "time of war" did not necessarily imply that Ireland had to be a belligerent force; on the other hand, the amendment of the Constitution served the purpose of enacting what came to be known as The Emergency Powers Act, thus granting the State quasi-absolute powers over specific areas previously unaffected by governmental involvement. De Valera himself acknowledged in that very speech that the Act "does undoubtedly confer on the Government very extensive powers, powers which a representative government of a democratic state could ask for only in times of emergency such as that in which we are" (*ibid:* 419).

The original Act, which was amended and extended on eight occasions for the duration of the war, consisted of thirteen sections. Section 2, "Emergency orders", specifies a total of sixteen items which were of potential and irrevocable application by the

[31] "Nothing in this Constitution shall be invoked to invalidate any law enacted by the Oireachtas which is expressed to be for the purpose of securing the public safety and the preservation of the State in time of war or armed rebellion".

government. Some of them involved censorship[32] or rationing,[33] two of the most important aspects informing many wartime *Cruiskeen Lawn* columns. Empowered with this extraordinary authority, the Government could restrict at will any material deemed for publication, particularly within the realm of the public press. This, according to Ó Drisceoil resulted in "a highly compromised democratic context [where] free speech, a free press, the right of the minority to challenge the majority and so were […] swept aside" (2004: 186). The atmosphere generated by the Act "was cautiously authoritarian and necessarily introspective, even solipsistic" (Foster 1989: 562). The *Irish Times* in particular suffered a severe censorial examination of each of its issues before publication partly because of O'Nolan's provocations to the censors with his comic accounts of the war in *Cruiskeen Lawn* (Ó Drisceoil 2000: 160) and also because of the fact that R.M. Smyllie, the then editor of the newspaper, "evaded the Censor by cheering on the allies as neutrally as he could—or, as Myles put it, "played with his Panzerdivisionen"' (Wyse Jackson 1999: 9). Overall, however, reports of the war were rendered as neutral as possible as a result of the Act, to the extent that even the journalists' style of writing evidenced it. For instance, relevant figures during the course of the war were referred to honorifically regardless of their side in the war while, in turn, opinions or judgments of any kind were systematically omitted. Smyllie's editorial entitled "A Historic Moment", published in the *Irish Times* and reporting a Hitler-Mussolini meeting, is one of the many examples of this tendency:

> For more than three hours Herr Hitler and Signor Mussolini conferred in the Duce's armoured train. The Fuehrer was accompanied by Herr von Ribbentrop, Herr von Mackensen, the German Ambassador in Rome; Dr. Dietrich, the Nazi Press chief, and General von Kietel, Chief of Staff, who attended the later stages of the conference. With the Duce were Count Ciano, Signor Dino Alfieri, Signor Bastianini, who was

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[32] Regarding censorship, sections h) and i) of the Act are especially relevant: "(h) authorise and provide for the censorship, restriction, control, or partial or complete suspension of communication […]; (i) make provision for preserving and safeguarding the secrecy of official documents and information and for controlling the publication of official information and for prohibiting the publication or spreading of subversive statements and propaganda, and authorise and provide for the control and censorship of newspapers and periodicals".

[33] Such as, for instance, section c) of the Emergency orders: "authorise and provide for the control, regulation, restriction, or prohibition of the import or of the export of particular kinds or classes of goods".

> Italian Ambassador in London, and General Nacci. The official bulletin, which was published after the meeting, vouchsafes very little information. (*IT,* October 5, 1940)[34]

Censorship was so widespread and normalized that it extended to day-to-day conversations, with the result that the war became "a subject to be cautiously adverted to in most company; and such locutions as 'the present emergency' or 'the present global conflict' […] kept it at a psychological distance" (Cronin 1990: 131). Shortages of basic goods were also a determinant factor of the social fabric of the Emergency: "Dublin was a city of contrasts. The tempting availability of luxuries was combined with the real difficulty of getting hold of the staples of everyday life" (Wills 2007: 245). These included basic food shortages like tea, wheat and sugar or energy sources such as coal, kerosene or electricity; in all cases, shortages led to a rapid rise in the price of said items, which restricted their general availability. A lack of petrol caused the number of cars registered in the country to fall dramatically: "7840 private cars licensed in Ireland in 1939, falling to a mere 240 in 1941 as a result of The Emergency" (Ferriter 2005: 373).[35]

But neutrality ensured that Ireland remained in a better state than most European countries overall. Indeed, as Geoffrey Roberts suggests, neutrality "protected the Irish people from the perils of war, asserted the country's sovereignty and independence from Britain, and, crucially, maintained the unity of the state at a time of great national danger" (2000: 165). It has also been seen by Robert Fisk (1985) and John P. Duggan (1985) as the ultimate expression of Irish nationalism. "Irish neutrality", writes Murphy, "worked on two levels—on the one hand, the legal, the formal, the public manifestation of neutrality with strict censorship and pedantic observation of protocol; on the other, the constant exercise of covert, benevolent co-operation with Britain and the Allies" (2000: 14). The fact that there existed a sort of under-the-counter *quid pro quo* between Britain and Ireland is essential to understand the period of the Emergency, and it was—to an extent—an evolution of de Valera's pre-Free State policy of external association. He hinted as much during a Seanad speech given on 7 February 1939, only seven months before the outbreak of the war: "we want to be on friendly

[34] When unsigned, all articles quoted from the Irish Times will be abbreviated "*IT*". Smyllie's editorials were unsigned, so rather than quoting them as Smyllie's, Smyllie's authorship will be specified in-text.
[35] For more on wartime shortages see Wills (2007), Evans (2014), and Durnin and Miller (2016), among others.

relations with Britain […]. Our situation is that we are two islands off the continent. Our very geographical position suggests that there are relations […] which make it possible for us to have closer contact than we would have with other peoples" (qtd. in Moynihan 1980: 373). Neutrality was not contested by many—it was, in fact, agreed on by all the political parties and the majority of the population. Such was the silent but overall unanimous assent to the policy of neutrality that "for the remainder of the war Fine Gael fully supported neutrality as the only game in town. Deputy leader James Dillon, however, spoke out against it in the Dáil in July 1941 and again at the party's *árd fheis* in February 1942" (Ó Drisceoil 2004: 176).[36] The result of his internal party conflict was his subsequent forced resignation and further internal rupture in Fine Gael, much to Fianna Fáil's satisfaction.

The foundations of neutrality, and consequently Ireland's national security, were shaken on two particular occasions. The first threatening event occurred shortly after the outburst of the conflict, and it involved Britain's wartime Prime Ministers: Chamberlain and Winston Churchill, respectively. On June 28, 1940, Chamberlain put forward an offer of Irish national unity which would effectively end partition provided that Ireland joined the war against Hitler. This proposal was not welcome either by Ireland or Northern Ireland. On the one hand, Aiken, by then Minister for Defence, was blunt to Fine Gael's Frank MacDermott (who, like Dillon, criticized neutrality heavily and was involved in talks with Northern Irish authorities and hoped for the end of partition) on this regard: "MacDermott, get this clear, we are never going to abandon our neutrality" (qtd. in Bowman 1982: 237); on the other hand, Northern Irish Prime Minister Viscount Craigavon told Chamberlain that he felt the offer to be treachery to Ulster, who had always remained loyal to the United Kingdom (Bew 2007: 469). Negotiations between de Valera's government and Britain spanned several weeks but eventually ceased.[37] A similar attempt took place almost two years later, on December 8,

[36] James Dillon (1902-86, Fine Gael) was a member of the National Centre Party and, later (when it merged with Cumann na nGaedheal) of Fine Gael. Dillon abandoned Fine Gael in 1942 due to the party's decision to support de Valera's neutrality and ran as an independent politician. He gained a seat in the first coalition government (1948) and was appointed Minister of Agriculture. He rejoined Fine Gael in 1953 and was appointed Minister of Agriculture once again during the 1954 coalition government. After becoming president of Fine Gael, he nonetheless failed to become Taoiseach in 1965 against Lemass' Fianna Fáil, thus stepping down from the presidency of the party.

[37] Trying to determine the reason for this, Former Fine Gael Taoiseach (1981-2, 1982-7) Garret FitzGerald (1926-2011) wrote in the *Irish Times* on January 29, 2005, that "in finally deciding to reject this proposal, he may have been influenced by the fact that the British government had not consulted the Northern Ireland

1941, when Churchill implicitly offered de Valera to put an end to partition if Ireland eventually decided to join the war: "Now is your chance, now or never, a nation once again" (de Valera 2004: 212).[38] Admittedly, victory for the Allies was about to become almost a certainty after the United States joined the war in 1941 following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, so Churchill clearly had the upper hand—the offer was, however, rejected once again. De Valera's determination of "asserting the rights of small nations to be masters of their own political and military destinies" (Ferriter 2005: 388) prevailed, much to his future political detriment and admiration at the same time. Neutrality thus remained top on de Valera's list of political priorities: "Ending partition had never been a priority for de Valera—not in 1921 or in 1940: the self-determination of Ireland—by which was meant the twenty-six counties—along with the revival of Irish had always been his key objectives" (Bartlett 2010: 454).

The second threat to neutrality took place shortly after Hitler's death on April 30, 1945 and was led by de Valera himself. Having dismissed any sort of official approach or contact with any of the Axis or Allied powers throughout the war, he decided to visit the German embassy in Dublin on May 2, 1945, to pay his respects to the German ambassador, Eduard Hempel, on the occasion of Hitler's death. It was, Ferriter writes, "very much a lone decision by de Valera, and against the advice and wishes of his officials at the Department of External Affairs" and "won him few friends anywhere and placed him in the company of dictators Salazar of Portugal and Franco of Spain" (*ibid:* 389). Nevertheless, as Fanning (2015: 195) argues, "it must be placed in the context of de Valera's sense of outrage at what he saw as the unprofessional conduct of the American minister, David Gray". Even though the United States had been neutral during the war prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor, Gray had been an outspoken supporter of the Allies and, by order of the then President of the United States Franklin Delano Roosevelt, tried to facilitate British-American relations during the war (Bew 2007: 464). Gray had demanded that de Valera allow the Allies to take control

government about the proposal—and also, perhaps, by memories of how British promises of home rule for Ireland to John Redmond had later been abandoned" (2005).

[38] It has been suggested (Foster 1989: 561), however, that Churchill's "a nation once again" did not imply a political offer to unify the island, but rather a redemption of Ireland's soul and a humble assertion of morality and humanity towards Britain.

of the German embassy before the end of the war; de Valera refused to comply and decided to uphold neutrality until the ceasing of hostilities.

The negative international consequences of neutrality soon began to be made apparent, the first of which was Churchill’s BBC victory speech on May 13, 1945. Praising the actions of thousands of Irish volunteers “who hastened to the battlefront to prove their ancient valor”, he then turned to de Valera and scorned Ireland’s neutrality policy. He placed emphasis on the Taoiseach’s determination not to join the conflict in 1941 and yield the ports back to the British to prevent potential flanking maneuvers by the Germans:

> This was indeed a deadly moment in our life, and if it had not been for the loyalty and friendship of Northern Ireland we should have been forced to come to close quarters with Mr. de Valera or perish forever from the earth. However, with a restraint and poise to which, I say, history will find few parallels, we never laid a violent hand upon them, which at times would have been quite easy and quite natural, and left the de Valera Government to frolic with the German and later with the Japanese representatives to their heart's content. (Qtd. in Coogan 2004: 227)

De Valera responded three days later, on May 16, 1945:

> Mr. Churchill makes it clear that, in certain circumstances, he would have violated our neutrality and that he would justify his action by Britain’s necessity. It seems strange to me that Mr. Churchill does not see that this, if accepted, would mean Britain’s necessity would become a moral code and that when this necessity became sufficiently great, other people’s rights were not to count […]. It is indeed fortunate that Britain's necessity did not reach the point when Mr. Churchill would have acted. All credit to him that he successfully resisted the temptation which, I have no doubt, many times assailed him in his difficulties and to which I freely admit many leaders might have easily succumbed. It is indeed; hard for the strong to be just to the weak, but acting justly always has its rewards. […] By resisting his temptation in this instance, Mr. Churchill, instead of adding another horrid chapter to the already bloodstained record

> of the relations between England and this country, has advanced the cause of international morality an important step—one of the most important, indeed, that can be taken on the road to the establishment of any sure basis for peace. (Qtd. in Moynihan 1980: 474-5)

De Valera's diplomatic response, much more moderate and obliging in tone than Churchill's, has been generally regarded as "dignified" (Fanning 2015: 197) and "a masterful assertion of Ireland's right to sovereignty, independence and its own foreign policy" (Bartlett 2010: 465).[39] De Valera had beaten Churchill in their battle of words but public opinion after the Emergency still remained highly polarized: on the one hand, there still existed a solid political consensus regarding the boons of neutrality (national security and relative economic and social stability) and the Taoiseach's "resolute, cool-headed handling of affairs in these dangerous months [which] won him widespread respect and support in Ireland" (Brown 1981: 172); on the other hand, de Valera's visit to the German embassy was a "gesture [that] appalled many" (Foster 1989: 564) and his refusal to hand over war criminals were any of them to wash ashore in Ireland was met with fury and disappointment by the Allies. Besides, the horrors of the Nazi concentration camps were starting to spread all over Europe and given the loosening of emergency censorship by the end of the war, a certain section of the Irish people began to become critical of neutrality.

The future for Ireland after the war was, however, at worst dreary, and at best uncertain. Aiken bleakly hinted as much after the war: "This is a small country. It has a small population which is still dwindling, and limited national resources […]. Our economic position was relatively stagnant for a long period before the war. It has not since improved" (qtd. in Fanning 1978: 394). During the war, Ireland's local preoccupations had been restricted to halting emigration, managing shortages and restricting the flow of external information on the war; otherwise they remained much the same as throughout the Free State period. The Gaelicization of Irish culture and society, which was paradoxically not incompatible with sluggish—yet existent—industrial and technological progress, remained a

[39] Murphy (2000: 14) has remarked how "Churchill's vituperative strictures on Irish neutrality in his victory speech, and […] what was widely perceived as de Valera's masterly response, that of a dignified David against a blundering Goliath" contributed positively to the solidification of neutrality in public opinion.

top priority for the Fianna Fáil government and would continue to do so for the successive Fine Gael administration.[40] Censorship and neutrality had irrevocably distanced Ireland from the continent; in the words of Belfast-born poet Louis MacNiece (1907-63): "Going to Dublin was changing worlds—a dance of lights in the Liffey, bacon and eggs and Guinness, laughter in the slums and salons, gossip sufficient to the day. Dublin was hardly worried by the war; her old preoccupations were still her preoccupations" (qtd. in Wills 2007: 76).

2.3.3 Flann and Myles

For O'Nolan, the 1930s had meant both economic independence but also a ponderous and ever-increasing burden of responsibility of his family and his job. Unlike Joyce or Beckett, O'Nolan did not choose to leave his mother country and stoically took those responsibilities to heart. He was, in a sense, the antithesis of Joyce, the ideally unbound, free-roaming avant-garde artist made myth as Stephen Dedalus in *A Portrait of the Artist* and *Ulysses* (1922):

> The difference was that Stephen had, in fact, flown by those nets. He had rebelled and escaped; and through transforming himself into Leopold Bloom he had, as it were, become a member of the human rather than just the Irish race. They [O'Nolan and his contemporaries], however, were, in varying degree, stuck […]. They confronted the same pastors and teachers, the same vulgarities, half-truths and nationalist distortions, rendered even more objectionable by the victory of nationalism and the Sinn Féin philosophy. (Cronin 1990: 55)

He felt, therefore, compelled "to find a stance in relation to Ireland which would enable him to make a career in it—to some extent even of it" (*ibid:* 57). He was, in fact, off to a good start: he had emerged from UCD in a haze of relative success and admiration of his peers

[40] These policies are best represented on the one hand by de Valera's 1943 St Patrick's Day Speech, also dubbed "The Ireland That We Dreamed Of" speech; and on the other by the establishment of the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies (1940), headed by Nobel Prize-winning Austrian physicist Erwin Schrodinger (1887-1961). Both events were widely commented during the Emergency and were given particular attention by O'Nolan himself in his column.

with a more than guaranteed future in the Irish Civil Service owing to his condition of native speaker of Irish. He had also been appointed Private Secretary to the Minister for Health and Local Government in 1937 (Séan T. O'Kelly, P. J. Ruttledge and Séan MacEntee would be the Ministers he worked for during his civil service career) which meant at the time a substantial £50 salary increase. As for his literary career, he had published widely while in college and was starting to make valuable contacts and acquaintances in the literary world, especially later in the decade during his literary reunions at the Palace Bar and others haunts. But the event that marked O'Nolan's literary career in the years leading up to the Emergency—and in a sense laid down O'Brien's structural style, which would later be reconfigured in *Cruiskeen Lawn*—was doubtlessly his first novel, *At Swim-Two-Birds,* which took about five years to be completed.[41] *At Swim-Two-Birds,* finally published in 1939 after a prolonged and weary revision and publication process, has been succinctly defined as a "riotous matryoshka" (Borg et al 2014: 3); it is, more generally, "a late-modernist, transitional text which critiques both realism and modernism in an openly deconstructive manner, and in the process comes to the brink of an exciting new aesthetic" (Hopper 2009: 13). This new aesthetic was the juxtaposition of everyday trivia and Irish myth which he accurately represented by means of an expertly crafted mixture of Dublin working-class Hiberno-English speech. The novel tells the story of a young Irish student-writer who spends most of his spare time in bed, writing stories about an assortment of characters from diverse backgrounds (Irish myths or the Wild West, among others) whose author is not the young Irish writer but one of his creations, another author named Trellis who has the same sedentary tendencies as his creator. The student-writer's famous theory of alternate beginnings and endings for a book marks a rupture with traditional modes of narration and logical sequencing

[41] I have addressed the matter of the origins of *At Swim-Two-Birds* elsewhere (Asensio Peral 2015) with a particular focus on the short story, "Scenes in a Novel" (1934). Murphy and Hopper (2013) have claimed that this short story is the precedent of *At Swim-Two-Birds,* a kind of proving ground where to test his newly acquired metafictional notions. Although it is not within the scope of this dissertation article to analyze "Scenes in a Novel", it must be mentioned that it contains many of the metafictional elements present in *At Swim-Two-Birds:* the use of the *mise en abyme* technique, a despotic novelist and characters who rebel against their creator. More recently (Asensio Peral 2018) I have also tackled the structural influence of Aldous Huxley's novel *Point Counter Point* (1928) on *At Swim-Two-Birds* and how the *mise en abyme* narrative sequences present in the novel might have been derived from Huxley's work. Caoimhghín Ó Brolcháin corroborates this view: "there were portents of the germination of *At Swim-Two-Birds* at least, in his subconscious, long before the masterpiece was set in print" (1997: 9).

of events: "One beginning and one ending for a book was a thing I did not agree with. A good book may have three openings entirely dissimilar and inter-related only in the prescience of the author, or for that matter one hundred times as many endings" (O'Brien 2003: 9). Some contemporary readings of *At Swim-Two-Birds* have nonetheless moved away from Hopper's consideration of the novel as a "liminal text on the edge of a new paradigm" (2009: 13) and have instead remarked its fragmentary nature, more in keeping with post-modernist tendencies:

> The fragments of *At Swim-Two-Birds* are and are not colloquial fragments; they are not the shards produced by the rupturing of a pre-existing totality […]. Rather, the fragmentation found in *At Swim-Two-Birds* is a plural speech of dissymmetry and irreversibility. It is a non-progressive series of beginnings that never present a secure foundation as there is always something that came before […] Each fragment is both wholly independent as it functions as a separate aside, and absolutely part of a whole, as it is a section in a larger work. (Long 2014: 10)[42]

Fragmentation in *At Swim-Two-Birds* is best reflected by its intricately metafictional, matryoshka-like narrative design, encompassing different levels of narration thus making *At Swim-Two-Birds* "not one book, but four books in one" (Gallagher 1992: 128). The layout of these levels is predominantly vertical; that is, the young student's life comprises the first level and then he creates Trellis, whose residence—called the Red Swan Hotel—delimits the second level. He, in turn, forces some of the characters he has written into life to live on different floors of the Hotel, who make up the third level. Finally, the fourth level of narration is created when Trellis rapes Sheila, a character of his own creation, and as a result Orlick is born straight into adolescence and equipped with writing skills.

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[42] It is not within the scope of this dissertation to explore O'Nolan's novelistic canon in any great length, but it is important to point out that the debate surrounding the encasement of *At Swim-Two-Birds* into modernism or post-modernism is still open. Some (Anspaugh, 1992; McMullen, 1993; MacPiarais, 2007; Flor, 2011; Long, 2014) argue for a consideration of *At Swim-Two-Birds* as a paradigmatic post-modernist text. Others (Esty, 1995; Hopper, 2009; MacDonald and Murphet, 2014) resort to viewing O'Nolan's first novel within a clear-cut—even if anticipatory of post-modernism—modernist framework.

The disruptive structure of *At Swim-Two-Birds* also reflects its author's predisposition toward literary authorship and, to some extent, toward his own public projection. His first novel was published under the pseudonym "Flann O'Brien", which was to become his most famous and recognized persona in later years. The pseudonym, necessary due to his civil servant status, was chosen by Longman's from a list provided by O'Nolan himself: the names Flann and O'Brien reflected the novel's two-headed aesthetic of Celtic myth and modern Ireland, respectively: "the choice of names reveals some of the tensions underlying O'Brien's ambivalent attitude to Irish literature and language" (Hopper 2009: 24-5).[43] Despite ample praise from towering twentieth-century literary figures such as Joyce, Dylan Thomas and Graham Greene, *At Swim-Two-Birds* sold poorly: around 240 copies were sold before Hitler's Blitz blasted Longman's London warehouse.

In a February 14, 1940 letter to Armenian-American writer William Saroyan—whom he met shortly after leaving UCD—O'Nolan described *At Swim-Two-Birds* as a "a bum book" (2018: 68) destined to live under the shadow of the Joycean masterpieces, both in Ireland and elsewhere.[44] He also added in the letter that he was "writing a very funny book about bicycles and policemen" which would "be perhaps good and earn a little money quietly" (*ibid*). He was talking about *The Third Policeman,* which was written between 1939 and 1940 but published posthumously, in 1967. *The Third Policeman* tells the story of a yet again unnamed narrator[45] who—with the help of his partner and long-term co-worker and roommate John Divney—kills and robs an old man, Phillip Mathers, with the aim of subtracting the contents of a mysterious black box. Contrary to *At Swim-Two-Birds,* whose structure has been established as being vertical in nature, *The Third Policeman* follows a circular structure: after killing Mathers, Noman spends most of the novel being held prisoner in 'The Parish', an unspecified location resembling the Irish countryside, by three mad

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[43] O'Nolan's insistence on a variety of pseudonyms has been seen as "the almost schizophrenic dismantlement of any unitary core of artistic responsibility into partial and more provisional identities" (MacDonald and Murphet 2014: 2). This tendency is worthy of emphasis because it was to be continued with *The Third Policeman* as Flann O'Brien and expanded into the ever-growing, limitlessly imaginative persona of Myles na gCopaleen in *Cruiskeen Lawn.*

[44] Aidan Higgins's account of a meeting with O'Nolan shows how he grew with time to abhor his first novel: "When civilly asked whom he had to thank for this bounty I replied as civilly, 'Another admirer of *At Swim-Two-Birds*', not aware of how much he detested the novel, or its fame" (2011: 29).

[45] Following Hopper (2009), this anonymous main character is often referred to as "Noman" in most academic contributions on *The Third Policeman.*

policemen who make little if no sense to Noman. In the end, he discovers that he has to go once again through the same series of events alongside his partner Divney, arriving at the conclusion that 'The Parish' is nothing but a self-created hell and that he has been dead all along. In another letter sent to Saroyan on February 14, 1940, O'Nolan said of the plot that "it is made clear that this sort of thing goes on for ever—and there you are. It is supposed to be very funny but I don't know about that either . . . I think the idea of a man being dead all the time is pretty new" (O'Brien 2018: 69). *The Third Policeman* was not destined to enjoy even the very brief success of *At Swim-Two-Birds.* He sent the book under the title of *Hell Goes Round and Round* to America through Harold Matson, Saroyan's publishing manager, but failed to find any willing publisher; the same thing happened with Longman's, whose reply specifically stated that "we realize the author's ability but think that he should become less fantastic and in this new novel he is more so" (qtd. in Cronin 1990: 111). It was only natural, then, that he felt a strong sense of disappointment after his first novel was selling so poorly and his second novel had failed to get into print. All of O'Nolan's friends and Palace cronies were aware to a certain extent that *The Third Policeman* existed and was nearing completion, so O'Nolan made a wide assortment of excuses for its sudden disappearance: having left it on a tramcar, on a train or in the Dolphin Hotel were various of the different explanations he gave for what is essentially a very common occurrence among writers; that is, having a manuscript rejected by a publishing house.

It was in the midst of this discouraging and generally bleak context of his life that he stumbled across what would become a long-running career as a columnist in the *Irish Times.* The process that led to the birth of Myles na gCopaleen and *Cruiskeen Lawn* spawned over the course of roughly a year and a half, and it involved several Irish literati such as Séan O'Faolain, Frank O'Connor, Patrick Kavanagh or Maurice Walsh, among others. It all started, as recounted by Cronin (1990: 118-23), in early 1939, when O'Nolan and his friend Sheridan intervened bluntly in a controversy about an Abbey play by Frank O'Connor, which had been reviewed negatively by the *Irish Times* and others critics while being starkly defended by Séan O'Faolain. O'Nolan and Sheridan sent letters to the editor for approximately two weeks under the pseudonym Flann O'Brien, which he was about to use for *At Swim-Two-Birds.* A year later, O'Nolan, Sheridan and Niall Montgomery, another future contributor to *Cruiskeen Lawn,* became involved in more controversy, this time

surrounding the production of Antón Chekhov's *Three Sisters* (written in 1900 and premiered in 1901) and its general public rejection. On this occasion, a greater range of pseudonyms were used—F. O'Brien, Lir O'Connor, Paul Desmond or Luna O'Connor were some of them. A month later, on July 20, 1930, Patrick Kavanagh's review of *The Hill is Mine* (1940), a novel by Irish best-seller writer Maurice Walsh, appeared on the *Irish Times.* This, together with Kavanagh's poem "Spraying the Potatoes", published just a week later, provoked an outburst of comic letters to the editor where O'Nolan and his friends poked fun at Kavanagh's poetry and literary thought.[46] In view of this—and aided by Sheridan's recommendations and arrangements—Smyllie interviewed O'Nolan at the Palace Bar and by all accounts liked him, with the result that both agreed on the serial publication of the column starting on October 4, 1940. He signed the first column as "An Broc" but proceeded to write under the pseudonym Myles na gCopaleen for the rest of his career in the *Irish Times.*

2.4 Years of Stagnation: 1945-54

This section deals with the years following the Second World War and Ireland's slow emergence from its emergency lockdown in the political, social and economic realms. Firstly, a picture of the immediate postwar Ireland, often referred to as "De Valera's Ireland", will be briefly discussed in an introductory manner, taking into special consideration the causes of Ireland's painstaking economic growth, pre-modern infrastructure or incessant emigration. Secondly, attention will be shifted over to the political sphere through the tracing of Fianna Fáil's hegemony during the 1940s until 1948, when a coalition formed by different parties and led by Fine Gael managed to overthrow De Valera's sixteen-year-long reign and keep his party away from power until 1951. Thus, the 1951-4 (Fianna Fáil) and 1954-7 (Fine Gael in coalition) cabinets will also be part of the political analysis carried out in this chapter. Furthermore, the declaration of the Republic of Ireland (1949) and the Mother and Child Scheme (1950-1) will also be examined in this context. Finally, an account of O'Nolan's life

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[46] Kavanagh was not perceived as a highly sophisticated and learned writer by some of his Palace peers mainly because of his rural origins: "The publication of his prose book *The Green Fool* in 1938 had confirmed his image as a naïve and unlettered lyricist at whose expense the Palace Bar could be completely patronizing" (Cronin 1990: 119). Despite the *Irish Times* controversy, Kavanagh and O'Nolan enjoyed a cordial relationship and respected each other's work. Joseph Brooker's (2014) comparative study on both writers is illuminating in this regard.

during the late 1940s and 1950s will be offered with a particular focus on his work as a columnist for the *Irish Times* and some other sporadic contributions.

2.4.1 Postwar Ireland

The postwar world brought slow but steady recovery to most of the belligerent countries. Emerging victorious from the conflict, the United States put forward the Marshall Plan,[47] an initiative which aimed to supply European countries with substantial amounts of money for economic recuperation in the form of loans. This, coupled with internal policies of economic openness, expansionism and free-trade, accelerated the growth of most of the Western bloc countries. The material loss caused by the war, if not forgotten, was rapidly left behind in an attempt to return the main European countries to their prewar status of prosperity.

This was, however, not the case of Ireland. The country came out of the fog of war virtually unscathed owing to its neutrality policy but, in turn, "the end of the war left Ireland isolated: an outsider, if not a pariah, from the perspective of the victorious powers" (Fanning 2015: 217). Even though Ireland did actually apply for Marshall Aid and by 1950 had received circa £150,000,000 in grants and loans, the successive Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael coalition cabinets—unlike postwar European governments—failed to put them to economically productive use: "the country, it seemed, was left in the economic and cultural doldrums while much of the rest of Europe was benefiting from a sustained post-war boom" (Ferriter 2005: 462). International relations did not contribute to the cause either. Ireland's neutrality had been very unpopular across Britain from the very beginning—and even more so after Churchill's rise to power in 1940—but de Valera's visit to the German legate in Dublin had offended the United States as well; ever since then there existed a powerful anti-Irish sentiment in America which would not dissipate until John F. Kennedy became president in 1960. That might explain why Ireland was never invited in the first place to the 1945 San Francisco Conference from which the future United Nations would spawn. Demonstrating once again that "for de Valera, sovereignty was, as always, the yardstick" (Fanning 2015: 220), he rose the United Nations question to the Dáil following Russia, the

[47] For more on Ireland and the application of the Marshall Plan, see Whelan (2000, 2006) and Loftus (2010).

United States and the United Kingdom's willingness to let neutral states join the organization: "Is the independence and freedom which we have achieved and the independence and freedom to which we aspire for the whole country likely to be better guaranteed by our being a member of this organization or by our not being a member of it?" (qtd. in Moynihan 1980: 486). In the end, the Dáil motion was passed but Russia vetoed Ireland's admittance into the United Nations until 1955.

The doors to internationalization had been, so to speak, slammed in Ireland's face, so the only remaining option was to look inwards. De Valera's ideal of a self-sufficient and nostalgic Ireland was still possible because there was no way for the depraved materialism of the Western world to enter its shores.[48] Catholic doctrine thus imposed itself firmly through the 1950s and figures show that during the early 1960s, more than 88% of the population would trust the Church with official matters over any given government (Garvin 1982: 30-31); indeed, educational and health-related matters were regulated mostly by the Catholic echelons, so much so that they had the power to halt initiatives which would be contrary or discordant with Catholic principles. Economically, Fianna Fáil's policy of protectionism and self-sufficiency was upheld severely, and while the 1948 coalition government did actually begin to take steps in the direction of internationalization and welcoming of foreign investment, once Fianna Fáil got back to power in 1951 the process was immediately reverted and economic stagnation presided over the 1952 budget (Ó Grada 1997: 29). After neutrality was left behind, partition became once again the main item of interest regarding domestic policy, one over which de Valera seemed to have no control whatsoever. In October 1946, the Fianna Fáil government created a party sub-committee devoted to partition which Stephen Kelly has dismissed as "a tactical ploy […] to create the impression that the Fianna Fáil hierarchy were listening to party supporters' concerns on the lack of progress on partition" (2013: 110). Partition would, in fact, become virtually unattainable after the United Kingdom's Ireland Act, 1949, by which Northern Ireland would

[48] In the words of Cronin: "it is also apparent that the past offered, until the mid-1960s, a safe haven for Irish politicians and their people. It was often more reassuring to cast their minds back to landmark events and personalities, rather than face the reality of the complex problems that dogged Irish society in the decades following independence" (2003: 396).

never be able to leave the United Kingdom or become a part of the Republic unless given consent by Westminster.

While Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael competed over who devoted more attention to partition, economic malaise kept on driving Irish people away from their country, as well as a rejection of rural ways of life which "in the immediate post-war period quickened into what almost amounted to an Irish exodus" (Brown 1981: 211). Between 1951 and 1961, more than 400,000 people left Ireland; just in 1958, over 60,000 emigrated to the United Kingdom or the United States, among others (Foster 1989: 578). Emigrants mostly originated from the countryside, which despite constituting a central part of de Valera's nostalgic Ireland was for the most part in dire straits; the Underdeveloped Areas Act, 1952, whose purpose was "the provision of sites or premises for the establishment, development or maintenance in an undeveloped area of an industrial undertaking" was not working as expected. The countryside in general felt as a whole comparatively neglected, with plumbing and electricity still unavailable in many areas of the Gaeltacht. This necessity was decisively addressed in later years by local women, who were "instrumental in bringing long-needed change and innovation […] in the context of running water and electricity" (Ferriter 2005: 465). Agriculture remained the main productive source in the country with little if no innovation: "the dictation of the market abroad and the price-support system at home meant that extensive farming patterns reasserted themselves" (Foster 1989: 578). However, farm employment fell drastically, and economy was more unstable than ever. In short, it became evident that "despite the injections of post-war aid, the Irish economy was unfit to cope with the strains of independence" (*ibid*).

2.4.2 Hegemony overthrown: Irish politics during the 1950s

The economic instability of the postwar period was reflected in an increasingly growing, yet not fully developed, shift in the public mind regarding where it stood ideologically: "the fires of economic nationalism and the quest for cultural self-sufficiency were waning, but as yet they had not been replaced by a coherent set of values" (Brown 1981: 221). Fianna Fáil had been in power since 1932 and both their set of ideological values and economic measures were felt by many as stale, a sort of political anachronism which was unable to cope with the

rapid growth of other countries or cater for what was slowly becoming an urbanized nation. In fact, as Eoin Ó Broin remarks, "de Valera's successful articulation of Irish neutrality did much to divert attention from his own government's responsibility for its failure to tackle a stagnant economy" (2009: 140). The circumstances, then, could not be more unfavorable for de Valera's party: "Inflation, and revived emigration, disadvantaged the Fianna Fáil government further; and, given their long tenure of power, the radical ethos that had characterized their early days was no longer evident. Political realignment was on the way" (Foster 1989: 565). The problem was, however, that the opposition failed to offer any viable alternatives, to the point that some commentators have noted that "it is not immediately apparent what either stands for or where they should be placed on the left–right spectrum" (Gallagher and Marsh 2004: 408); or, as Foster has claimed, there was a marked "ideological differentiation between the two major parties [with] no difference in the social background of Dáil TDs on each side" (1989: 575).

Particularly during the 1950s, the original differences that separated both parties had started to become less visible. While Fine Gael's predecessor Cumann na nGaedheal had pursued policies "marked by commercialism, free trade, financial orthodoxy and a recognition of the state's economic relationship with Britain and the Commonwealth" (Farrell 2017: 294), their efforts had been strained once Fianna Fáil rose to power and started the Economic War with Britain. Moreover, the Second World War restricted international and economic relationships even further, and Fianna Fáil's trademark policy of protectionism reigned during the 1940s. This was to change during the late 1940s with the First Inter-Party Government but especially after the economically open-minded Séan Lemass became Tánaiste for the 1951 Fianna Fáil cabinet:

> From the early 1950s government thinking had been moving towards the idea of attracting foreign capital—always a sensitive political issue, given the rhetorical tradition of 'self-sufficiency' […]. [T]his meant that Lemass and those who shared in his conversion from protectionism had to tread carefully. But by 1955 economic expansion with foreign capital was becoming the accepted wisdom among all parties. (Foster 1989: 578)

By the late 1940s, the electorate had had enough of Fianna Fáil's hegemony: "the 1950s were also important in establishing that the Fianna Fáil monopoly on power could be broken and that, though sometimes difficult to manage, coalition governments could work effectively in Ireland" (Ferriter 2005: 464). In 1945, O'Faoláin had written that "the best one could say for Mr de Valera would be that his policy may be to give Ireland twenty years of undisturbed peace in order to stabilise and reconstruct" (qtd. in Garvin 2004: 37). That period of stabilization and reconstruction had ended after the Second World War and there started to be a need for different political approaches to socio-economic questions. Change came with the 1948 snap election, which de Valera expected to win yet again despite polls indicating a substantial loss of seats. In the 1944 election, fought while the Emergency was still ongoing, Fianna Fáil obtained 76 seats as opposed to Fine Gael's 28 and Labour's 8 seats. What de Valera had not predicted was the unstoppable rise of another republican party, Clann na Poblachta, in 1946, only two years after his triumph in the 1944 election. Clann na Poblachta was led by Séan MacBride.[49] MacBride had been chief of staff of the IRA in 1936, but he deserted its flanks after the desire of devising a Constitution was made public. In essence, the Clann was not dissimilar to Fianna Fáil, but their program "stressed social issues and the evils of emigration, unemployment and rising figures", their intent being to "capitalise on the sense of boredom born of Fianna Fáil's having been continually in office since 1932" (Fanning 2015: 223). Their approach was made clear in their original 1946 manifesto, which read as follows:

> For many years a large section of republican opinion has felt that republicans should take an active part in the political life of the Nation. […] Various causes combined to prevent political development. Not least of these was the low standard of political morality set by those who in the name of republicanism secured office. The continual inroads on elementary rights (quite apart from Emergency legislation) also rendered it difficult to instill in republicans confidence in political action. […] The nation is being weakened by the forced emigration of its youth. A small section has been enabled to

[49] Son of Major John MacBride (who was executed during the Rising) and Maud Gonne, William Butler Yeats's lifelong muse.

> accumulate enormous wealth while unemployment and low wages, coupled with an increased cost of living, are the lot of workers. (Qtd. in Keane 2007: 77)

With this manifesto, Clann na Poblachta was effectively discarding the need for military action (thus rejecting the IRA's activities completely) while at the same time embarking on a plausible left-wing political path which would lead them to win "over many former Fianna Fáil voters, especially from the ranks of embittered teachers who played a key role in its organization" (Fanning 2015: 223). The success of MacBride's party, fueled by Fianna Fáil dissidents, peaked when it defeated Fianna Fáil in the 1947 by-elections with the result that MacBride entered the Dáil. As Ó Broin notes, "the timing could not have been more favourable to the new party, as Fianna Fáil's republican and labour constituencies were becoming increasingly restless at the failure of the party to deliver on what they believed were fundamental issues" (2009: 143). In the 1948 elections, Clann na Poblachta achieved 8 seats. This was a decisive contribution to the 1948 inter-party government, which came to life by adding the seats of Fine Gael (31), Labour (14), Clann na Talmhan (7), National Labour Party (5) and Dillon (formerly from Fine Gael, he left the party after their decision to support Fianna Fáil's neutrality)—all of them united under the slogan "PUT THEM OUT". The sum of this *a priori* unthinkable teaming of parties was enough to overcome de Valera's Fianna Fáil, who was 6 seats short of a majority, thus forming the first inter-party government in the history of independent Ireland. "It was termed an 'inter-party' government", writes Michael Gallagher, "rather than a coalition, a title intended to convey that the participants would be operating fairly autonomously, as indeed they did" (2004: 48). The new government met in the Dáil for the first time on February 18, 1948, and its prime members were Fine Gael's John A. Costello as Taoiseach,[50] Labour's William Norton as Tánaiste and Clann na Poblachta's Séan MacBride as Minister for External Affairs. Costello's appointment was made public on that same day by Mulcahy himself alongside the main features of the policy to be pursued by the coalition government:

[50] The leader of Fine Gael was Richard Mulcahy (1886-1971), and it was he who was supposed to become Taoiseach after the 1948 general election. His candidacy, however, was not supported by Clann na Poblachta, whose members still remembered vividly his part in the executions of anti-treaty soldiers immediately after the Civil War under Cosgrave's orders.

(1) Increased agricultural and industrial production;

(2) Immediate all-out drive to provide houses for the working and middle classes at reasonable rents; luxury building to be rigidly controlled;

(3) Reduction in the cost of living;

(4) Taxation of all unreasonable profit-making;

(5) Introduction of comprehensive social security plan to provide insurance against old age, illness, blindness, widowhood, unemployment, etc.;

(6) Removal of recent taxes on cigarettes, tobacco, beer, and cinema seats;

(7) Immediate steps to provide facilities for the treatment of sufferers from tuberculosis;

(8) Establishment of a Council of Education;

(9) Immediate steps to launch a National Drainage Plan;

(10) Modification of Means Test as at present applied to Old Age, Widows' and Orphans', and Blind Pensions" (*IT,* February 18, 1948)

While influence from left-wing parties forming the coalition such as Labour, National Labour and Clann na Poblachta can be clearly seen in Mulcahy's manifesto, the coalition's program lacked focus (an improvement to social services was pursued while at the same time taxation on "recreative" goods was removed), and it soon became obvious that

> given the strong ideological and personal diversities in a government formed without any agreed programme (except the desire to oust Fianna Fáil after an uninterrupted 16 years in office) and without any experience of coalition, this Inter-Party administration strained some of the inherited conventions of a cabinet system designed for single-party government. (Farrell 2004: 182)

It was the influence of opposing ideologies within the coalition, especially on the part of Clann na Poblactha, that caused rapid internal deterioration and their eventual defeat to Fianna Fáil in 1951; or, as J. J. Lee has put it, “problems of personality compounded problems of policy” (1989: 299). Nevertheless, the First Inter-Party government “deserves recognition as a reforming administration” whose “introduction of capital budgets was a turning point in Irish economic planning” (Ferriter 2005: 482). It also “achieved some noticeable success in revitalizing land policy, developing agriculture, and introducing the Industrial Development Authority and Córas Trachtála” (Farrell 2004: 182).[51] The general view was, in short, that Fine Gael “was in government and doing things, rather than an ageing party [Fianna Fáil] of sterile opposition living on its memories” (Gallagher 2004: 49).

Another of Costello’s preoccupations after entering government was the official denomination of the country. On December 12, 1936, the Executive Authority (External Relations) Act was hurriedly signed into law by the Fianna Fáil-led Executive Council of the Free State following King Edward VII’s abdication. It allowed the Executive Council to appoint diplomatic and consular representatives in other countries without the permission of the Commonwealth. However, it was also ambiguous in allowing that “for the purposes of the appointment of diplomatic and consular representatives and the conclusion of international agreements, the king so recognised may, and is hereby authorised to, act on behalf of Saorstát Eireann”; thus retaining the connection with the Commonwealth on a symbolic level. It was, therefore, an important instrument in securing the right of the Executive Council to decision-making at an international level; in essence, it “left Ireland effectively a republic in her internal affairs, while retaining the king as a symbolic sleeping partner in external relations” (Lee 1989: 300). It was not, however, a Republic on paper, and upon the signing of the 1937 Constitution, the name of the state simply became Éire, or Ireland.

[51] Founded in 1949 and 1952, respectively. The Industrial Development Authority (IDA) was in charge of attracting foreign capital and investment to Ireland, whereas Córas Trachtála (Export Board) was devoted to making sure that Ireland could enter the international market by exporting national products not only to the United Kingdom, but to other countries as well.

The years leading up to Costello's government had been witness to Fianna Fáil and Clann na Poblachta's propagandist anti-partition struggle, to the extent that a 66-year-old de Valera toured the United States, Australia and the United Kingdom giving speeches that "were inflammatory and seemed to contemplate the use of force if all else failed" (Fanning 2015: 227). As has been established, however, partition was generally perceived as a lost cause by the political sphere, and even though MacBride visited the United States in 1949 assuring NATO of Ireland's full involvement in the organization provided that the United Kingdom abandoned Northern Ireland (Foster 1989: 567), these attempts were feeble and fell on deaf ears given the fact that anti-partition sentiments were not as strong in the North as they were in the South. Possibly in an attempt to put an end to the anti-partition tension, Costello declared in the Ottawa Commonwealth Conference on September 7, 1948 that Ireland was going to break its links with the Commonwealth by repealing the 1936 External Relations Act.[52] Lee has attempted to explain Costello's decision by putting forward a number of possible reasons for such a political move:

> There may have been a number of motives for Costello's decision. He himself disliked the characteristic ambiguity of de Valera's External Relations Act of 1936 […]. But a passion for logical consistency rarely suffices to explain political decisions, even by a part-time politician like Costello. The 'Republic' could serve several purposes for Fine Gael. It stole Fianna Fáil's Sunday suit of constitutional clothes […]. By behaving in a manner so out of character with the performance of the party for more than a decade, it helped retrieve Fine Gael's fading image as a serious party concerned with the real business of politics, power […]. Costello himself justified the decision on the grounds that it would take the gun out of politics. (1989: 300)

[52] Mary Kenny (2009: 197) has recounted the background to Costello's sudden and unexpected decision: during his trip to Ottawa, he was hosted by the Canadian Governor-General, Viscount Alexander, who hailed originally from County Tyrone, an area of Northern Ireland which at the time was known for particularly strong anti-Catholic sentiments. After taking offense at the Viscount's decision to place a replica of "Roaring Meg" (a cannon used by Protestants to guard Derry from the Catholics in 1688) on the dinner table and a subsequent toast to the King, Costello voiced his decision to the astonishment of the other attendees.

Once in Ireland, Costello managed to pass what became the Republic of Ireland Act through the Dáil on December 21 of that same year; it came into effect on April 18, 1949.[53] While the opposition publicly backed the redefinition of the state as a Republic and the cutting of all remaining ties with the Commonwealth, on a private level de Valera had some reservations toward it. In fact, when Churchill asked him in 1953 whether he would have followed Costello's example in declaring the Republic, de Valera replied in the negative: "He had no objection ever to Ireland being a member of the commonwealth […]. He had come to the conclusion that the commonwealth was a very useful association for us because the commonwealth countries (Especially Canada, Australia, and New Zealand) had a strong interest in Ireland" (Keogh 1994: 190-1). Despite absolute secession from the Commonwealth, Ireland maintained amicable relations and close trade links with the rest of the member states.[54]

Another paramount event of political nature that occurred during Costello's first administration was the Mother and Child Scheme of 1950 and 1951, which involved the more progressive sectors of the First Inter-Party Government and the Catholic Church. "Up until the 1960s," writes Michelle Millar, "the Church and its doctrine on all matters concerning the family and society remained unquestioned by society and the political system" (2003: 144). This interconnection between the Church and the State was made legitimate by the 1937 Constitution, which emphasized the "special position" of the Catholic Church. Thus, "the Church had achieved the kind of political power where it could […] short circuit the social-welfare schemes attempted by the coalition government" (Foster 1989: 567). It was particularly within the realm of education and health services where the Church had a firmer grip and feared to lose control the most; in fact, "during this period there was a general re-evaluation of the role of the state and, by extension, local authorities in relation to public health. As a result, the need to be more interventionist, with a concentration on the principles of preventative rather than curative medicine, was recognised" (Ferriter 2005: 501).

[53] The Act is described in the archives of the Oireachtas as follows: "an Act to repeal the Executive Authority (External Relations) Act, 1936, to declare that the description of the State shall be the Republic of Ireland, and to enable the President to exercise the executive power or any executive function of the state in or in connection with its external relations".

[54] For more on the 1949 Declaration of the Republic see Fanning (1981), McCabe (1992), Kenny (2004), Kenny (2009) and McCullagh (2010), among others.

Somewhat in imitation of Britain's Welfare State, Fianna Fáil had passed an all-encompassing Health Act in 1947 dealing with, among other things, with a revision of the management system of health institutions; a "Mother and Child Service" meant to economically facilitate motherhood and the preservation of health in the household; proposals for maintenance and treatment of people suffering from a variety of infectious diseases, as well as standards for the sanitary regulation of food and drinks. The result was an overall progressive document which purported to actually improve health conditions in Ireland so as to stand on a similar level as other European countries. It was, however, heavily contended by both the opposition and the Church in general: "Opposition to the 1947 Act […] was based on a suspicion that the provisions were a form of 'socialist' medicine, that they diminished medical progressional autonomy and income, and expose adherents of the Catholic faith to potentially corrupting influences, especially in relation to teaching on family planning" (Cox 2017: 274).

Given the Church's initial aversion to Fianna Fáil's proposal, it was to be expected that a similar move by the Inter-Party Government would be met with the same degree of adamant opposition, not only from the Church itself but also from its own ideologically disparate members.[55] Their proposal, commonly known as the Mother and Child Scheme, reached an entirely higher level of controversy. It soon became "one of the most celebrated and vitriolic controversies of twentieth-century Ireland", and while it has been "often referred to as a Church-state clash, it was in reality far too multi-layered for such a label to do justice to it" (Ferriter 2005: 502). Lee has also followed this line of thought: "it is an oversimplification to present the Mother and Child Scheme, which can still evoke passionate controversy, as a straight conflict between Church and State" (1989: 318). The protagonist of the Scheme was the coalition government's Minister for Health Nöel Browne (1915-97), whose devotion to improving health conditions in Ireland had been noted since taking office in 1948.[56] Browne had originally supported Fianna Fáil's 1947 Act and intended to pursue

[55] Indeed, as Michelle Millar notes, "any reform of the healthcare system required not only Cabinet approval but explicit Cabinet agreement, something that might prove difficult in a five-party coalition" (2003: 145).
[56] The IMA (nowadays the Irish Medical Organisation) was founded in 1846. It was named the Irish Free State Medical Union by the end of the Free State (1936) but was later renamed the Medical Association of Éire after the Constitution came into force. It took the name the Irish Medical Association in 1950. Counihan (2002) provides valuable insight into the role of the IMA in the Scheme.

its implementation once in power. He thus formally submitted the Mother and Child Scheme, a derivation of the 1947 Act, to the Irish Medical Association (IMA),[57] who abhorred Fianna Fáil's Act on the grounds that it paved the way for the "socialization of medicine" in Ireland. It became an immediate outrage: the doctors themselves, fearing a decrease in pay and social privilege, mobilized the Catholic Church and contacted prominent figures such as Archbishop McQuaid. McQuaid, who personally supervised boards of directors of a variety of Dublin hospitals and sanatoria, was by far in a superior position of power. He summoned Browne to his palace and wilfully made him aware of the Church's position on the issue by reading a letter addressed to Costello carrying the bishops' condemnation. As John Cooney, McQuaid's biographer, has stated, the Archbishop "believed that history would vindicate him as the prelate who successfully defended the right of the Catholic Church to manage its own voluntary hospitals and practice Catholic medical ethics against the encroaching and potentially totalitarian powers of the State" (1999: 252).[58]

Browne had little if no support from either the public or the political and religious sphere. He was talked about in a vituperative manner by most in the medical profession for attempting to socialize medicine in offering free treatment to mothers and children. The vast majority of Catholic leaders despised the Scheme because it was contrary to Catholic social teaching. They also had strong reservations toward idea of state interventionism in family matters.[59] Certainly, "Browne was not only struggling against the Church and the medical profession […], but equally against the apathy and inaction of his own colleagues in the coalition government" (Millar 2003: 141). Some of these colleagues found the Scheme

[57] Just three months following his appointment as Minister for Health, Browne established the Consultative Council on Child Health which "was charged with reviewing the child welfare provisions in Dublin and making recommendations to pave the way for forthcoming legislation" (Earner-Byrne 2007: 160). Ferriter has also offered figures for Browne's successful intervention on the still wide-ranging problem of tuberculosis in Ireland at the time: "As a result of a mixture of wartime awareness and Browne's subsequent initiatives, in conjunction with more efficient administration, the death rate from TB fell from 1.25 per 1,000 in 1945 to 0,54 in 1952" (2005: 502).

[58] In fact, in a letter to Archbishop Ettore Felici, the Papal Nuncio, on April 16, 1951, McQuaid made the following claims: "That the clash should have come in this particular form and under this Government, with Mr Costello at its head, is a very happy success for the Church [and] has thrown back Socialism and Communism for a very long time" (qtd. in Cooney 1999: 251). Furthermore, Cooney also notes how "the McQuaid files show how Costello wholeheartedly accepted an utterly subservient role" on the issue (*ibid*).

[59] The letter that McQuaid read aloud to Browne stated clearly that "the right to provide for the health of children belongs to parents not to state. The state has a right to intervene only in a subsidiary capacity, to supplement, not to supplant" (qtd. in Browne 1986: 158).

"distasteful", while others "had always thought Browne too volatile and deficient in that measured pragmatism esteemed by the political mind" (Brown 1981: 222). Even MacBride, his party leader, ostracized him during a meeting of the Clann na Poblachta's prime members on March 19, 1951. As a result, Browne offered his resignation as Clann na Poblachta TD (and, by extension, as a Minister), which was made effective on April 11, 1951.[60] There has also been general agreement (McCullagh 1998; Bew 2007; Fanning 2015, among others) that it was the Mother and Child Scheme that caused the Inter-Party government's collapse and Fianna Fáil's return to power in 1951.[61]

The years that followed were dominated, in Brown's words (1981: 221), by a marked sense of "electoral volatility". On the one hand, "Fine Gael remained in almost permanent opposition during this period [but] their Blueshirt pedigree mattered less and less; so did the executions of the celebrated seventy-seven in the civil war" (Foster 1989: 574); on the other hand, Fianna Fáil "continued to rely on its Civil War era and 1930s stalwarts when it got back into power. Seven out of the 12 members of the 1951-4 cabinet had been members of the 1932 government" (Ferriter 2005: 482).

The First Inter-Party Goverment (1948-51) was followed by the aforementioned 1951-4 Fianna Fáil cabinet, which failed to achieve a stable majority having won just 69 seats out of the 74 necessary to form a majority government. Fine Gael, however, could not form a coalition with the rest of the parties: Fine Gael got 40 seats which, added to the ones obtained by Labour (16), Clann na Talmhan (6), Clann na Poblachta (2), totalled 64 seats for another hypothetical coalition government. In response to the threat of coalition, Fianna Fáil secured the help of independent TDs—being Browne, the former Minister for Health being one of them—and managed to form a minority government. For the seventh time since Fianna Fáil's 1932 debut in the Dáil, de Valera became Taoiseach, this time appointing the more

[60] While it has been treated briefly in this dissertation, the Mother and Child Scheme has been well documented by historians and the extensive accounts of the people involved. For the latter, see Browne's autobiography, *Against the Tide* (1986) and biographical accounts on McQuaid (Cooney 1999, Feeney 1974). For the former, see Whyte's (1980) seminal study on the Church and the State in twentieth-century Ireland, as well as McKee (1986), Earner-Byrne (2007) and Powell (2017), among others.

[61] Somewhat ironically, an alternative Health Bill came into force on October 25, 1953, put forward by Fianna Fáil themselves. On this occasion, there were again some protests among the bishops, but de Valera, aware that McQuaid was in Australia at the time, offered the Bill to the bishops, who only made a few revisions to the original text. Once McQuaid arrived in Ireland, he demanded the Bill be further revised to accommodate Catholic morality, but the then President Séan T. O'Kelly refused to accept his petition (Fanning 2015-230-4).

economically progressive and future Taoiseach Lemass as his Tánaiste. De Valera's last two tenures (1951-4, 1957-9) "are notable less for what he did than for what he did not do", showing a remarkably "diminished interest in the course of domestic politics in the 1950s" (Fanning 2015: 230). Even though he managed to pass the 1953 Health Act, he failed to improve social conditions as a whole in the country, while economic matters remained austere and stagnant. De Valera, who asserted in 1951 that "there is no doubt that many of those who emigrate could find employment at home at as good, or better, wages—and with living conditions far better—than they find in Britain" (qtd. in Delaney 2000: 194), was easily contradicted by, for instance, unemployment figures, which according to Ferriter peaked at 86,604 in 1953 (2005: 491). This was one of the many bland attempts "by official Ireland to absolve itself from any direct blame or indeed any suggestion that Irish economic underperformance might have some part in the matter" (Glynn, Kelly and MacÉinri 2013: 89). This became mainstream during the 1950s: as late as 1957, "there were 78,000 unemployed in a year when emigration was responsible for a net loss of population of 54,000" (Brown 1981: 212).

The 1954 general election brought about the Second Inter-Party Government, but this time the coalition of parties was not as wide as during Costello's previous tenure, so there was more room for policymaking. In this case, Fianna Fáil went down to 65 seats (74 were needed for a majority), so it became particularly easy for Fine Gael (50), Labour (19) and Clann na Talmhan (5) to outmaneuver Fianna Fáil in case they were willing to try another coalition government with independent TDs. Even though this time decision-making felt more homogeneous, the problems affecting the previous cabinet persisted in the 1954-7: "Faced with what it regarded as a dangerously high balance of payments deficit, the government resorted to an austerity policy involving import levies and public expenditure cuts, whose inevitable consequence was an actual decline in gross national output, and a sharp increase in both unemployment and emigration" (Gallagher and Coakley 2004: 50). Nevertheless, this balance of payments crisis triggered "a comprehensive and epochal reassessment of economic policy, shifting the emphasis to an outward-looking view" (Honohan and Ó Gráda 1998: 65). Indeed, the Second Inter-Party Government demonstrated more interest in External Affairs than its predecessor did: on June 10, 1954, American Ambassador to Ireland William H. Teft III met Taoiseach Costello and Minister for External

Affairs Liam Cosgrave for the first time to discuss development of Marshall Aid. He later recorded having got an amicable and overall positive impression of both men, as well as the government's readiness and willingness to engage in further economic cooperation with the United States—as opposed to what de Valera and his Minister for External Affairs Frank Aiken had demonstrated on previous meetings (qtd. in Loftus 2010: 105-106). Although the general impression was that "policies pursued by that government mirrored the previous administration" (Murphy 1997: 7), there were also some positive outcomes from Costello's second term in office. Some of them were the creation of the Agricultural Institute in 1954 or, more importantly, securing Ireland's admission into the United Nations in 1955.[62] Despite some of these advancements, Clann na Poblachta withdrew from the coalition in late January 1957, which forced Costello to dissolve the Dáil on March 20.

2.4.3 O'Nolan and the 1950s

O'Nolan emerged from the war in a state of disillusion and discouragement, not only because of the conflict itself but also because his literary aspirations had gone astray after the scant sales of *At Swim-Two-Birds* and the outright rejection of *The Third Policeman.* There was, in general, a gloomy atmosphere hanging over the heads of the Dublin literati; the Palace crew soon changed premises and moved over to an assortment of haunts, such as the Pearl Bar, the Scotch House (frequented by O'Nolan during worktime breaks) and the Dolphin Hotel. Cronin, himself acquainted with some figures of this collective, has offered a sample of one of their many meetings:

> Whatever interior trepidations they felt, the demeanor of everybody here was assured and calm. There were no literary enmities and few expressions of cosmic, or any, angst. Everybody aimed at the confidently delivered witticism, mildly deprecatory rather than cruel or hurtful, but often involving a pun on somebody's name. (1990: 167)

[62] For more on the foundation of the Agricultural Institute, see Manning (1999), Jordan (2007) and Loftus (2010); for further reading on Ireland's entry into the UN see, among others, Skelly and Kennedy (1997), Murphy (1998), Spelman (2005) and Gillissen (2007).

Many of the attendees became frequent contributors to *The Bell,* a monthly magazine devoted to literary and political commentary, founded and edited by Seán O'Faolain (from 1940 to 1946) and Peadar O'Donnell (from 1946 to 1954). *The Bell,* according to Séan McMahon, attempted to tackle the "general dispiritedness" effected by the war and to "play some part in jazzing up the sluggish life of the country" (1997: 10). The list of contributors included, among many others, celebrated names in Irish letters such as Elizabeth Bowen, Frank O'Connor, Brendan Behan, Patrick Kavanagh, Austin Clarke or O'Nolan himself.[63] It was in *The Bell* where the first attempt at conglomerate criticism of all of O'Nolan's works appeared. In his 1947 essay "Myles na gCopaleen", Hogan[64] examined the totality of O'Nolan's literary production up until 1947[65] and came to the conclusion that "Myles is our type—he is the active embodiment of Dublin's, and Ireland's, destructive element. His best work, *At Swim-Two-Birds,* is far behind him and the line of his present work is brilliant but futile" (qtd. in Cronin 1990: 179). Hogan's view—though probably premature and highly prejudiced by a general Dublin consensus of *At Swim-Two-Birds* being but a post-Joycean experiment—was borrowed years later by many critics who dismissed the quality of his post-1940s work.[66]

The late 1940s and early 1950s were, however, happier times for O'Nolan. His marriage in 1948 to Evelyn McDonnell brought him economic stability because he entered the "married scale" at the Civil Service, which meant slight financial benefits. At the same time, "his family responsibilities were now, in the nature of things, beginning to decrease"

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[63] O'Nolan contributed three early pieces to *The Bell* under the Flann O'Brien pseudonym: "Going to the Dogs" (October 1940), "The Trade in Dublin" (November 1940) and "The Dance Halls" (February 1941). He also published one of his widely commented short stories, "Two in One" in June 1954 as Myles na gCopaleen.

[64] In a September 6, 1958 letter, O'Nolan declared having known Hogan "slightly" as "a morose civil servant whose real name is Woods" (2018: 228). He seemed to harbor some resentment towards Hogan on account of his "Myles na gCopaleen" essay, as he criticized some of Hogan's recent writings as unable to "evoke no proper comment" and "ignorant and impertinent" (*ibid:* 228-9). Hogan's piece has been referenced in the Introduction to the present dssertation.

[65] Including *Blather,* his two published novels *At Swim-Two-Birds* and *The Poor Mouth* (*The Third Policeman,* though completed, had not been published yet and few knew of its existence), the *Cruiskeen Lawn* column and two plays (*Insect Play* and *Faustus Kelly*).

[66] Notable examples are Hopper, who claims with regards to *The Hard Life* that towards the late 1950s and early 1960s "O'Brien's work was beginning to suffer, and this novel is markedly inferior to his previous experimental fiction" (2009: 43); or, more famously, Hugh Kenner who, as cited in the Introduction to this dissertation, blamed both the drink and the column for his lack of success in later life.

(Cronin 1990: 185), and this improved the quality of his time. In 1950, *At Swim-Two-Birds* was republished in America by Pantheon Books, thus spreading his international fame. He also became involved in a new literary magazine, *Envoy* (1949-51), founded and edited by John Ryan (1925-92), a Dublin painter and critic. Samuel Beckett, Brendan Behan, Patrick Kavanagh, Mary Lavin, Aidan Higgins, Anthony Cronin and O'Nolan himself were among the most frequent contributors to the magazine. In fact, *"Envoy* was the first Irish periodical to attempt a full-scale critical response to Joyce's work" (Brown 1981: 226). In 1951, O'Nolan himself co-edited a special *Envoy* issue on James Joyce, contributing an essay titled "A Bash in the Tunnel". This essay, shaped like a short story, tells the tale of a man who steals a bottle of whiskey from a train bar and locks himself in the bathroom to drink it whole. O'Brien thought that this image best represented the model of Irish artist that Joyce wished to create: "Surely there you have the Irish artist […], resentfully drinking somebody else's whiskey, being whisked hither and thither by anonymous shunters, keeping fastidiously the while on the outer face of his door the simple word, ENGAGED? I think the image fits Joyce" (1951: 9). Although the rest of the essay shows a concealed and contained admiration for Joyce's work (except for *Finnegans Wake,* which he thought to be obstinately obscure and intentionally unintelligible), "O'Brien here is resisting the edifice that Joyce had so carefully built by mythologising himself as Stephen Dedalus, martyr and creator of the fictional labyrinth" (Hopper 2009: 34).

1953 was the year that brought O'Nolan the most misfortune. After a particularly violent series of *Cruiskeen Lawn* attacks on the then Lord Mayor of Dublin Andy Clerkin in late 1951, he was eventually asked to refrain from further invective after another series of columns which sharply criticized An Tóstal, a celebration held in April 1953 which promoted tourism in Ireland and the country's past Celtic ideals and lifestyle. In a column on February 5, 1953, he painted a physically abusive and humiliating portrait of the Minister for Local Government, Patrick Smith (1901-82). Upon reading O'Nolan's column, Smith asked for O'Nolan's immediate resignation from the Civil Service, which was made effective on February 19. From that moment on, O'Nolan was no longer a civil servant; he became instead a full-time writer and journalist. What seemed to be a perfect occasion to exploit his as yet completely unfulfilled literary talent was nevertheless spoiled by two particular factors: on the one hand, by the time he was married he was already a heavy drinker, a problem which

worsened dramatically over the following decade; on the other hand, "in the early 1950s Brian's relationship with the *Irish Times* was not happy", with many of his columns being "closely scrutinized for libel, scurrility or double-meanings" and many others "drastically cut, or thrown whole into the waste-paper basket" (Cronin 1990: 193). Since he was unemployed, he could not fight the *Irish Times* over the editing of his columns, so instead he devoted himself to produce as much as possible over the decade; therefore, "throughout most of the 1950s his aim was to produce six columns a week and for long periods he succeeded" (*ibid*: 204).

2.5 Years of Expansion: 1954-66

Starting with a focus on the economic objectives held by Costello's Second Inter-Party Government, this section discloses how Ireland began a period of growth which would culminate in Lemass's First Programme for Economic Expansion in 1958. However, this period of prosperity was acidly punctuated by a renewal of IRA tensions in the shape of the Operation Harvest (1956-62), with the consequent accentuation of political pressure surrounding the question of partition and the political integrity of the island. As such, the Republic's economic growth played out against a backdrop of unrest, necessitating of Lemass's official visit to the Northern Irish premier, Terence O'Neill (1914-90), in order to assuage public tensions and foster a climate of cooperation and understanding. Domestically, Ireland experienced the restoration of Fianna Fáil hegemony in 1957, with the return of an ageing de Valera, now semi-blind and, according to most critics, merely a symbolic figure. As evidenced by the Programme for Economic Expansion—an essentially anti-de Valera piece of legislation in its rebuke of long-term protectionism—the man behind policy-making at the turn of the 1950s was Lemass, who had been de Valera's Tánaiste since 1945. After de Valera's resignation as Taoiseach following *Irish Press* scandals and his victory in the 1959 presidential election, Lemass became Taoiseach. He impulsed a young-blood policy within the party and led it to victory in the 1961 and 1965 general elections. While still hesitant to disassociate the party from the traditional agrarian sector and the more protectionist and neutral voices, Lemass was keen on clearing up claims of corruption and brewing a climate of discipline and meritocracy with a sharp focus on promotion of local entrepreneurship and

foreign investment and a cultivation of international diplomacy and relations. This section will conclude with a discussion of O'Nolan's later years, including a brief overview of his renewed literary energies evidenced by the publication of two novels and a number of side projects, such as writing for television and radio and other periodicals. Illness and financial struggles, however, stood as a negative counterpoint to a promising renaissance of his career.

2.5.1 The Second Inter-Party government

Unlike de Valera, Costello was much more receptive toward innovation and openness in economic policy. As Coogan remarks, "Costello also argued in favour of new industrial incentives by way of taxation and government grants to encourage investment and new plant and factories" (2003: 388). Prior to entering government, Costello had put out a major policy document in 1953, Fine Gael's *Blueprint for Posterity.* The document recommended the creation of a central savings office and demanded greater control over public spending. Costello also suggested the removal of the Control of Manufacturers Act, a 1930s Fianna Fáil piece of legislation that protected native industry and hindered foreign investment. However, he made the decision—unfortunate in terms of political strategy—of appointing Gerard Sweetman,[67] a conservative member of Fine Gael of the Blueshirt stock, as Minister for Finance. As Myles would often complain, the Irish political system bestowed all financial powers upon the Minister of Finance, and this often led to incongruities in terms of cabinet policy.[68] De Valera, for instance, had always known that appointing Lemass as Minister for Finance would imply a disassociation from the party's financial ideology of protectionism. Costello, on the other hand, was forced to appoint Sweetman given Patrick McGilligan's preference to become Attorney General.[69] In *Economic Growth in Ireland: The Experience Since 1947* (1975: 219-21), Kieran A. Kennedy and Brendan R. Dowling have examined Sweetman's inability to prevent the economic decline onset by MacEntee's protectionist

[67] Gerard Sweetman (1908-70, Fine Gael) first served as Minister for Finance during the 1954-7 government. He had previously served as senator from 1943 to 1947.
[68] See "A Writer Writhings" (Flann O'Brien Papers, John J. Burns Library, Boston College; MS.1997.027, box 2, folder 52).
[69] Patrick McGilligan (1889-1979, Fine Gael) first served as Minister for Industry and Commerce during the Cumann na nGaedheal government led by Cosgrave (1924-32), for which he also served as Minister for External Affairs. He was appointed Minister for Finance during the First Inter-Party Government in 1948.

policies. The causes ranged from the emergence of a balance of payments deficit of over £35,000,000 caused from an unimpeded flow of consumer expenditure and a decline in agricultural exports, as well as the imposition of import levies and taxes during the later years in government.[70] In the meantime Lemass, inspired by recent developments in Italian finance, started to garner support for a Fianna Fáil-led renewal of the economy after giving his famous "100,000 jobs speech" at Clery's in Dublin. This speech "marked a break with Fianna Fáil emphasis on partition and the restoration of the Irish language as being the main targets of achievement, and helped to bring the question of how to create prosperity further up the debating ladder" (Coogan 2003: 388). In retrospect, however, Sweetman's faults were widely compensated by his insightful and meritocratic decision to appoint T. K. Whitaker as Secretary of the Department of Finance.[71]

For the most part, Sweetman had unsuccessfully tried to swim against the current of economic modernization in the European style that was slowly finding its way into the Irish administration. In doing so, he had ignored the warning voices of his own Taoiseach and those of supporting figures and members of the opposition such as MacBride and Lemass, respectively. As such, he has traditionally been scapegoated for the fall of the Second Inter-Party Government. This is only partly true, as there was a second issue that plagued the government's fortunes and eventually led to its demise: the IRA's Operation Harvest (1956-62), or border campaign.

After the proclamation of the Republic of Ireland in 1949, the IRA's military efforts were focused exclusively on Northern Ireland, the last and greatest remnant of British power in the island (Bell 1979: 266).[72] If the late 1940s brought a certain lulling in terms of IRA activity, the early 1950s set the stage for the border campaign with a re-arming of its members. From 1951 to 1954, a number of raids on Northern Ireland police and military

[70] See also Norton (1975), Walsh (1979) and Lee (1989).

[71] Thomas Kenneth Whitaker (1916-2017) was an Irish economist and civil servant who was Secretary of the Department of Finance to the Second Inter-Party Government and to de Valera and Lemass's successive governments. The First Programme for Economic Expansion (1959) was largely based on his essay, *Economic Development* (1958). He was later appointed Governor of the Central Bank of Ireland (1969-76) and independent senator (1977-82). Alongside Lemass, Whitaker has been seen as a key figure in shaping Ireland's modern economy in the 1960s.

[72] The IRA had been active in the South during the Irish Free State and also after the 1937 Constitution prior to Ireland's total disconnection from the Commonwealth.

barracks resulted in the insurgents' seizure of hundreds of weapons. Seán Cronin,[73] the mastermind of the operation, had written in personal documents that the aim of Operation Harvest was to "break down the enemy's administration in the occupied area until he is forced to withdraw his forces" (*ibid*: 300), later adding that the method "of doing this is guerrilla warfare within the occupied area and propaganda directed at its inhabitants" (*ibid*). There were a number of raids and attacks on Northern Irish military bases, especially during 1957, but the campaign would soon die down after the poorly organized 200-strong IRA succumbed to pressure from the systematic persecution of the British Army and the Royal Ulster Constabulary. The campaign was heavily publicized in the Republic and "aroused latent republican sympathies" (Lee 1989: 327); this became very obvious after the martyr-like funerals of Fergal O'Hanlon and Seán South, two young members of the IRA who died during a 1957 raid, were attended by close to 50,000 people. In Northern Ireland "the effect of the campaign was increased harassment and discrimination" (Keogh 1994: 229) for many Catholics.

Politically, however, Costello's government was quick to denounce the activities of the IRA as illegal and contrary to the peaceful and unarmed process of partition set out by de Valera. Costello's official denunciation of IRA activity prompted MacBride to withdraw Clann na Poblachta's support from the Second Inter-Party Government, which precipitated a general election in 1957. This election would mark the reinstation of Fianna Fáil as the hegemonic party, as well as the near-dissolution of Clann na Poblachta after the re-emergence of Sinn Féin as a political force.

2.5.2 The Lemass dispensation

The results of the 1957 general election were transparent: the voters had withdrawn their support from the Second Inter-Party Government after their inability to implement sufficient economic change to revert Ireland's stagnant position. Fine Gael fell from 48 to 40 seats; so did Labour (from 17 to 12), Clann na Talmhan (from 5 to 3) and Clann na Poblachta (from 3 to 1). The sum of these parties was far from enough to overcome de Valera's ample majority

[73] Seán Cronin (1922-2011) was Chief of Staff of the IRA from 1957 to 1958 and from 1959 to 1960. He was jailed and released in 1962, year in which he left the IRA and pursued his former profession of journalism.

of 78 seats, a 10-seat increase from the previous election which showed distrust of any of the other parties rather than unconditional support of Fianna Fáil policymaking (Lee 1989: 327). De Valera's last election as Taoiseach came from "a vigorous valedictory campaign with brass bands, torchlight processions and monster meetings" with a focus on the party's proposition that "coalitions were inherently unstable [and] encouraged bargaining for places and power between irresponsible minority groups" (Keogh 1994: 232-3). Sinn Féin was also a winning party in the election at the expense of Clann na Poblachta and Fianna Fáil, scoring 4 seats and a total of 65,640 first preference votes; these were wasted, however, as the party decided to abstain from taking these seats in an opposition to partition.

Notwithstanding de Valera's election as Taoiseach, many were perceptive of his growing status as a symbol of the party's glorious past rather than as an actual leader and ideologue. Despite being more closely associated with MacEntee in terms of social and financial ideology, Lemass's dynamism and efficiency had helped him retain the position of Tánaiste from 1945. By the 1957 general election, his influence within the party was so pervasive that his personal preference in policymaking and ministerial appointments prevailed over de Valera's. An early example was the Taoiseach's embrace of major European integration weeks after Lemass's had publicly demonstrated interest in the upcoming European Economic Community (Keogh 1994: 232). This was more clearly perceived, however, in de Valera's appointment of MacEntee as Minister for Health rather than Finance, which went to Ryan instead. Lemass was famously at odds with MacEntee, and having Ryan in Finance would allow them to pursue a modernizing economic agenda without the protectionist background of MacEntee. Lee writes that "this suggested, as events confirmed, that Lemass had at long last established his ascendancy" (1989: 329). Lemass's influence also became evident in the decision to have Whitaker remain as Finance Secretary: both men were close in terms of economic philosophy, and the latter would be crucial in the reformulation of *Economic Development* into a White Paper later known as "First Programme for Economic Expansion".[74]

[74] At the time, public servants "were expected to remain the background, anonymous and low-key, devoid of a public persona" (Chambers 2014: x). Many voices, Myles's included, were critical of Whitaker and Lemass's closeness given the former's status as a civil servant.

Lemass's appointment as Taoiseach was preceded by de Valera's resignation from the premiership after his election as President of Ireland in 1959, which was accompanied by a referendum on the validity of proportional representation. At 75, de Valera's decision to retire did not spring from the clumsiness of old age, but rather as a result of accusations of corruption led by Dr. Browne in the Dáil. *The Irish Press,* long seen as the Fianna Fáil ideological organ, "had effectively become a de Valera family concern, with Vivion as managing director, and his brother-in-law on the board" (Coogan 2003: 393). The paper was also worth over a million pounds, so de Valera's position as Taoiseach and his intimate relation to *The Irish Press* was untenable. Predictably, de Valera won the presidential election by 538,000 votes to 417,636 and became the third President of Ireland. However, he failed to achieve his second objective: to abolish proportional representation and instate a first-past-the-post system in the style of British general elections. This would have allowed Fianna Fáil to eschew the inevitable prospect of coalition, as the party had always received the widest number of individual votes. This preference for proportional representation, in a way, was evidence of the maturity of the Irish electorate and demonstrated "the Irish voter's ability to discriminate between party and policy" (Garvin and Parker 1972: 35). The referendum, officially known as the Third Amendment of the Constitution Bill 1958, yielded 453,322 votes in favor of adopting a system of single-member constituencies, and 486,989 against said implementation.

With de Valera comfortably relegated to the non-political position of President, Lemass was free to pursue the economic modernizing agenda he had been promoting since the 1940s. And pursue it he did. A few months before de Valera's resignation, Lemass had teamed up with Whitaker and produced the First Programme for Economic Expansion. The Programme, whose table of contents already hinted at its revolutionary nature with items such as "Foreign Participation" or "Reappraisal of Policies" in Industry, declared its "conviction that the years immediately ahead will be decisive for Ireland's economic future" (1958: 7). It acknowledged that "the establishment of a Free Trade Area in Europe will […] call for a special effort on our part if output and living standards are not to lag behind those of neighbouring countries" (*ibid*). It also espoused the idea that "in the future […] the private sector will be the principal source of new productive projects" while admitting that "the expected decline in social capital expenditure in the coming years will afford an opportunity

[…] of switching resources to productive purposes" (*ibid*: 8). In general terms, the Programme propounded an economically liberal—and socially conservative—model of state, one in which the taxpayer's money could be directed away from public expenditure in social services and used to fund private projects. These would, in turn, create a feedback loop by improving the consuming potential and living standards of individuals.[75] The Programme had estimated a five-year-long application of its measures in order to perceive visible results. By the mid-1960s, the Irish GDP, timidly expected to rise a mere 2%, doubled expectations with a 4% rise. As Ferriter indicates, "there was a rise in the value of the country's exports of 35% from mid-1959 to mid-1960 alone" while "the average annual emigration rate (per 1,000 of the population), which had been about 14 between 1951 and 1961, dropped to less than 5 between 1961 and 1971" (2005: 542). Additionally, over 350 foreign companies settled in Ireland, which increased the availability of jobs. Tourism, especially from America, increased widely, and so did the number of Irish people who could afford holidaying overseas. The result of the Programme was that the late 1950s and early 1960s "have already become almost legendary years in Irish self-understanding. Irishmen and women believe now, as they believed then, that those five years represented a major turning point in Irish fortunes" (Brown 1981: 241). As O'Toole (2017) remarks, however, several of Whitaker's indications were not followed—most notably his advice against introducing free secondary education—and many have doubtlessly overplayed the historical and economic impact of the Programme, especially as opposed to the uninterrupted growth of the rest of European countries. A Second Programme for Economic Expansion, more ambitious and expansive than the first, was launched in 1963,[76] but its application was not considered as successful as

[75] In an illuminating obituary, Fintan O'Toole has called attention to the other side of Whitaker's proposals: "It is easily forgotten that even *Economic Development* […] is highly conservative in its social vision: Whitaker proposes raising funds for 'productive' investment by cutting spending on social housing and hospitals. He also sets the aim of keeping the growth of wages and salaries significantly lower than in Britain. And *Economic Development* has almost nothing to say about what would in fact be the most revolutionary aspect of the modernisation of Ireland: the huge expansion in access to education" (*IT,* January 11, 2017). Indeed, the Programme for Economic Expansion did not list expansion on education as one of its main objectives and it also recommended putting a stop to increasing public infrastructure in order to direct capital to more productive projects.

[76] The Second Programme acknowledged the 4% growth in GDP and projected a sustained increase of 4.4% in order to attain a 50% growth by 1970. This was overly ambitious for a country so dependent on exports and on Britain as its primary market. The rhetoric of the Programme itself evidenced these insecurities: "The studies undertaken show that it is possible, though by no means easy, to realise this aim, despite the downturn in 1962 and the initial difficulties of adjustment to greater competition and other economic changes, provided there is sufficient unity and strength of purpose" (1963: 11).

that of the first, partly due to Ireland's failure to be admitted into the European Economic Community (EEC) in that same year.[77]

Lemass was moderately successful in his contest of both the 1961 and 1965 general elections. He had to rely on the support of independents in both elections; of the 73 seats required to form a majority government, Lemass's Fianna Fáil managed to secure 70 and 72 seats, respectively. On both occasions, his Fine Gael opponent was Dillon, who had been elected leader of the party yet "was at pains to point out that Fine Gael was the party of free enterprise" (Keogh 1994: 248) both inside and outside his party. The 1961 general election showed an improvement in Labour fortunes with a 4-seat change (from 11 to 16) and a further deterioration of the growingly minor parties of Clann na Talmhan and Clann na Poblachta (2 and 1 seats, respectively). The National Progressive Democrats, a new party led by Dr. Browne, managed to win 2 seats, but the 1965 general election showed their virtual disappearance from the political scene after Labour's additional 5-seat increase.[78] Lemass's tenure, abruptly interrupted after his resignation from his position as Taoiseach on the grounds of ill-health in 1966, are remembered by many as a pinnacle moment for the country; "the best of decades", as Fergal Tobin (1984) puts it. Foster has painted a general picture of the decade:

> The overall theme of the 1960s was an exposure to the wider world: through the UN, through international economic initiatives, through the vast expansion in television licences (and the reception of British stations in the east of Ireland), through the cosmopolitan *lingua franca* of student radicalism, and through the tourist boom […]. The development of Shannon Airport led to a huge American influx; the coach-tour industry took over. And the advertising industry 'sold' Ireland as energetically and unrealistically as any seventeenth-century plantation promoter. Ireland was glossily advertised as a land of Edwardian comforts, limitless Guinness and tangible history. (1989: 581)

[77] For more on Ireland's application and eventual admission into the EEC in 1971, see Fitzgerald (2000), O'Driscoll, Keogh and aan de Wiel (2013) and Keogh (2018).

[78] The Labour Party was at the time led by Brendan Corish (1918-70), arguably more charismatic than Norton and one who furthered the party's socialist agenda. He was Tánaiste to the 1973-7 government led by Liam Cosgrave, as well as Minister for Health and Minister for Social Welfare.

In consonance with his expansionist program, Lemass promoted an international agenda of commitment and cooperation. A well-known instance was the country's readiness to forego its signature policy of neutrality and engage in a UN-sponsored military operation during the Congo crisis in September 1961.[79] As for Ireland's most immediate international concerns, the UK and the USA, Lemass was also keen on taking progressive stepts toward amicability and reconciliation: he welcomed President John F. Kennedy[80] on his sentimental visit to Ireland in June 1963 and met Captain Terence O'Neill,[81] Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, in January 1965. Both events signaled the country's acceptance of a future which called for international integration and expansion of the self-imposed social, cultural and material horizons of postwar Ireland.

2.5.3 O'Nolan's final years

In a curious parallel to Ireland, O'Nolan's professional efforts saw a process of renewed expansion and energetic disposition toward the late 1950s and early 1960s. From 1953 onwards, O'Nolan was compelled to rely heavily on *Cruiskeen Lawn* for a living in the absence of his civil service pay, in which place he received a very moderate pension. By virtue of this, his relationship with the *Irish Times* was problematic, especially given the fact that many of his most contentious articles were automatically discarded by the cautious editors. In a September 6, 1958 letter to Sheila Wingfield, O'Nolan disclosed his opinion on the newspaper in crude terms:

[79] The Irish army played a key part in the Siege of Jadotville (from September 13 to 17), when they were attacked by Katangese mercenaries. Less than 200 Irish soldiers faced over 3,000 mercenaries loyal to the Katanga state and were forced to surrender after inflicting severe damage on the enemy troops. They were held as prisoners and eventually released a month later. For more on Ireland's role during the Congo crisis, see Whelan (2006) and MacQueen (2013).

[80] John Fitzgerald Kennedy (1917-63, Democrat) served as the 35th President of the United States (1961-3). He was assassinated in Dallas, Texas, on November 22, 1963. Kennedy was the first Catholic President of the country and had Irish ancestry on both sides of his family.

[81] Terence O'Neill (1914-90, Ulster Unionist Party) was Prime Minister of Northern Ireland (1963-9). He was forced to resign in 1969 as a result of the Troubles.

> I agree the *Irish Times* can be very trying quite often but they have a very mixed staff and a shockingly mongrel Board. In a way the paper is a microcosm of Ireland. Where else will you find such a congregation of humbugs, twisters, ignoramuses and bastards? […] The Editor,[82] a dacent [sic] man in other ways, is a funk and—worse—married to a cookery expert. (O'Nolan 2018: 227)

In the meantime, O'Nolan had other professional prospects in mind. Not only was he in constant search of other journals to which he could send columns in the style of *Cruiskeen Lawn,*[83] but he also tried to attain financial stability through other means. For instance, he applied for the post of Assistant Lecturer in English in TCD, a possibility suggested by Montgomery (Cronin 1990: 228), but he was unsuccessful. In 1957 he had requested Radió Éireann application forms for the positions of Station Supervisor, Programme Assistant and Balance and Control Officer (O'Nolan 2018: 220). Also, a May 16, 1960 letter to an unknown recipient expressed his interest "in your recent advertisement for Administrative Assistant, as this may involve the sort of work I should like to do" (O'Nolan *ibid*: 248). In 1961 he tried to find a similar position in the Dáil, but nothing came out of it. He had decided in 1957 to re-enter the world of politics by letting his name go forward in the Senate election of that same year. His "manifesto", which has been described by Cronin as "rather unbalanced" (1990: 210), stands as a faithful representation of his view of Irish politics as cantankerous and sterile:

> Dear Electors,
>
> I ask for your vote in this election.
>
> I am not associated with the present political parties and disagree with many of their attitudes and alignments. The recent Dáil election showed that the major parties were intent on perpetuating the personal schisms of nearly forty years ago and ordained that

[82] The then Editor (1954-61) of the *Irish Times* was Alec Newman (1905-72). In an August 17 letter to Brian Inglis (1916-93), editor of *The Spectator,* O'Nolan described Newman as "a perfect gentleman but a complete weakling as an editor, accepting instructions on petty matters from certain directors" (2018: 254-5). The letter also included further derogatory comments regarding the newspaper.
[83] See p. 228 (footnote 7) for more information on this episode.

> the political life of this generation at least shall subsist in the detritus of these divisions […]. A particular tactic in this aim has been the crowding of the Dáil with the immediate relatives of dead or surviving politicans, many of them quite unfitted to public life […]. Above all, I will speak my mind without regard to the Whips and Big Brothers of Leinster House. (O'Nolan 2018: 220)

He signed it "Brian O'Nolan", but he could have easily signed it "Myles na gCopaleen" instead, as many of the opinions explicitated in the manifesto would become recurrent political themes in the columns: the references to Civil War politics, Dáil dynasties, obscure dictatorships, political inefficiency and, above all, his ready disposition to publicly humiliate members of the Dáil. Interestingly, this coincides with Wyse Jackson's division of O'Nolan's career into three parts (1988: 8) as stated in the Introduction to this dissertation . It is very telling in terms of O'Nolan's personal and political temperament toward the late 1950s that his canvassing letter to Seanad electors contained material which could have been featured in a *Cruiskeen Lawn* column. After all, at this point in his life he was personally referred to as "Myles" by many of his intellectual fellows.

O'Nolan's fortunes were about to take a turn for the better, at least temporarily. In May 1959, Timothy O'Keeffe of MacGibbon and Kee suggested O'Nolan that a re-issue of *At Swim-Two-Birds* would doubtlessly be profitable and instrumental in extending his reputation outside Ireland. O'Nolan agreed, and the book was re-issued in 1960 to general praise.[84] To O'Nolan's dismay, over the years *At Swim-Two-Birds* "had been acquiring that best of all literary reputations, one conveyed from reader to reader by word of mouth. The Hibernophiles of English criticism had been aware of it for some time and so had the sedulous avant-gardists" (Cronin 1990: 232). When Higgins met O'Nolan in McDaid's in 1964 and expressed his admiration for the novel, he was the object of drunken repudiation (Higgins 2011: 29); in letters, he dismissed the novel as juvenilia and remarked its college origins. What is perhaps more important is that the financial boost afforded by the republication of *At Swim-Two-Birds* spurred him back into writing novels. In 1961, he would publish *The Hard Life,* followed by *The Dalkey Archive* in 1964 and *Slattery's Sago Saga,* an unfinished

[84] It was later re-issued again by Penguin in 1980 and by Dalkey Archive Press in 1998.

novel republished in *The Short Fiction of Flann O'Brien* (2013). The wave of scholarship following O'Nolan's death and well into the 2000s had discarded these works as minor opera, but recent studies have sought to recover these narratives, along with *Cruiskeen Lawn* and several of his stories and plays, and place them at the forefront of O'Nolan studies. As Borg, Fagan and McCourt put it, we are compelled "to reconsider, at least partially, the authority the major novels had previously held over our critical attentions to the neglect of once marginal titles in the author's canon" (2017: 9). Given his well-established national fame as Myles and his growing international fame as the author of *At Swim-Two-Birds,* O'Nolan's personal finances evened out somewhat by the early 1960s; enough so that O'Nolan was able to list "writer" as his profession in his 1965 passport.[85]

Notwithstanding his growing success as a writer, his health started to fail him in the mid-1950s and grew worse with every passing year. Cronin (1990) has detailed O'Nolan's frequent visits to hospital, naturally linked to the drinking freedom derived from his resignation from the civil service. He was also profoundly upset by the death of his mother in 1956, to whom he was very close. He was hospitalized in late 1956 and early 1957 and also in early 1960 for a cracked coccyx and eye injury and suffered a number of minor ailments. In September 1964 he passed out in bed and was diagnosed with severe uraemia (the kidneys' inability to filter out blood); a few weeks later, he lost consciousness in the middle of the street, which resulted in a broken leg. He was eventually diagnosed with throat cancer in September 1965, he suffered from a heart attack and died on April Fools' Day, April 1, 1966.

[85] Flann O'Brien papers at John J. Burns Library, Boston College (MS.1997.027, box 24).

CHAPTER 3. *CRUISKEEN LAWN* AND THE EMERGENCY, 1939-45

3.1 Introduction

By the time O'Nolan created the Myles na gCopaleen persona in 1940, the "phoney war" had just ended, giving way to vicious clashes between both sides. Hitler had already occupied Poland, Denmark, Norway, Belgium, Holland and most of France, and was at the time carrying out the Blitz on the United Kingdom (September 1940-May 1941). The influx of war news was constant all around the world, but in Ireland de Valera had safeguarded neutrality in public opinion by means of the Emergency Powers Act, 1939. Newspapers like the *Irish Times* did not fail to report on war news, which generally was "a daily portion of the Eire press, especially in the major Dublin papers, much of it supplied by the Reuters news agency and reported in graphic detail" (Cole 2006: 158). Overall, however, they exercised excruciating caution while doing so. Less than a year into the war, the *Irish Times* affirmed in an article that "no country in Europe stands in greater danger at this moment. Six months ago we were an almost remote island in the North Atlantic, far removed from the horrors of the war, but to-day we occupy a precarious seat in the very centre of the arena" (*IT,* July 11, 1940). They were, of course, hinting at the possibility of invasion but refrained from directly

mentioning any of the two likely invading parties, that is, Germany and the United Kingdom. Taaffe (2008: 129) has summarized the wartime period for the *Irish Times* and *Cruiskeen Lawn* as follows:

> throughout the war, the draconian press censorship which was in place to protect Ireland's neutrality ensured a difficult period for *The Irish Times,* a paper long used to identifying with the Commonwealth and the British Army. At a time when Bertie Smyllie's editorials were regularly the subject of unwanted attention from the censorship authorities, Myles's wartime commentary was largely restricted to the inventions of the Myles na gCopaleen Research Bureau.

Cronin adds that "Myles na gCopaleen was also subject to censorship of any views or preferences he might have expressed about the outcome of the war" (1990: 131). It is a well-established fact that the *Irish Times* was subjected to a considerable censorial pressure (Ó Drisceoil 1996; Cole 2006). Smyllie, in particular, was the preferred target of the censors on account of his highly controversial and opinionated editorials on the war (he published an article entitled "Unneutral Neutral Eire" in 1946 in *Foreign Affairs*).[1] More importantly, Evans dismisses the relevance and down-to-earthness of Myles's commentary during the war, claiming that "during the Emergency, the widely quoted Myles na gCopaleen contributed some of his most biting satire in the column *Cruiskeen Lawn* in the *Irish Times*, but his references to the "plain people of Ireland" sat too long as a waggish substitute for an analysis of social and economic conditions at the time" (Evans 2014: 3). Such a view might be due, in part, to the censorship campaign, which inevitably produced a sense of forced critical numbness among writers in general. Elizabeth Bowen, who spent part of the war in Ireland, observed that "no view expressed by any Irish writer (novelist or poet) on the European situation, on Irish politics, seemed to be much listened to, or cut much ice" (Bowen 2011: 56).

[1] For more on Smyllie and his role as editor of the *Irish Times* during the war, see Inglis (1962) and Richardson (2007, 2019).

In this chapter, however, I intend to challenge reductionist views such as those espoused by Taaffe or Evans and prove that, despite both editorial and censorial pressures, Myles did actually get away with sporadic opinions on the progress of the conflict, as well as on the generally celebrated status of neutrality on the part of the Irish government, and that his commentary was incisive, precise and well-informed despite said impositions. This chapter follows the line of thought of, for instance, Flynn, who defies Hugh Kenner's argument of wartime *Cruiskeen Lawn* as being an example of "Irish solipsism" (1983: 326) and remarks instead that the columns "show O'Nolan inventing, in order to engage with the issues of the war, an aesthetics of the half-said" (2017: 72). My contention is that Myles made use of a variety of strategies and resources to smuggle censure-provoking political opinions into the paper undetected and offer his take on the issue to the readers of the *Irish Times.* Therefore, this chapter of my dissertation aims to trace Myles' preoccupation with the Second World War in *Cruiskeen Lawn,* not only because of the incisive importance of the conflict for the broader Irish political scene but also for the author himself, in that, as addressed in the first part of the biographical profile given in Chapter 3, the war became a turning point in his career as a writer. It also aims to establish a point of departure in Myles' wartime commentary and establish the degree of his actual involvement and engagement in discussions of the war.

3.2 *Cruiskeen Lawn* and the Second World War

Surprisingly enough, it was in relation to wartime terminology that *Cruiskeen Lawn* began life. The first column was published on October 4, 1940. Unlike the more prominent position granted to the column in later years in accordance with its popularity, the first *Cruiskeen Lawn* article occupied a rather unassuming space on the fourth page of an eight-page issue. It was not signed by Myles na gCopaleen but by "An Broc" (Irish for "The Badger") and the subtitle "From a Correspondent" appeared beneath the name of the column. The article commented on how a previous *Irish Times* editorial[2] had criticized the government's efforts on the revival of the Irish language on the basis that it could not possibly keep up with the

[2] This editorial was published on September 28, 1940 and was entitled "Irish in the Home".

ceaseless torrent of new wartime terminology; words like "incendiary bomb", "Molotoff bread-basket", "decontamination" or "non-aggression pact" or "Axis", among others, would be near-impossible to translate into Irish and as a consequence conversations would be restricted to discussing mere trivia, such as food and drink. As a response, Myles provides a sample of a hypothetical dialogue in Irish that would take place in a Gaelic household regarding the translatability of such words. In the dialogue, a mother tries to force her son to eat some porridge. The son refuses and demands to know the Irish equivalent of "Molotoff bread-basket". Myles mockingly claims, however, that such an argument is hardly necessary because the Irish language is flexible enough so as to be modulated in such a way as to offer plausible renditions of modern words:

> Of course, there is no necessity for such scenes, because the Irish for Molotoff bread-basket is easy. One can say it several ways—
>
> *Clíabh aráin an duine-uasail Ui Mhuilitíbh*
>
> *Manna Rúiseach*
>
> *Rúiskeen Lawn*
>
> *Feirín ó Stailím*
>
> *Brad-bhascaod Mhalatábh.* (*CL,* October 4, 1940)[3]

The meaning of Myles's comic translations range from "'Russian manna' […] a pun on Russia and Cruiskeen Lawn, and 'a little gift from Stalin', to a comic transliteration of the English term" (O'Nolan 1988: 15). Later, he adds that while the *Irish Times* critic of the Irish language claimed that reviving Irish would be a difficult task unless topics would be limited to food and drink, other conversational topics are mostly artificial and unnecessary: "Why not admit that hardly anybody ever thinks of anything else? If on and after to-morrow the entire *Irish Times* should be printed in Irish, there would not be a word about anything but

[3] In many cases, Myles stresses some expressions using italics or includes text in bold. Unless otherwise specified, these will always be the author's emphasis or typographical preference.

food and drink. Those who find that they cannot do without [those words] would have to get some other paper to accompany their ghoul's breakfast" (*CL,* October 4, 1940).

Myles's first column has remained largely unexamined by scholars. Taaffe comments in an introductory manner that it "was a playful response to an Irish Times editorial which presented the language (and its revival) as an anachronism in the modern world, its vocabulary unable even to accommodate the latest news from a wartorn Europe" (2008: 27).[4] Beneath this playfulness, however, looms the fact that Myles's first column actually engaged the reader in a discussion on the war and, more specifically, on the Russian side. It indirectly demonstrates the author's sheer awareness of the progression of the conflict (so far as censored news stories permitted him to be) and his masterful manipulation of the war-related vocabulary that so frequently appeared in newspapers, aided by his trademark use of dialogic and polyphonic discourse (Coulouma 2011: 217). More importantly, this column is the first of many instances during the Emergency of Myles's intimation that the Irish people did not care about the conflict but relished their comfortable insularity. In doing so, he was subconsciously echoing the views on Ireland's neutrality held by members of the international (mainly British and American) scene—such as Churchill himself, for instance, or the case of Louis MacNeice (Wills 2007: 75)—while simultaneously launching an oblique attack against censorship: the Irish people would be unable to express themselves in terms different from the basic necessities of life because censorship would strictly prevent them from proffering opinions on the conflict. If viewed through the lens of the language revival, it is also Myles' first official defense of the Irish language and its capabilities and his scorn at both its detractors and staunchest advocates. As Hopper notes on Myles's first column, "this display of linguistic pyrotechnics proves [...] that not only could Irish retain its signifying autonomy in a modern context but that it could also exuberantly express itself using highly charged poetic allusions" (2009: 30). In short, what he was trying to demonstrate was that "this type of discourse", one which was inclusive of Irish language and not merely

[4] Interestingly, Tony Gray recalls the main officers of the LSF (Local Security Force) encountering problems when trying to explain the operation of machine guns and anti-aircraft guns in Irish: "My first recollection of the service in the LSF was my extreme puzzlement at the fact that those in charge [...] were not merely trying to turn us into soldiers by drilling us not in English, but in Irish—which few of us, and indeed few of them, understood perfectly—but, far worse, were also trying to explain the complexities of the anti-aircraft guns and range-finders which we would have to use through the medium of Irish" (1997: 50).

political lip-service, "was necessary to create a healthier climate for the promotion of Irish culture" (*ibid*). He increasingly failed to follow his own example, however, for 1941 saw the growing disappearance of Irish in *Cruiskeen Lawn,* which was made complete in 1943, by which time "Myles had acquired a broader scope [and] also a more polemical character" (Taaffe 2008: 128).[5]

The first *Cruiskeen Lawn* article set the stage for the topics that would preoccupy him the most during the 1939-45 period: The Second World War, censorship and the revival of the Irish language. He would also speak at great lengths about Irish neutrality during the conflict, shortage of basic goods, postwar planning and the internal political developments of the country during the period. As such, the present chapter will subdivide the topics dealt with in *Cruiskeen Lawn* to be commented in an individual and focused manner to ensure consistency and clarity. Firstly, I will discuss Myles's ideas on the war and how they were affected by the censorship apparatus established after the neutrality policy was announced; secondly, I will examine his comments on shortages and his subversion of the measures taken by the government to placate the situation; thirdly, I will switch the focus to the political scene at the time in Ireland and observe Myles's comments on both the 1943 and 1944 elections, as well as on individual parties and political figures. Finally, and in close relation to the previous aspect, I will determine Myles's treatment of the postwar planning policy pursued by the officialdom, with a particular emphasis on the author's commentary on Ireland's reception of the Beveridge Plan devised by the United Kingdom.

3.2.1 Neutrality and censorship in *Cruiskeen Lawn*

As wartime censorship was a direct consequence of de Valera's decision to remain neutral during the war, it is perhaps necessary to linger briefly on O'Nolan's own internal debates and ambiguous views on the morality and applicability of censorship so as to understand his attitude to it during the war. For instance, Hopper (2000) examines the excruciating extent to

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[5] On June 5, 1944, replying to his readers on the reason why Irish had been discontinued in the column, he joked that "the grammar was subject to fungoid complaints, the syntax was old, patched and leaky, some words completely unusable. Spending money on 'repairs' was like pouring money down a well. It was all incredibly worrying" (*CL,* June 5, 1944).

which O'Nolan went to render *At Swim-Two-Birds* suitable for publication by means of an aptly crafted metonymic discourse. This was far from being the case with his fourth (third in order of publication) novel *The Hard Life* (1961). Murphy argues that "there appears to have been some desire, on O'Brien's part, to attract notoriety with *The Hard Life"* (2011: 150). The general feeling has been that this novel was primarily designed as bait for the censorship board since by then O'Nolan, as Myles, was a fairly notorious personality in the Irish literary scene. The reason for this seemingly literary suicidal desire was simply a matter of prestige: "there were […] so many that to be censored was considered something of a mark of distinction […]. Nearly every professional Irish author had had a book banned and O'Nolan's gleeful anticipation of the prospect makes it clear that he was anxious to join the club" (Cronin 1990: 234). Therein lies the ambiguity of censorship in O'Nolan's career: during the war, censorship was pernicious for *Cruiskeen Lawn* and O'Nolan because the column was a constant, albeit scant, source of income; for the novels, however, it became an unfulfilled necessity over the years since unbanned novels paradoxically affected O'Nolan's recognition as a writer in a negative way. He expressed his anxiety on October 6, 1941: "Have we reached the stage when a writer is considered to be 'of repute' because he has been banned?" (*CL,* October 6, 1941)

This did not mean, however, a complete dissociation from the difficult European reality: he kept an earnest interest in the progression of the war and possibly remained well informed *en petit comité* by people like Smyllie,[6] who enjoyed ready access to unfiltered information, during their literati meetings at the Palace Bar and elsewhere. His options of eschewing the censors' attention and making his opinions on that information public were nevertheless very limited given the close scrutiny which the *Irish Times* was under. He had to devise, in a subtler style than that of his editor, a way of manifesting his views on the state of the war and the country's role within it. O'Nolan, as all journalists and intellectuals at the time, had been put in a straitjacket he could not easily free himself from, and as Wyse Jackson perceives, his tone "darkens alarmingly" (1999: 12) during the war years. One of the earliest

[6] It seems, however, that O'Nolan and Smyllie's relationship deteriorated over time, probably due to the former's ceaseless undermining of the latter's work as Editor. Michael Phelan, O'Nolan's fellow civil servant who attended the literary pub meetings, reminisced that "I never spoke to the famous Smyllie, and why should he, but the same at that period appears to have been true of Flann O'Brien. At least, I never saw them speak or even salute, in those likely surroundings" (Phelan 1976: 97).

examples of his wartime commentary concerned tourism in Ireland, which coincidentally was one of the many different means of income the State, since its inception, had been devising for decades. Ireland was a fledgling country and from 1929 onwards, the different governments incessantly increased the budget for tourism at all levels, promoting the country's mythical beauty through many different publications (Zuelow 2009: 21). During wartime, Ireland's neutral condition in the conflict was probably seen by officialdom and travel agencies as a potentially effective way of attracting western visitors who might be afraid of getting any closer to the war-torn continent, as well as for British people who "choosing to protect themselves from wartime austerities in Britain, and the bombing of British cities, found no better haven than the cushioned existence of the Irish country hotel" (Wills 2007: 244). This was the perfect target for Myles's repressed, albeit equally derisive, satire without interference on the part of the censors:

> I notice that the current issue of *Irish Travel* is adorned with the Irish supertitle *Cuaird Faoi Éirinn.* So far as my knowledge goes, this means nothing more or less than 'Travel Under Ireland'. The suggestion seems to be that the Irish Tourist Authority is taking note of the times we live in and is arranging underground tours for scared visitors. Such enterprise deserves (and gets herewith) unqualified commendation.
>
> I cannot dismiss from my mind the picture of a group of bright-faced Americans being carefully lowered through a man-hole or excavation in O'Connell Street and emerging on to some quiet thoroughfare in Waterford. (*CL,* March 17, 1941)

Beneath the Gaelic playfulness and the devastating lampooning of the State's inability to come to terms with the language they were so intent on promoting lay darker concerns and questions, such as the shattering of the generally perceived presumption that Ireland was a cocoon of frugal safety during the war. Myles implies that bombs could find their way to Ireland, as indeed they did, repeatedly, from August 1940 to July 1941, all of them of German origin (McMahon 2009). Furthermore, the column was published in March 1941, at a time when Hitler was still liable to invade Ireland with the possible aim of using as a spring platform toward England; alternatively, Britain could also invade Ireland for defensive

purposes (Brown 1981: 171). The theme of the war pervades the column as Myles now introduces, if subtly, the question of censorship by providing a scenario where a Gaelic speaker opens a newspaper and finds the statement that "the intelligence has been made naked that the city Bardia has been invaded by Saxons this Tuesday that went past" (*CL,* March 17, 1941). While the main aim seems to be Myles's perseverance in his critique of the Gaelic-speaking abilities of those who are presumed to speak the language fluently, we are told that the "Gael realises that he is regarded as a cretin" (*ibid*). The reason for such a feeling could either be found in the nonsensical sentence in Gaelic or, alternatively, in the fact that Bardia was never invaded on a Tuesday; the Battle of Bardia took place between January 3 and 5, 1941,[7] that is, between a Friday and a Sunday. While this might be a possible coincidence, through his position on the newspaper Myles was certainly aware of the progression of the war and there are many chances that he committed such a mistake on purpose to hint at the unreliability of Irish news and the government's unobstructed tampering with war facts to preserve neutrality in the press; it is, as Young has remarked of much of *Cruiskeen Lawn,* an instance where "we sense the bleakness on the underside of the joke" (1997: 115).

As time passed, Myles was devoting increasing attention to the war and its perceptible consequences in Ireland, as well as hinting at the derisiveness of censorship regarding war reports. More than two years into the conflict, Myles published a *Cruiskeen Lawn* column of his "Brother" series[8] where, among other topics, he offered a simulated conversation between the Plain People of Ireland and himself:

> **The Plain People of Ireland:** If it's all the same, we'd prefer to have you by installments.
>
> **Myself:** Fair enough.

---

[7] Fought between the Australian and British armies on the Allied side, and the Italian army for the Axis powers. Albeit outnumbered, the Allies emerged victorious thanks to their strategic prowess.

[8] The early years of *Cruiskeen Lawn* featured a wide number of articles which followed a similar pattern: Myles encounters a member of the Plain People of Ireland at a random bus stop and engages in conversation with him, often alluding to his brother's national renown as a man of many talents. The articles were often shaped as a dialogue, with the replies by Myles's interlocutor in bold.

Well, what do you think of the war?

Nothing. I never think of the war.

The brother was across to the other side last week. He said we have no idea.

Have we not? (*CL,* October 20, 1941)

The column, which in itself is quite explicit in its affirmation of the ignorance of the real horrors occurring in Europe, becomes even more relevant if we consider how "in *Cruiskeen Lawn* the relationship between the sound of words and their physical representation is frequently exploited" (Day 2011: 37). In this column, both voices—Myles and the Plain People of Ireland's—are represented in bold, and so are the comments "Nothing. I never think of the war" and "Have we not?", supposedly belonging to the latter voice. The fact that they are in bold not only makes them highly significant, but it also points out to Myles's intention to emphasize them, or to imply a hint of irony. In particular, his suggestion that "we have no idea" clearly indicates that the operation of censorship was so fierce and blinding that the version of wartime events received by the Irish people was at best watered-down, and at worst false altogether. Ó Drisceoil affirms as much: "War news was neutralised (including the suppression of reports of the concentration camps)" (1996: 6). The implication that war reports were inconsistent is strengthened by Myles's false claims that "the Swiss are thinking of having a go at the French. There's bad blood there, you know, always was" (*CL,* October 20, 1941). Unlike Ireland or Spain, among others, Switzerland remained unbendingly neutral throughout the entire conflict—striking down invading Allied or Axis aircraft alike—and declined to favor openly or covertly either of the sides.[9] The section of the column was titled "CONVERSATION PIECE", which contrasts enormously with the explicitness of the ideas discussed, more so if we take into consideration Cronin's remarks that "these feelings could not surface in the newspapers, however, and rather more strangely they were not much expressed by ordinary people in the course of a conversation" (1990: 131).

[9] For more on Switzerland's neutrality during the Second World War, see Wylie (2003) and Codevilla (2013), among others.

Myles employs the same strategy in subsequent columns dealing with censorship during the war. One of the most significant was published on May 25, 1942 and the section of interest was titled “Interchat”:

> Who is going to win beyond? Which of the pair would you back?
>
> **I do not know.**
>
> The brother says your man is going to win. But begob I don’t know. It’ll be a long time before your other man hands in his gun.
>
> **That is true.** (*CL,* May 25, 1942)

Throughout this column, Myles used Dublin speech and the locutions “your man” and “your other man” to indirectly refer to the Allied and Axis powers, respectively, even though there are some instances of ambiguity in his references. The first evidence backing this argument is the fact that the brother thinks “your man” is going to win the war; the column was published in May 1942, and by then the Allies were leading the conflict after Hitler’s Operation Barbarossa (the Axis invasion of the Soviet Union, commenced on June 22, 1941) was thwarted by the weather conditions of the following winter in the Soviet Union. Furthermore, the United States had recently joined the war on the Allied side, with the positive impetus it meant for the public perception of the Allies. What followed was perhaps more telling of the likelihood of this duality:

> Your man is smart, I’ll agree with the brother there. And he doesn’t take a jar, that’s another thing that stands to him. And of course he bars the fags as well. But does that mean that your other man is a buff?
>
> **Scarcely.**
>
> Oh indeed begob it doesn’t. It certainly does not. Because your other man gets up very early too. It wasn’t yesterday or the day before your other man came up.
>
> **He has undoubtedly certain qualities of adroitness.**

> Of course the brother looks at it the other way. He is all for your man and never had any time for your other man. *Says no good could ever come out of the class of carry-on your other man has been at for the last ten years.* (*Ibid*)

The ambiguity surrounding this exchange makes it difficult to discern the truth behind Myles's references. A plausible reading is Myles's metaphoric intention to depict both sides as strong and functional in their military contest. Be that as it may, the sentence emphasized above does actually point out to "your other man" being a reference to the Axis powers, and more particularly to Germany and Hitler himself, since the column was published in 1942, almost ten years after Hitler's rise to power in Germany (January 1933). This argument is reinforced by Myles's assurance that "your other man" "knows the place backwards, every lane and backyard in it. Lived there all his life, why wouldn't he. And of course your man doesn't know where the hell he is" (*ibid*). Reading between the lines, the impression given is that "your other man", the Axis powers of Germany and Italy, have a sounder knowledge of the geographical and weather conditions of the European continent as opposed to the United Kingdom or the United States, which are not continental. On a higher level of meaning, however, this column suggests that Myles found ways to engage more directly with the war than permitted by the censors. As Hopper indicates, "writers will always find ways of circumventing censorship through imaginative processes of invention, euphemism and circumlocution, or by resorting to encoded discourses which substitute signifying symbols for what is forbidden" (2000: 122). In this case, it seems possible that Myles used the locutions "your man" and "your other man" as codified ways of referring to both sides of the war. By masking his reference in a craftily elaborated representation of Dublin speech, and the insertion of the speech into the discursive context of the pub and horse races, he was easily able to smuggle his view of the war into print, since there is not a single reference in the column whatsoever to any element associated with the war which might have alerted the censors.

The column is yet another example of Myles's strategic use of "competing voices, or styles, in patterns of maximum digressiveness" and "truths, half-truths and fictions that supply us with the requisite voices in which to 'perceive' and 'understand' the reality of a

particular place at a particular time" (Young 1999: 117). On a previous occasion, Myles had also made a similar and arguably more explicit reference to the growth of Nazism in Germany, this time fashioning two Corkmen, Marshal Tim O'Shenko and one alleged brother, Tomoshenko, out of the figure of Marshal Semyon Timoshenko (1895-1970), a commander of the Red Army at the beginning of the war. He reports Tomoshenko as having told him before the beginning of the war that "'I've had a letter from Tim,' he said, 'and he takes a very poor view of what is happening in Germany. He says that there will be a world war in seven years, if not sooner. He has joined the Red Army as a private" (*CL,* August 12, 1941). Such a statement on the political state of affairs in Germany at the time is considerably straightforward and most likely overlooked by the censors as their hold on The *Irish Times* was perhaps not as strong as during later stages of the war, as Ó Drisceoil (2000: 160) has remarked. Later in the same column, Myles took the opportunity to add that "one does not take sides in these neutral latitudes, but I think most of my readers will join me in expressing the hope that we will yet see both Tom and Tim O'Shenko back in Ireland safe and sound" (*ibid*). Wills has interpreted this column as meaning that "the Irish are taking a leading role in the war" (2007: 289) and thus an amicable reference to the approximately 50,000 Irish soldiers who volunteered to fight in the war alongside the British. Wills also remarks that the article puts forward Myles's "own farcical version" of Ireland's "slavish relationship to foreign culture—finding Europe not in the cultural sphere, or in leisure, but in warfare and belligerence" (*ibid*: 288).

Not only the brothers Tim and Tomoshenko, but also Myles's "Brother" was apparently involved to a high degree in The Emergency. A month later, Myles found himself engaged in a bus-stop conversation again with a representative of the Plain People of Ireland:

> Half the crowd above in the digs are off to Arklow for a week Tursda. On their holliers, you know.
>
> **I see. Is your relative travelling also?**
>
> The brother? Not at all man. Yerrah not at all. Shure [sic] the brother can't leave town.
>
> **Is that a fact? Why not?**

> The brother has to stop in town for the duration of the emergency. The Government does be callin the brother for consultations. (*CL,* June 29, 1942)

In the vein of previous columns, Myles was alerting the reader that there was a war raging on offshore and a certain degree of danger had to be presupposed. He added that "do you know what I'm going to tell you, if ould Ireland isn't kept out of this business that's goin [sic] on, it won't be the brother's fault" (*ibid*). This last sentence is certainly illuminating since it seems to betray Myles's position regarding neutrality; that is, despite loathing censorship and refusing to abide by the Emergency Powers Act in the realm of public expression, Myles argued—or, at least, was affected to think—that neutrality was actually the safest course of action for Ireland during the war. This column also raises the question whether Myles's opinions on the war were his actual thoughts or, conversely, whether they were meticulously fabricated to sate the hunger of the audience for polemic issues. Asbee has argued in this regard that "the Myles na gCopaleen persona is notoriously both extravagant and unreliable, but beneath the bombast there is a sense that O'Brien felt strongly about the subjects he returned to" (1991: 8). As will be seen later, Myles's ideas on the duality of neutrality and censorship mirror his thoughts on the powerful ambivalence existing between the Irish language and its political uses: the State argued at lengths that neither neutrality nor the Irish language could exist without the boons of censorship and political promotion, respectively; whereas Myles, on the other hand, appears to defend in *Cruiskeen Lawn* that the latter element were harmful and detrimental to the former one. As such, he was in the same line of "writers such as Sean O'Faolain, Peadar O'Donnell, and Frank O'Connor [who] accepted the inevitable fact of neutrality, but they also accepted the challenge that neutrality threw at them" (Wall 1995: 235).[10] These writers, more particularly O'Faolain and O'Donnell, responded to this challenge, presented to them in the form of censorship and isolationism, with the creation of

[10] Other figures from the Irish literary background were equally relevant in the neutrality scene. Wills also mentions the case of Elizabeth Bowen, Kate O'Brien, Francis Stuart or Denis Johnson (and, as previously mentioned, MacNiece) and argues that "each was specifically working against the censorship if not precisely against neutrality" (2007: 12).

The Bell in 1940; Myles did so by launching satire-clad protests from the pages of *Cruiskeen Lawn.*[11]

During the Emergency, Myles displayed his preoccupations about the war by constantly wondering about the indeterminacy of its duration, playing with words in his Catechism of Cliché columns and asking "in what manner do wishful thinkers imagine that the war will be over this year? Fondly" (*CL,* July 8, 1942), asking the readers for the solution: "I will re-offer the prize to the reader who can tell me when the emergency will terminate" (*CL,* December 10, 1943), or even criticizing the whims of people whom censorship had blinded to the fact that the war was raging: "*Sponge-cake*? Me good woman do you realise there's a waaaaaaaaaaar [sic] on?" (*CL,* December 31, 1943). The fact is, as he wrote to Saroyan in a letter as early as February 1940, that O'Nolan himself was painfully aware of the numbing effect censorship had on people, saying of the war that "people here have simply forgotten about it" (qtd. in Hogan and Henderson 1974: 71). Brown has offered a similar account of the period: "For many, the years of the war were simply a continuation of pre-war experience, in economically straitened circumstances, with the language, national sovereignty, religion and the protection of Irish distinctiveness" (2004: 168). It thus became Myles's self-assigned ambition to subvert and bring to light the government's surreptitious attempts to silence those voices which opposed either censorship of neutrality and to warn the Irish people of this damaging process. He said that "you can't believe all the stuff you read in the papers, boy, no, sir" (*CL,* October 26, 1942), implying that information on the war might have been tampered with or modified altogether to suit the purposes of neutrality. Prior to the columns discussed above, Myles had already given yet another example of the far-reaching operation of censorship on war topics, this time offering the theater as potential context:

> In another play there is a desperate storm at sea. Masts, funnels and lascars are carried away by the roaring sou'-easter. The schooner ultimately founders on the stage with all

[11] For more on how the war affected Irish writers as a whole, see Brown (1981) and Teekell (2018), among others.

> hands, the captain sea-dog that he was, reading extracts from *The Irish Times* leading articles as he is engulfed in his noble death.
>
> The *Panzercorps,* coping-stone, *raison d'ètre* and *sine qua non* of the strategy devised by the German *Obersteheersleitung,* will, according to the *Führer*, achieve *so oder so* a decision in the east.
>
> […] Nevertheless, the piece was turned down. No reasons were given, but I heard through a friend that it was considered unsuitable for a Dublin audience because the cast did not contain a young girl who has been done wrong, a tyrannical ecclesiastic and an impecunious gentleman with a Dublin accent. (*CL,* September 26, 1941)

Myles admits that "no reasons were given" and that the play "was considered unsuitable for a Dublin audience". He has heard through a friend, in a typical example of the gossip-like quality of pub-talk, that the motives for the rejection of the piece were actually the absence of certain archetypal characters of Irish drama at the time. Underneath these hollow reasons, however, we see again the looming presence of the war, literally voiced by the dying captain's recitation of an *Irish Times* leading article. Such a leading article, which might as well have been written by Smyllie himself, would have doubtlessly attracted the attention of the censors due to its lexical explicitness and open reference to Hitler as "the *Führer*" (Herr Hitler would have been the preferred and official epithet). It is implied, then, that the reason behind the rejection of the fictional play is political rather than of absence of literary quality: the play is openly engaging with the war. As a consequence, the captain is silenced by death itself when reading a particularly partisan war report, in an allegory of the numbing power of censorship. This column echoes the case of Paul Vincent Carroll's play, *The Strings Are False*, first staged in 1942.[12] The play was subtitled "A Drama of the Clydeside Air Raids" and represented the Glasgow Blitz that took place between March 13 and 14, 1941. It came to be understood, according to Wills, as "the allegory of the choice between pacifist non-involvement versus humanitarian aid", with the result that "no one would touch it for 'political reasons'. The implied critique of neutrality was presumably too dangerous" (2007: 218). Myles's column

[12] Paul Vincent Carroll (1900-68) was an Irish playright. The play was first staged at the Olympia Theatre in Dublin on March 16, 1942.

implied that, as it happened to Carroll's play, theatre was not free from the clutches of wartime political censorship.

In connection to the editorial resonances of the previous piece, Myles demonstrated satiric interest in the style used in news reports. In November of that same year, he published another article where he himself offered a report on the war imitating the variety of language that censorship forced on journalists:

> With the ever-hastening approach of winter there is a proportionate increase in speculation as to the outcome of the titanic struggle which is taking place in Russia. [...] When the Fuehrer first threw his *Panzerdivisionen* against Smolensk and embarked on the **ILLEGIBLE** operation which culminated in the bloody battle for the Dnieper, many observers predicted a long war. General Koniev, whose masterly strategy in the last war was responsible for the Allied successes in Moravia, has moved up considerable forces from the middle front, where the pincer 'claw,' turning south, has brought the *Sturm und Drang* of the battle to new and unexpected quarters. The—
>
> **The Plain People of Ireland:** Isn't there some mistake. Surely, this is the leading article.
>
> **Myself:** It is.
>
> **The Plain People of Ireland:** But— (*CL,* November 24, 1941)

This column emulates the aseptic style used to ensure that texts were suitable for publication; in other words, he purposely avoids using what Ó Drisceoil defines as propagandist terminology. During the war, propagandist terminology was "disallowed and only official titles of states, leaders, armed forces, etc. were permitted. Thus for example the words 'Nazi' and 'Fascist' were prohibited as were 'Hitlerism', 'Reds' and 'Bolsheviks'" (2000: 154). Despite the fact that Myles's text is once again more colored than would be expected ("Fuehrer", "bloody battle", "masterly strategy" or "Allied successes") what is perhaps more striking is the sudden interruption by the Plain People of Ireland at the point when Myles was about to disclose the most visceral aspects of the battle; or, in his own eloquent words, the

"*Sturm und Drang* of the battle" being brought "to new and unexpected quarters". On being asked by the Plain People of Ireland whether what they were reading was actually the leading article, Myles admits that it is. The Plain People of Ireland, astonished, were about to reply, when Myles interrupted them as well. A conversation ensued:

> **Myself:** Yes, I am sorry, there is something wrong. My stuff is in the wrong place. Some fool has blundered.
>
> **The Plain People of Ireland:** You don't mean to say you write the leading article?
>
> **Myself:** I do, usually. We have another man who comes in when I am 'indisposed,' if you know what that means. And there is no reason why you shouldn't, red-snouts.
>
> **The Plain People of Ireland:** But—Well, dear knows. How do you find time to do the two things?
>
> **Myself:** It's no trouble to me. In both cases it is the same old stuff all the time. You just change it round a bit. (*CL,* November 24, 1942)

While not being as explicit as previous columns, the implication is that "some fool has blundered" might be referring to the censors rather than the editorial team. It is not coincidental that "in general, it was policy to remove all details of specific atrocities" (Ó Drisceoil 1996: 48).[13] In this column, Myles seemed to be secretly playing out the intellectually and humanely concerned individual who strives to get information across unsuccessfully, not only because of the censorship apparatus but, crucially, because of the Irish people themselves, whom as he made clear in the letter to Saroyan, did not seem to care at all about the war. More important, however, is his reference to both the leading article and the column being "the same old stuff all the time". He is suggesting a degree of automaticity and monochromy in the writing of both pieces, and the impression given is that censorship is

[13] Cole offers a wider and official list of potentially censored material: "The censor's list of matter considered to have propaganda value for film or press included 'Church Dignitaries', 'Home Affairs', 'War News', 'Propaganda', 'Heads of States', 'Countries', 'Cities', 'Atrocities', 'Book Reviews', 'Military Leading Articles', 'Correspondents to Foreign Papers', 'Balance File', 'Names of People' and 'Miscellaneous Matter'" (2006: 32).

the cause. To make the pieces acceptable, Myles suggests, “you just change it round a bit”; that is, the informant has to ensure that the text conforms to the censorship standards—either by yielding to the pressure or by finding unique mechanisms to masquerade his or her opinion—before being suitable for publication. It was the latter course that Myles took with *Cruiskeen Lawn*. As he declared in column on December 31, 1943, Myles was devoted to the exercise of truthfulness and free speech, loathing any sort of constraint or regulation imposed on the process: “You see, one is ... one is simply a plain hack journalist, concerned with such prosaic things as ... getting things across, smoothly, fair play to all, square deal for my masters [...] Of course, when Truth is not paramount, one must cry aloud for Tolerance and free speech” (*CL*, December 31, 1943). He would nevertheless often ironically embody the opposite position, that of the extremely concerned nationalist who reveres the importance of censorship in conveying an image of the Irish people as ascetic, well-behaved and tame individuals; in other words, an image “which would contribute to the safeguarding of the national interest and the maintenance of good relations with other states” (Keogh 1994: 127). On June 1, 1944, for instance, he joked about the demand “for genuine, good quality Irishmen”. Nevertheless, he warned that “in its natural state the Irishman is … often tempted to …. (smiles deprecatingly) .. commit evil”. Therefore, he asserts the need “to see that at no stage on the production line is the Irishman exposed to any such temptation. And that is why the principle of censorship is so valuable to us” (*CL,* June 1, 1944). The reference in this case is both to Aiken, whose duty was to oversee the censorship campaign, and to de Valera, who clung to absolute neutrality as the only path for self-sufficiency and prevention of invasion.

Mussolini and Hitler died on April 25 and 30, 1945, respectively, events which marked an informal end to the war; it was made effective on May 8, with VE-Day, as termed by the United States. On May 12, 1945, the Censorship Order of the Emergency Powers Act, as well as many other Emergency restrictions, were removed. It was then that Myles subsequently introduced one of his main traits, noted by Brooker (2014) as one of the author’s keynote tones: superiority and authority at all times and on all topics, moral or otherwise. The day following de Valera’s response to Churchill’s accusation,[14] he incarnated the Taoiseach himself and imitated what he perceived as his patriarchal, condescending and aloof

[14] See p. 71 for extracts of Churchill’s accusation and de Valera’s response.

attitude toward the Irish people, who had complained about censorship and neutrality during the war:

> Now, it has been borne in upon me [...] that some of you resented the efforts of my censors. I say it with great humility but say it I must—that was terribly wrong of you. After all, when I now read the things you are writing without their help, I cannot help feeling you are trying to prove I was right [...] Now, while a further contest is being arranged in San Francisco,[15] let us take stock [...]. *I want to congratulate you, all of you—you have been very good.* You saw the point that a show loses its significance if it has no audience—you decided to *be* that audience; you realised that without the maintenance here of a miniature peace, people might in time recognise the essentially normal nature of war. (*CL,* May 17, 1944)

As the climax of his speech, Myles added that "I still have the old message: Hold fast to your humility, your poverty, your talent for suffering. These are the clean enduring things" (*ibid*). In other words, Irish people should invariably conform to the stereotype of a peasant, Gaelic, God-fearing Ireland celebrated in de Valera's 1943 speech. Myles was thus poking fun at de Valera's view of censorship, which "was [seen as] a prerequisite for maintaining the necessary sense of righteousness" (Lee 1989: 266). In playing de Valera, Myles also demonstrated his particular ease at "assuming an absurd position of vast and unassailable authority" (Taaffe 2008: 158). Myles's irony-loaded speech, which feels more like an implied denunciation of de Valera's censorial policies and introspective politics, was followed the next day by an even franker attack on Churchill's victory speech, which Myles claims to have written himself except for a particular section:

> Now upon one matter it is necessary for me to be explicit. The speech, as delivered by Mr. Churchill, contained disrespectful, arrogant, unmannerly and minatory references

[15] He is referring to the United Nations Conference on International Organization, otherwise known as the San Francisco Conference, celebrated between April 25 and June 26, 1945. As previously mentioned, Ireland was not invited to attend it on account of its neutral position during the war. Myles would eventually discuss the San Francisco Conference in his column. See section 4.2.1.1.

> to your Ireland. *Not one word of that was in my script!* They were inserted—*illegally,* I hold—by Mr. Churchill. And there was no misunderstanding about it. We had discussed the thing quite frankly, man to … to. … well, man to me. He confided to me the very words he wished to use and which, in breach of our long friendship, he eventually *did* use. (*CL,* May 18, 1945)

Myles later indicates that Churchill's views were "kindly read over the wireless for me by Mr. de Valera (to whose unfailing kindness to me impersonally I must here record) represent the correct and final attitude" (*ibid*). Furthermore, in a response to Churchill's self-laudatory mention to his restraint in not invading Ireland, he adopted an uncharacteristically serious tone: "Very odd indeed that a man should become uppish from living in Downing Street. Permit me to point out that it would *not* have been easy (the Irish Army had British-made arms, finest in the world) and as for 'natural,' it would have been *illegal,* cf. Emergency Powers Act. It would have been contrary to the rules of human conduct as enunciated by the United Nations" (*ibid*). Myles's response can be seen as the voicing of the general opinion of the public, one which was even shared in some parts of Britain and, most certainly, by the British Ambassador to Ireland, John Maffey, who "implied that Churchill had thrown away the diplomatic initiative without any real need or gain" (Keogh 1994: 200) in trying to entice de Valera into yet another diplomatic battle between Ireland and the United Kingdom. It was, more importantly, one of Myles's most outright defense of neutrality to date. If read along a passage from a November 21, 1944, article—a reply to a ferocious indictment of Irish neutrality coming from the *Yorkshire Post*—the resulting picture of Myles and neutrality emerges:[16]

> Indeed, it is all terribly paradoxical. For those same centuries Pat has been jeered at because he wanted to fight. Club at the ready, he ranged the world looking for a rough house, a donnybrook, a melée. He was a terribly uncivilised person. And now, bedad,

[16] It was undoubtedly perceived in Ireland that British newspapers promulgated a sense of animosity towards Ireland. As Elizabeth Bowen wrote in her "Report from Ireland" of November 9, 1940, to the Ministry of Information: "it would be well—if this were possible—to mitigate the tactlessness, with regard to this country, of the British press. This last is very important" (Bowen 2011: 53).

> he's no gentleman because he's decided to put away the club, sit down and have a smoke for himself. And in his own house, mind you. (*CL,* November 21, 1944)

3.2.2 *Cruiskeen Lawn* and wartime shortages in Ireland

In 1939 Lemass, former Minister for Industry and Commerce, was appointed head of the newly-formed Ministry of Supplies. Its sole function was to secure the distribution of an equal and sensible flow of basic goods during the Emergency. As Evans notes, "Lemass could now exercise an unprecedented measure of control over a wide range of industries and effectively policed the domestic market as well. The Minister for Supplies gradually came to assume almost unadulterated control over Irish economic life" (2011: 113). Such an early appointment during the war evidenced the degree to which a lack of supplies was liable to hit Ireland and, with the passing of time, highlighted an alarming dependence on British imports (particularly fuel), which were drastically cut by Britain during the war both in an attempt to face its own internal wartime shortages and also as a tacit punishment for Ireland's policy of non-involvement in the war effort (Evans 2014: 6-7).

In June 1943, de Valera publicly said in Kilrush, Co. Clare, that "there is nobody in this country who is not getting proper food" (qtd. in Share 1978: 36).[17] Such a desperate bid to promote the management of his Fianna Fáil government during the Emergency was made on the threshold of the 23 June general election, one in which de Valera failed to achieve a stable majority. It was, indeed, a severe overstatement. Wartime period in Ireland for the poor "meant poverty, unemployment and emigration" (Wills 2007: 223).[18] The reason for this was that restrictions, shortages and rationing were imposed on basic foodstuffs rather than luxury items, thus mainly affecting the underprivileged.[19] Tea, sugar, fish, butter, cocoa, eggs or

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[17] In fact, on January 16, 1941, Cosgrave had also accused Lemass of misinforming the Irish people and offering an abnormally optimistic picture of the degree to which supplies were in jeopardy: "For the better part of some 12 months now, the public has been informed, principally by the Minister for Supplies, that the situation with regard to supplies of essential commodities [...] was quite comfortable" (qtd. in Evans 2011: 130).
[18] Lee points out that while there are no precise emigration figures during wartime, a total of 198,537 travel permits were issued between 1940 and 1945, which gives an approximate idea of the number of Irish migrants at the time (1989: 124).
[19] Full rationing was introduced in 1942, long after the start of the war and at a time when the most basic resources were severely lacking in the country (Evans 2014: 30). Up until 1942, rationing was only occasional and limited to particular goods. For instance, sugar was not rationed until August 9, 1941 (*IT,* August 7, 1941).

milk, for a long time staples of the basic Irish diet, became occasionally unobtainable by the poor. Ferriter has remarked “the generally appalling physical environment in which the vulnerable lived” (2005: 391), the number of which was increasing dramatically over the course of the war, as well as the line that separated them from those who had the means: “shortages and rationing and the consequent black market [...] accentuated the very wide gap between rich and poor” (Share 1978: 36). In relation to trafficking, Wills has painted the picture that resulted from alternative shortages and rationing in either side of the border: “Batteries, candles, tins of cocoa, tea flowed steadily from the six to the twenty-six counties. Cattle were herded surreptitiously along unapproved roads. Butter, bacon, eggs and other produce were conveyed in the opposite direction. Boats rowed across Carlingford Lough after dark, laden with meat and eggs going north, bringing tea and sugar on the return voyage south” (Wills 2007: 153).[20] Girvin has painted a bleak picture of the Irish economy and how it was affected by shortages during the conflict:

> Reserves were low and by early 1941 some commodities had disappeared. By 1942 imports were down two-thirds on pre-war levels, while exports were down by about one-third [...]. By the end of 1940 the Department of Supplies estimated that there was only four weeks’ supply of tea, eight and a half weeks of petrol, and eleven of coal. By late 1941 the situation had deteriorated further: virtually all petrol-driven vehicles had disappeared and coal for railway engines was in short supply. (2006: no pagination)

Myles’s response to Emergency shortages, in the line of his thoughts on neutrality and censorship, was comic in nature but at the same time loaded with biting political satire. One of the most well-known *Cruiskeen Lawn* “Brother” articles of the period tackles food shortages in general through a conversation between Myles and a member of the Plain People of Ireland:

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[20] Evans (2014) discourses at large on profiteering, black market trade and trafficking during the Emergency. The State, particularly under the direction of Lemass, “deployed moral propaganda to discourage black market activity and promote equitable distribution” and “took chief responsibility for the *material* assault on ‘unfair’ market prices” (11). For more on this, see Lemass’s biographies (Farrell, 1991; Horgan, 1997; Garvin, 2009; Evans, 2011). Additionally, see Zweiniger-Bargielowska (2000) and Ó Drisceoil (2005).

> The brother has it all worked out.
>
> **What?**
>
> The war. How we can get through the war here in the Free State. I mean the rationing and brown bread and all that class of thing.
>
> **What is the nature of this plan?**
>
> It's like this. I'll tell you. We all go to bed for a week every month. Every single man, woman and child in the country. Cripples, drunks, policemen, watchmen—everybody. Nobody is allowed to be up. (*CL,* April 29, 1942)

Later, we are told that the reason for such an outrageous proposal is that "when nobody is up you save clothes, shoes, rubber, petrol, coal, turf, timber and everything we're short of". He subsequently added that large amounts of food would be saved as well inasmuch as "it's work that makes you hungry. Work and walking around and swallying pints and chawin' the rag at the street corner". Myles thought that after staying in bed all day, "all you'll ask for is an off slice of bread. Or a slice of fried bread to make your hair curly, says you". The representative of the Plain People of Ireland agreed in theory with the Brother's proposal and opined that "**he would do well to communicate this plan to the responsible Government department"** (*ibid*). Myles's "modest proposal" was possibly a response to an article published the previous day in the front page of the newspaper, which informed that "Eire has sufficient wheat and flour [...] to keep the country supplied with bread until the end of June" and that "at least 70,000 tons of wheat need to be imported to maintain the supply under rationing until the end of September" (*IT,* April 28, 1942). It came at a time when "the department's [Supplies] failure to secure supplies at an earlier stage resulted in poorer yields at a time when the British supply squeeze necessitated a significant increase in Irish self-sufficiency" (Evans 2011: 132). On the outer level, the column reads as a nonsensical and laughable proposal obviously impossible to carry out and only meant to entertain the reader; on a more specific level, this particular column could be read as an indirect attack on the government's poor handling of the question of wheat supplies, imports and exports. The

Brother claimed that "if nobody's up, there's no need for **annybody** to do anny [sic] work because everybody in the world does be workin' for everybody else" (*CL,* April 29, 1942), thus disagreeing in principle with the idea that Ireland had to be so overly dependent on British exports. He also hinted at the political strictness of the de Valera regime during the war and his trigger-happy use of the Emergency Powers:

> No newspapers, 'buses, pictures or anny [sic] other class of amusement allowed at all. And no matter who you are you must be stuck inside in the bed there. Readin' a book, of course, if you like. But no getting up stakes.
>
> **That strikes me as a curious solution to difficulties in this dynamic iron age.** (*Ibid*)

Since censorial pressures were not applied to the same degree on articles discussing shortages, Myles felt more at ease to comment on this consequence of the war. While most of his commentary adopted comic undertones and was aimed more at the nonsensical than the satirical or polemical,[21] he did not shy away from discussions of shortages and rationing within the political realm. One of such examples is a column published on December 1, 1944, which was a direct response to Dillon's letter to the *Irish Times* on November 28, 1944. The politician claimed that "many vital commodities cannot be produced in this country—e.g., tea, iron, ore, sufficient coal, machinery, oil, etc. These commodities must be purchased abroad. Commodities purchased must be paid for" (*IT,* November 28, 1944). Such a comment, derisive of the government's handling of the supply question during the war, could have naturally been expected to come from Dillon, who admittedly was "the most impressive political antagonist of the government during the Emergency" (Evans 2014: 169). Myles, wielding his often-used sword of duality in *Cruiskeen Lawn,* this time in support of the government, slashed back at Dillon by asking: "How 'vital' is tea? Is oil vital because, say, a privately-owned transport concern runs amok and scraps a system that can operate on native

[21] Among these, the fantastic inventions of the Myles na gCopaleen Research Bureau, aimed at solving Emergency problems, are worthy of mention. In particular, Myles devoted special attention to the question of "inferior fuel" (turf, instead of coal) and how to optimize railways. See *CL,* April 20, 1942; *CL,* May 22, 1942 or *CL,* May 27, 1942, for instance.

fuel so that it can be replaced by foreign machines using foreign oil? If coal be 'vital', how come we have lived for years without it?" (*CL,* December 1, 1944). To Dillon's claims that "to pay for commodities purchased abroad currency acceptable to the foreign vendor must be acquired. Part of this currency at least can only be acquired by selling exports for foreign currency" (*IT,* November 28, 1944), Myles jokingly responded that "foreign goods can be got by exporting services. Witness the admirable American textiles so freely worn here around Christmas—available through the exertions of hibernian labour in the Boston City Gasworks" (*CL,* December 1, 1944). This article reads as if Myles were advocating de Valera's narrative of self-sufficiency. He even goes so far as to say that "the agricultural export trade must be reduced to the barest minimum and the national economy revised to provide that exports shall consist as far as possible of labour, processing, skill; whiskey, for example, is an ideal export because it is a by-product" (*ibid*). Whether this commentary was made in earnest is difficult to tell, but it definitely points toward Myles being consciously unopposed to the Fianna Fáil agricultural ethos of self-sufficiency.

3.2.3 *Cruiskeen Lawn* and political developments during the Emergency

Cruiskeen Lawn started running in October 1940, when the Emergency was already underway and, by extension, with the Emergency Powers Act in full swing. Thus, a great part of the initial wartime events in Ireland—De Valera's rapid espousal of a neutrality policy, the subsequent application of the Act and the consequent and inevitable spawn of the censorship apparatus, as well as Hitler's invasion of Poland and France and the entirety of the "phoney" war—missed being addressed by Myles in *Cruiskeen Lawn* simply for temporal reasons. Nor was the 1938 general election, won by Fianna Fáil with the first overall majority in the history of the State and thus decisive to the outcome of the Irish role in the war. *Cruiskeen Lawn,* therefore, was born amidst a convoluted political background, and one in which Myles's critical involvement proved hazardous, not only for his future as a columnist but also for his position in the Civil Service (indeed, it would be precisely his unyielding, and most certainly careless, engagement with local politics in the column that cost him his position in 1953). As seen in previous subsections, he did nevertheless manage to slip passed the censor's eye his opinions on both censorship and neutrality on occasion, and their natural

consequences in the form of shortages. *Cruiskeen Lawn* was also witness to the 1943 and 1944 general elections and, perhaps more importantly, it also demonstrated a ready interest, albeit admittedly a heavily prejudiced one, in the developments of the Beveridge Plan in England and its potential application to the Irish case in the form of postwar planning. The elections, however, were contested by Irish parties under the heavy expressive burden of the Emergency Powers Act, and this affected both the political campaigns of the parties themselves—which Wills has defined as "acrimonious" and plagued by "dissatisfaction over the worsening economic situation" (2007: 330)—and external commentary on them. In fact, Girvin notes that "Fianna Fáil used censorship to circumscribe the opposition, and despite the changes in Irish politics since 1938, was still extremely confrontational; every threat to its majority was claimed as a threat to the nation, neutrality and on occasion, religion itself" (2006: 242). In a bid to reunite the country through patriotism, de Valera broadcast his 1943 St Patrick's Day speech[22] at a time when

> most [...] pieces of the Republican dream looked to be in tatters, with the collapse of rural Ireland one of its greatest failures. The small-farmer class was either buried alive by rural poverty or gone to England. And along with the vanishing Irish went the vanishing of the Irish language. (Wills 2007: 333)

Although Ireland's neutrality was perilously surviving the goings-on of the war, the speech was markedly rife with "the danger [...] of acute nostalgia; of shelter from modern-day concerns by taking mid-century political rhetoric and promises at face value" (Ferriter 2005: 4). It was, in other words, a complete dismissal of external influences and occurrences and embraced Ireland's non-involvement and non-committal attitudes to the war. As he had previously done in *An Béal Bocht* (Taaffe 2008: 105), Myles took a rather clear stand on the

[22] De Valera's 1943 St Patrick's Day Speech was actually a Raidió Éireann address entitled "On Language and the Irish Nation". It included his notorious formulation of an idealized vision of Ireland: "The ideal Ireland that we would have, the Ireland that we dreamed of, would be the home of a people who valued material wealth only as a basis for right living, of a people who, satisfied with frugal comfort, devoted their leisure to the things of the spirit – a land whose countryside would be bright with cosy homesteads, whose fields and villages would be joyous with the sounds of industry, with the romping of sturdy children, the contest of athletic youths and the laughter of happy maidens, whose firesides would be forums for the wisdom of serene old age" (qtd. in Moynihan 1980: 466).

issue, which was political and ideological in nature, in the sense that de Valera was intent on rejecting intervention and promoting pastoral autarky. Fianna Fáil reconstructed his public image after 1943, a fact that de Valera used to his advantage when he decided to call a snap election in 1944. The party fared much better: de Valera obtained his longed-for overall majority to the detriment of Fine Gael and other minor parties. In fact, "by 1944 Fine Gael was in serious political difficulty. It was poorly organized and financed and its coherence as a national political force was seriously in question" (Garvin 2006: 248). The 1944 election would allow Fianna Fáil to remain in government for the duration of the Emergency and, more importantly, to pass laws unopposed. For instance, Lemass announced further energy restrictions on June 7, 1944 (just five days after the election had taken place) and, in marked contrast with its Transport Bill of the previous month (which was eventually passed into law on December 8, 1944, as the Transport Act, 1944), it was impossible to Fine Gael or any other party to prevent them from coming into effect.

3.2.3.1 1943 and 1944 general elections

The hallmarks of the Fianna Fáil emergency government, in power from 1938 to 1943, were the discourses of neutrality, self-sufficiency and self-imposed moral isolationism; during the war, Ireland became, paradoxically, the most precise embodiment of the Sinn Féin doctrine: "Ourselves Alone". So far, and despite some dissenting voices such as Dillon's, neutrality was an accepted policy among all parties in the Dáil and the tenets of self-sufficiency had been working, with more or less success, ever since the establishment of the Free State. As for de Valera's intense manifestations on the need to shield Ireland from the moral malaise emanating from offshore, it was best articulated in his 1943 St Patrick's Day speech. Presumably a mocking response to full-sized portrait of de Valera that appeared on the front page of the newspaper on February 13, 1943, Myles somehow preempted the Taoiseach speech:

> We are extremely nice people. A humble community of persons drawn together in our daily round of uncomplicated agricultural tasks by the strongest traditional ties [...] Our conversation—gay, warm and essentially clean—is confined to the *charming harmless*

> *occurrences of every-day life* […] The wild and morbid degeneracy of the outer world does not concern us [...] A wide and benevolent administration protects us from *backin' alien horses,* I beg your pardon, bacchanalian courses […] What is called 'news' (by which one means the perverted sensationalism of the yellow press) *does not concern us*. We are not amused. *Rumour* (that recumbent jewel or lying jade) *once had it that a war was going to break out. Nothing ever came of it, of course.* [My emphasis] (*CL,* February 15, 1943)[23]

The piece, which is obviously ironic, was possibly Myles's most overt pronunciation on de Valera's introspective politics, as well as on the policy of neutrality and the concomitant censorial pressures.[24] Additionally, Myles was openly denouncing the general public's credulity and nonchalance when it came to the war itself and its lukewarm reports by the Irish press. The similarities to de Valera's speech, which would be broadcast a month later, are certainly striking, with the tropes of quotidian events, frugality, pastorality and baleful effects of the war being decidedly present. As Kiberd has put it, Myles and some other writers of his generation found very appalling "the alarming number of Irishmen, in the last century and in the present, who were willing to conform to these stereotypes" (Kiberd 1996: 503). Taaffe sees these columns as both satirizing "the disenchanted, middle-class Catholic civil servant" as well as exposing "the true limitations of the *sinn fein*" (2008: 130). It was thus one of the first instances of Myles's undermining of the official state's ideology, ironically stating that "I was pleased when recently a public man was permitted to announce publicly

[23] Nearly two months later, Myles made fun of de Valera's speech yet again by turning him into a banker, Mr Tramm, who takes part on a motion concerning the motto "the pen is mightier than the sword". Myles reports that Mr Tramm, who supported the motion, "stated that Ireland had been a lamp of civilisation at a time when Europe was enveloped in the druidic mists and miasmic vapours of pagan materialism and owed the fame of her golden age to her lifelong devotion to books and other objects of veneration and respect. It would be a sad commentary on our glorious and storied past if the house should decide that the alarums of war, which had never yet solved any problem but brought rapine, disease and death in its wake, were preferable to to the things of the spirit" (*CL,* April 9, 1943). De Valera even uses the phrase "the things of the spirit" in his speech.

[24] Throughout the column, Myles's stance in terms of Fianna Fáil political thought is often contradictory, constantly swinging between tacit support and overt abhorrence. See, for instance, p. 133, where the party's self-sufficient policy was not unopposed.

at last that we are, in fact, the best people in the world and consequently better than any other people".[25]

The 1943 election took place on June 23, 1943, three months after Myles's satire of de Valera's pastoral Eden. That particular day, he devoted a column to the electoral process and a hypothetical situation on election day:

> Yesterday I marched into the polling booth, happy that the decent Government had permitted me to take part in the complex quinquennial gestation that culminates in an expression of The People's Will. As usual, everybody looked as if they [...] were engaged in some criminal conspiracy. Shifty looks, muttering mechanical smiles. Women trying to look as if they had the remotest idea of the meaning of Irish politics. Youngsters of twenty-one coming in with a face that was intended to mean 'I supposed I'll have to vote but God be with the days of me dead chief Parnell.' A general air of deceit and pretence [...]. In the corner, a man that looked very like a member of the crew known as 'all right-thinking Irishmen' carefully reading a bound volume of *Irish Times* leading articles in order to find out for whom he should vote 'unless the country is to embark upon another decade of recriminations based upon a civil war that was fought at a time when a large body of the electorate was not even born'. (*CL,* June 23, 1943)

The main argument exposed here is, again, the passivity and indifference of a great majority of the Irish people at the time with respect to their political future and their rustic approach to the electoral process. Women, Myles seemed to think, knew nothing of Irish politics whatsoever and were exercising their right to vote in an act of pretense,[26] much in the same

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[25] Myles is very likely referring to a February 10, 1943, report of a meeting of Tippeary farmers attended by de Valera the previous day, where he claimed that "We are perhaps the most fortunate nation on the whole surface of the globe to-day. In many other countries at the moment people are starving, and undergoing the same agonies this nation had to undergo during the Famine" (*IT,* February 10, 1943).

[26] Misogyny was a habitual attitude in *Cruiskeen Lawn.* An article published on October 6, 1944, is very illustrative for a study of misogyny in the column. Dealing with the Women Writers' Club (1933-58, to which famous female writers Kate O'Brien and Elizabeth Bowen belonged) and the idea of female writers, Myles proffered a patriarchal and male chauvinistic comment: "It must be very nice being married to one of these dames. Home at night from the office, wore out and starving with the hunger (of all things). You take out [...] your latch-key and enter. No upsurge of meaty smells. Nothing only clickety-click. The old Remington is taking

way as young people, who regard wistfully their history lessons of the Home Rule while dismissing the realities of independent Ireland. Another man is seen to be reading Smyllie's daily prose for political advice, whose anti-Fianna Fáil rhetoric was mockingly imitated by Myles. Perhaps more important is the fact that Myles is positively inclined to the idea of voting, as well as his use of the word "permitted" when it comes to his voting rights, thus hinting at the Government's abusive application of the Emergency Powers. In an unusually explicit comment, Myles admits at the end that "I am glad it is over but for my part I will not celebrate when me man is returned. I am off the bier, as the corpse said when the drunken motorist crashed into the funeral" (*ibid*). "Me man" is clearly a reference to de Valera, since polls invariably indicated a Fianna Fáil victory, albeit a weak one. While it would certainly be unsafe to claim that Myles's political ideology distanced itself from Fianna Fáil—indeed, as will be seen in the following section, he followed a clear Fianna Fáil line on certain occasions—what is nonetheless clear is that the author harbored deep-seated feelings of animosity toward de Valera. In later years he would refer to him in private letters as an "illegitimate bowsie from the slums of New York now hiding in the Park not behind, but on, the backs of taxpayers" (O'Brien 2018: 368), a "murderous reptile" (*ibid*: 461) and would also remark "the established fact that de Valera is a bastard" (*ibid*: 378).[27]

The previous column was the extent of Myles's comments on the 1943 general election. As Myles had predicted, de Valera returned to power and formed a minority government, partially due to Labour's success (from 9 to 17 seats), "which stood to reap the harvest of urban discontent at wartime stringencies" (Lee 1989: 240)[28] and Clann na Talmhan's newly gained 13 seats. Fianna Fáil also remained in power thanks to, paradoxically, emigration, which "removed a large number of voters who might otherwise have punished the government for its lacklustre domestic performance" (Keogh 1994: 139). The following general election of 1944 was brought about by the failure of Fianna Fáil to pass the second reading of their Transport Bill—authored by Lemass, it proposed the

heavy punishment" (*CL,* October 6, 1944). For more on misogyny in O'Nolan's oeuvre, see Davison (1999), Long (2014: 149-190) and Rice (2014).

[27] Letters to Hector G.C of the *Sunday Independent* (February 15, 1964), Timothy O'Keeffe (March 10, 1965) and to the Editor of the *Sunday Telegraph* (April 9, 1965), respectively.

[28] These being "rationing and the general shortage of sugar, tea, butter and potatoes in the urban areas" which "gave an initiative to the opposition" (Keogh 1994: 139).

amalgamation of all railway companies into a state-owned company known as CIE (*Córas Iompair Éireann*) in an attempt to centralize transport in Ireland—[29], to which de Valera responded with a snap election. While Myles seemed to have been more active in his political commentary during the 1944 general election, he was less polemically so; there were, for instance, no relevant comments on the Transport Bill.[30] His first engagement with the event came on May 13, 1944, when he subtitled his column "(Special Plunging Edition)" and quoted an array of clichéd statements by members of the opposition, such as O'Higgins (Fine Gael) and Norton (Labour), who were abusing the expression "plunge into a general election" in reference to de Valera and Fianna Fáil. A few days later, however, he published a column entirely devoted to the general election. In this column, the impatience and despair that Myles showed the previous year is yet again brought to the fore, this time to the extent of proposing the creation of a quasi-anarchic (or, rather, "pan-cratic") system in which proportional representation is abolished:[31]

> I am interested in the President's decision that the parties in Leinster House should be again permitted to appeal to that mysterious and taciturn body of referees who live in the country—the people [...]. The tininess of our citizenry raises an interesting issue in relation to the General Election. My point is this—is a *representative* assembly really necessary in this country? Are not the electors sufficiently few to make known their wishes on political questions *direct*? I respectfully suggest that they are. I submit that deputies are unnecessary. Irish nation should assemble in person and end forever the unscientific paraphernalia of proxy and representation. (*CL,* May 16, 1944)

[29] The Transport Bill prompted corruptions scandals on the account that Lemass might have been secretly manipulating stock or informing friends of the upcoming rise in stock prices (Evans 2011: 154-5). See also Byrne (2013).

[30] He did nevertheless comment on it when it was formally established after Fianna Fáil achieved majority in the 1944 general election and was able to pass the Bill on December 8, 1944, and his response is best described as ambiguous. On the one hand, he remarked "our present disgraceful transport situation with its queues of shuddering waifs [sic] on the quays, contracting pneumonia and T.B. en route for Tullamore", but on the other hand he also described the planned station as the "erection of some monstrous concrete sausage" and derisively referred to CIE as "Chorus Empire Aaron" (*CL,* December 9, 1944).

[31] In the late 1950s he would attack de Valera's attempts at substituting Proportional Representation in favor of a first-past-the-post system. See section 5.3.2.

In consequence, he added, "*there will be no more elections,* no necessity for any more remonstrances from the Editor of the *Irish Times.* There will be no Senate, no Patres Conscripti with the emphasis on the first syllable" (*ibid*). At the end of the column he finally declared with a tint of critique that "when it is adopted, practically everybody will be a T.D. Practically everybody in Ireland will have £480 a year and free travel. How do you like that? Was ever a constitutional and economic problem so adroitly and simultaneously solved?" (*ibid*). The column is presumably a response to Smyllie's leading article of the previous day, when he repeatedly accused de Valera of disliking the system of proportional representation, thus suggesting that the Taoiseach was seeking to establish a dictatorship: "It's [proportional representation] greatest virtue in Eire, as we think, is the fact that it provides an almost absolute guarantee against political dictatorship" (*IT,* May 15, 1944). With his response, Myles's attitude did in part illustrate a perception of *Cruiskeen Lawn* "as a kind of critical parasite, with Myles acting the fastidious reader buried under acres of mediocre print" (Taaffe 2008: 137); that is, at a time when Smyllie and the entire newspaper were pouring all their energies into the general election and a Fine Gael victory by means of a coalition government (or, a National Government, as termed by General Mulcahy), Myles subverted that position and pointed the electorate in the opposite direction which he had previously criticized: non-committal, lack of interest in political developments.

The following week, Myles published yet again one of his cryptically political articles, this time on Fine Gael's candidate to Taoiseach General Mulcahy, who was at the time very active in the press promoting the idea of a National Government (an all-party cabinet for the duration of the war) and dilapidating Fianna Fáil's arguably poor management of the country during the Emergency. More importantly, Mulcahy and his idea of a National Government was very often cheered by Smyllie, who advocated that it "would tend to get rid of the political bitterness that had been such an unfortunate feature of Ireland's public life since the signing of the Treaty with Great Britain twenty-two years ago" (*IT,* March 17, 1944). Later in the week, Myles announced that "a rather distressing thing happened me the other day—broke two of my legs. A nice how do you do. If it wasn't for the other two I would be completely crippled and unable to fulfil my honourable plan to place self and trap at the disposal of General Mulcahy, when the big day comes" (*CL,* May 20, 1944). This comment perfectly illustrates "the idea that nonsense, or at least a finely-honed sense of

absurdity, was the best protection against all kinds of demagoguery and shrill polemics [...] in *Cruiskeen Lawn*" (Taaffe 2008: 91). By using nonsense to joke about him having four legs, Myles could in fact be remarking the impossibility of allying himself with Mulcahy in any way after the election, which was perhaps to be expected due to his poor popular support: "More than anyone else, he was tarred with the memory of the executions, the brutality of the civil war" (Valiulis 1992: 245). In the same column, Myles went further and criticized one of Mulcahy's public statements. Despite lacking any sensible line of argument other than dismissing the importance of Mulcahy's claim and applauding the uneducated rich, the fact that Myles decides to respond negatively to the Fine Gael candidate is telling by its very nature.

> 'Is it possible,' General Mulcahy said the other day—derisively, I assume, 'to attend a secondary school in Eire and pass for being educated without having studied Latin, science or a modern language.'
>
> Is not that rather ... reactionary? I know four men who make roughly £5,000 a year and they have so much stuff locked away that they just couldn't be bothered about G.S.R. or D.W.D.[32] Not one of them knows any Latin at all, they think science is what Gene Tunney[33] had and to one and all even H.M. English is an insoluble mystery. (*CL,* May 20, 1944)

As can be perceived throughout this section, Myles's political opinion in *Cruiskeen Lawn* is certainly inconsistent and ranges from an outright rejection of the two main candidates to an espousal of a depoliticized society. The following column, which follows a similar line in its double-sided critique, was published four days before the general election itself. This time, Myles offered himself as a candidate: "Would you make a note to give your NO.1 VOTE to MYLES na gCOPALEEN, P.C. (CINE GALL). At first I would not hear of going up, turned a deaf ear to the entreaties of my friends [...] But … the path of duty. I could not in conscience

[32] Great Southern Railways (transport company amalgamated into CIE in 1944) and DWD Distillery (Dublin-made Irish whiskey very popular during the early 1940s), respectively.
[33] James Joseph "Gene" Tunney (1897-1978), a famous boxer born in America to Irish parents.

rebut the reasoned case they had made. Eventually, with the utmost reluctance, I … consented … to allow my name to go forward" (*CL,* May 26, 1944). What is most surprising about this excerpt are perhaps the linguistic pyrotechnics at work in his coinage of "CINE GALL", which seems to suggest the name of the proposed Clann na Talmhan, Fine Gael, Labour and National Labour coalition, and at the same time work as a craftily elaborated pun ("CINE GALL" sounds like "cynical" to some extent). Later in the column, Myles expounded at large on his crazy electoral promises:

> If returned (though indeed I am not so sure that I have come from there) I shall press for the repeal of the Union (South Dublin), more intensive study of Poyning's lore, a vast national unplanning scheme with crazy pavements, small unradiating intravenous boreens, minuscule …. weakness stations, deflation of all airports, restriction of all runways to length not exceeding four feet, construction of a few small half-timbered Roe-Mahonesque terminal buildings, outlawing of private enterprise, exploitation of the horse for all transport purposes, vesting of all public activities, companies, ventures [...]. (*Ibid*)

Admittedly, some of the proposals respond to Myles's usual flights of fancy, but his "vast national unplanning scheme" is a subversion of the postwar planning tendencies initiated by the Irish government and some vocational bodies during the middle stages of the war. It was, more particularly, an attack on the main planning architect in the Dáil, Lemass, who introduced a British White Paper on Full Employment that month and recommended the government follow its Keynes and Beveridge-inspired approach to economic planning (Lee 1989: 230). But despite some of the government's misgivings, Myles was certain of a Fianna Fáil victory, and on May 30, 1944, the day the election was held, he made one of his typical bilingual jokes which conveyed more than mere linguistic playfulness: "Consider this text. Hibernia est in tres Parties divisa, Fianna Fail, Fine Gael, et hoc opus—oh sorry—hic Labour. Very well. Am I to be told forsooth that 'Fianna Fail Parties' are 'unknown in Latin'?" (*CL,* May 30, 1944).

3.2.3.2 Postwar planning

The debate around the question of postwar planning in Ireland, motivated by the constantly increasing popularity of the Beveridge scheme in Britain, piqued Myles's interest as soon as it became a tangible reality. Postwar planning in Ireland manifested itself in three different areas: the National Planning Exhibition (25 April-5 May, 1944), the report of Catholic-minded Commission on Vocational Organisation (August 1944) and Bishop Dignan's *Outlines of a Scheme of National Health Insurance* (October 1944). To some extent, each covered different aspects of potential postwar improvements for the country: the National Planning Exhibition concerned itself with infrastructure in a general sense, advocating "new towns linked by motorways, modernist architecture, pre-fabricated holiday villages" and reflecting "a sincere attempt to improve living conditions for the poor and apply modern social principles to the Irish situation" (Wills 2007: 287);[34] the Commission focused its efforts on the economic and political realms, more particularly in restructuring the civil service, "regarded as synonymous with bureaucracy, [it] was thought to be the main defect in the Irish political system [and] was castigated for its inefficiency and for its undemocratic practices" (O'Leary 2000: 103);[35] finally, Bishop Dignan's document, modeled after Beveridge's report but infused with the main tenets of Catholic social teaching, was a severe attack on existing social—particularly medical—services in Ireland and "advocated that the existing services be unified and transferred to an insurance basis" (Whyte 1971: 102).[36] What all of these attempts had in common was their relentless pursuit of an improvement of social, political and economic conditions of postwar Ireland.

Since wartime censorship did not apply to commentary on any of these groups or proposals—which Myles dubbed collectively as "The Royal Irish Academy of the Post-War World"—on the account that they were not war-related topics per se, he felt unrestrained to

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[34] Despite its marked relevance within the Irish postwar planning context, the National Planning Exhibition does not figure prominently in historical surveys of the Emergency. For more on it, see Curran (2001), O'Leary (2014) and Rowley (2015).

[35] O'Leary's *Vocationalism and Social Catholicism in Twentieth Century Ireland* (2000) offers a profound analysis of the Commission, its report and consequent political responses. For more, see Whyte (1971), Lee (1979), Clear (1995) or Evans (2014).

[36] Unlike the National Planning Exhibition, Dignan's report has been the object of considerable examination in recent times. Apart from Whyte's seminal *Church and State in Modern Ireland,* 1923-1970 (1971), where the outline is discussed in detail, see Cousins (1999, 2003), O'Leary (2000) and Fahey (2007) for further information.

discuss them at ease within the pages of the *Irish Times.* Myles's position was optimal for what would become a systematic and year-long undermining of all postwar initiatives: as a senior civil servant, O'Nolan was fully equipped with the pertinent jargon and, as Acting Principal Officer for the Department of Local Government and Public Health, he "had unique access both to the proposals themselves and indeed to the private reactions of senior members of the Fianna Fáil administration, most notably Séan MacEntee" (Curran 2001a: 355), to whom O'Nolan was Private Secretary at the time. In fact, as Wills duly notes, he "was nominally responsible for implementing any changes in health provision" (2007: 288), which made him particularly receptive to Dignan's proposals. As a senior civil servant, he was also bound to take offense to the Commission's vitriolic attack on the Irish civil service and decentralization of the Irish political system. In fact, "the vocationalist lobby was well known for its harsh criticisms of civil service bureaucracy and the expansion of state power. The government, on the other hand, favoured strong central power" (Evans 2014: 126). The Commission believed "that the political could be neatly separated from the socio-economic [and] failed to devise a satisfactory relationship between the national vocational assembly and the Dáil" (O'Leary 2000: 115). These points would later become a bone of contention in the column.

Myles had already pronounced himself against the emerging postwar planning tendencies in 1943, which were the inevitable consequence of the popularity of Beveridge.[37] He had harshly laid out his thoughts on postwar planning as early as spring 1944, when he claimed that "we are very unenterprising copycats if you ask me" (*CL*, April 13, 1944) in reference to the stirring attempts to postwar planning in imitation of Britain. He pursued this point on May 2, 1944, 3 days before the termination of the exhibition:

> I have only one little complaint against the National Planning Exhibition. It's (keep this under your hat) it's .... not very well planned [...]. I was, between ourselves, a little bit disappointed. My view is that it is rather late in the day (1944, remember) to start planning this old country of yours. You will see from the paper I read before the Statistical Society that the place is hopelessly uneconomic and should have been

[37] See *CL,* December 20, 1943, *CL,* December 24, 1943 and *CL,* April 13, 1944.

> evacuated years ago [...] Could we ... dare ... not to know or care anything about planning, when it is so modern, so *essential* my dear, so frightfully vital? Could paddy leave off from copying just for five minutes? (*CL*, May 2, 1944)[38]

It becomes evident that Myles saw planning as a mixture of political opportunism and pretentious and even puerile imitation which failed to appreciate the nuances and complex layers of the country's social and economic needs. James A. Walsh has perceived a mixture of apathy and suspicion, and described Myles's review of the exhibition as "excoriating" (2019: 10). As planning became a widespread idea, his critique turned even more violent; he defined the whole postwar planning enterprise in the following terms: "foreignism in its filthiest guise stalks the land" (*CL,* July 6, 1944).[39]

While these initial approaches to postwar planning are couched in a discourse of intransigence and negativity, Curran notes that "as the debate for planning gained momentum and direction, however, so O'Nolan's discussion of it also gained in penetration and coherence" (Curran 2001a: 356). The Exhibition had been unceremoniously closed by MacEntee,[40] but the planning debate ascended to the bureaucratic realm with Dignan's upcoming outline of improvement of social services and the Report of the Commission for Vocational Organization,[41] both of which were contested almost simultaneously by Myles between September and October 1944 and which, in essence, advocated a national health insurance scheme. De Valera was presented the Report of the Commission for Vocational Organization on August 1. Myles first commented on the Report on September 18. On

[38] Throughout the planning debate, he used the names "Paddy", "Pat" or "Pawd" as additions to his already popular epitaph "Plain People of Ireland", in order to refer to a variety of particularly gullible and unsophisticated Irish individuals.

[39] As Wills (2007: 287) remarks, Myles had already adopted an attitude of spiteful repudiation of what he termed as "blushing self-conscious foreignism" (*CL,* April 13, 1944), more particularly towards artists—especially painters and actors—that embraced foreign influences in art indiscriminately, merely for the sake of aesthetic novelty.

[40] Curran (2001a: 356) interestingly remarks MacEntee and O'Nolan's good relationship as Minister and Secretary, as indicated by a letter received from MacEntee's wife. Taaffe (2008: 152) also points out Myles's echoes of MacEntee's adversary position regarding the debate.

[41] Myles commented widely on the Exhibition on two further occasions; see *CL*, May 10 and *CL,* May 27, 1944. His definitive judgement of the exhibition summarized his thoughts: "eighty per cent. of what has been put before us is a blatant imitation of what tremendous and strictly local revolutions have thrown up elsewhere and our 'planners' have lacked the wit to dish up even some native sort of jargon" (*CL,* May 10, 1944).

learning that the Commission wanted the Report to be translated into Irish for the benefit of the Gaeltacht, Myles replied that "first, I say, let ye have your report translated into English. Let ye have said for ye, objectively, accurate and *once*, what ye have to say. Then have, by all means, the solemn farce of translation" (*CL*, September 18, 1944). With such a statement, he was introducing both his dismissal of the importance of the Report and his opinion that its contents were at best inaccurate, and at worst injudicious. Myles was quick to detect that the manuscript "manifested a prejudiced interpretation and analysis of the facts" (O'Leary 2000: 147). Both Curran (2001a: 360) and Taaffe (2008: 152) agree that Myles's examination of the 1944 postwar proposals was the most virulent but also best informed from the financial and administrative point of view in the whole of the Irish press. A column published on the following day proves this point. Addressing the Report's claim that an all-encompassing system of trade unions in Ireland would bear no cost on the taxpayer, Myles claimed that

> Where does one begin to explain the elements of what is involved here? The Commissioners must try to understand that all taxation is merely a mechanism for re-distributing the national income, taking away from those who *have* so that the general public good may be effected. Since *everybody*, with the possible exception of confined lunatics and paupers, has *something*, everybody is a tax-payer [...]. (*CL,* September 19, 1944)

He later adds that "this can be done—within the present book of rules—only by subsidies. And subsidies mean taxation. I do not find that this Report is a very … deep document" (*ibid*). He was dilapidating the idea of vocational organizations as seen by the Commission—which was, in essence, a corporatist approach to healthcare insurance—and defending a more centralized view of the functions of the State, as well as the State's command of the financial and labor market.[42] According to Evans, the Report was perceived as a natural response to

[42] Not only were corporatist interests evident in the Commission for Vocational Organization—whose membership was predominantly Catholic—but also in some other Catholic organizations of the time. For instance, the Catholic Social Service Conference (CSSC), whose establishment was overseen by McQuaid himself, followed the vocational-corporate line: "In broad terms, the philosophy of the Catholic Action subscribed to that of the vocational lobby, which was critical of the invasive state" (Evans 2014: 119).

the extraordinary powers self-imbued by the State during the war: "During the Emergency, the state accumulated power and initiated schemes which, in encroaching upon individual freedom and property rights, tickled this particular nerve" (Evans 2014: 115). In fact, the idea of planning as perceived by the more conservative sections of Fianna Fáil—and defended by MacEntee and Myles—was based on state centralization of all projects. As it occurred with the establishment of the Committee on Economic Planning in 1942: "De Valera preferred to keep the 'planning' in political hands. So potentially sensitive a subject would not escape his own control. Instead of the committee of senior civil servants, the cabinet established a Committee on Economic Planning, consisting of de Valera, Lemass and the Minister for Finance, Séan T. O'Kelly" (Lee 1989: 230). De Valera himself refused to apply most of the implementations suggested in the Report; instead, he adopted an attitude of ambivalence and put into motion only the minor recommendations since, much like Myles in the column, "he was suspicious of the influence and motive of corporate interests" (O'Leary 2000: 152).

A month later, Bishop Dignan began a press campaign of promotion of his own outline for social services, which coincidentally was considerably in line with what had been proposed by the Commissioners. Myles's response was swift and unambiguous:

> The day before yesterday I read in a newspaper about 'a threat to Irish culture' [...]. Funny that this should appear in the same issue containing an Irish 'Beveridge Plan,' in the same year in which Pat has excelled himself in a disgusting aping of foreign technological and social catch-words: funnier that such activity should be designated 'culture'. (*CL*, October 20, 1944)

"A disgusting aping of foreign technological and social catch-words", or as he put it in July of that same year, "foreignism in its filthiest guise stalks the land", became Myles's official approach to the work of the planners: he rejected their proposals on the basis that the realities of Irish experience did not fit into the British mould that they farcically imitated. With respect to this particular column, Taaffe suggests that Myles sees Irish culture in general as "a phantasm suspended somewhere between the shibboleths of a national tradition and insecure imitation of European fashion". Additionally, she points out that "as his impatience with

Ireland's 'Beveridge Plan' indicates, increasingly the preoccupations of *Cruiskeen Lawn* were less those of the urbane man of letters than of the distracted civil servant" (Taaffe 2008: 151). Dignan's outline was the culmen of the planning fever that overcame Irish policy makers and Catholic Church echelons, and it was based on two White Papers published by the British government and inspired by Beveridge which sought to extend medical social services to a wider section of the population.[43] Dignan's outline proposed an extensive range of medical and social benefits, "including retirement pensions, unemployment insurance, sickness benefits of up to fifty per cent of weekly earnings, maternity benefits, widows' and orphans' pensions [or] children's allowances" (Curran 2001a: 357-8), among others. Nevertheless, it is also worth noting that "in fact the Dignan scheme was devised to preempt demands for a greatly extended and rationalised state social security and medical service" (Cook 1986: 76).

On October 19, 1944, O'Nolan appeared anonymously in the pages of the *Irish Times* as MacEntee's Private Secretary. He sent a letter to the newspaper on behalf of his Minister stating that "if by a scheme for an extension of social insurance is meant a proposal substantially worked out in detail, supported by factual argument and *embodying estimates of the expenditure involved and concrete proposals for defraying the cost,* the Minister can categorically state that no such scheme has been submitted to him" (*IT,* October 19, 1944)[44] [My emphasis].[45] Myles would ferociously pursue the question of expenditure in subsequent occasions as the most severe fault of Dignan's proposal: "As the basis on an insurance scheme, I confess I was a bit flabbergasted by the grandiose dimension of the conception and turned quaking to the section headed 'Contributions' to find what vast tolls on individual incomes and industry were involved. *On this subject there was not a word of information!*" (*CL*, October 28, 1944). In short, "to O'Nolan's astonishment, no pilot studies had been undertaken to evaluate the Bishop's proposals. Unlike the Beveridge Plan, the approximate

[43] Namely, the February 1944 *A National Health Service,* published by the Minister for Health Henry Willink.
[44] *NB:* No *Cruiskeen Lawn* column appeared on October 19, 1944.
[45] MacEntee pronounced himself in similar terms on Dignan's scheme during a Dáil debate on November 8, 1944: "I have had the paper examined in my Department. The examination revealed that the paper in general did not take due cognisance of the several very complex fundamental difficulties which the author's proposals involved, that many of these proposals were impracticable" (qtd. in Whyte 1971: 110). It is very likely that O'Nolan, being MacEntee's Private Secretary, was among those in charge of examining the proposal. Nevertheless, MacEntee was unable to give a fleshed out response as to the alleged impracticability of the scheme to either General Mulcahy during his enquiry in the Dáil or to Dignan himself through correspondence.

costs of which had been calculated, Dignan's scheme had received no such scrutiny of its economic feasibility" (Curran 2001a: 360). However, his staunchest attack on Dignan's proposal, and the one that shows the degree to which he felt disgruntled and even offended by the persistence of the planners, came also in late October, this time as Myles himself:

> My Honour has perused the report on social insurance issued by the Royal Irish Institute of Insurance and Health, Ltd., and I avert that—bar only the egregious tone recently issued on 'vocational organisation'—nothing like it has lighted on this land of yours during the odd two centuries of my residence here [...]. Both documents are well-intended, their plenitude of gaffes unconscious. Where both documents come together on a single issue, they differ with a sharpness that will embarrass the savants concerned [...]. However divergent they may be, they both advocate (insofar as I can understand them, at all events) what one might call a neo-fascism. Both assail the fitness of the Government to carry out several of its most material duties, and demand that these should be transferred to certain 'voluntary' and 'vocational' bodies not directly answerable to your Oireachtas. (*CL,* October 26, 1944)[46]

In dubbing both Dignan's scheme and the Commission for Vocational Organization report as "neo-fascist" proposals, Myles was intelligently using wartime vocabulary, and one which was commonly used in its rigorous negative sense in ordinary conversations, to undermine the potentiality of a National Health Insurance Society. Both the Report of the Commission and Dignan's scheme proffered opinions that "were supportive of the government in time of war but overwhelmingly critical of Fianna Fáil's management of the country and the economy during the Emergency" (Evans 2014: 127). Furthermore, at the time the *Irish Times* was one of the papers with widest circulation in Ireland and Myles's readership had grown substantially after his definitive switch to English, thus turning *Cruiskeen Lawn* into a

[46] Myles had also denounced the previous day the high degree of political intrusion affected by the proposal, which claimed that a new Minister of Social Services needed to be appointed for an optimal management of the new National Health Insurance Society. Myles was quick to respond: "Surely we are going a wee bit fast here? For one thing it means the amendment of your excellent Constitution, and a Referendum. The exclusion of the President and the Seanad from the reckoning—the extinction of your Oireachtas—that is a big thing to advocate so lightly" (*CL,* October 25, 1944). Once again, Myles's critique denounced Dignan's inability to fully articulate the costs, approximate or otherwise, of his scheme, nor its potential consequences within the political arena.

potentially damaging—or enshrining—political platform. As Taaffe has put it: "*Cruiskeen Lawn* would certainly be a useful ally in any public debate, given its self-professed reputation as the enemy of native humbug and cant, and especially considering that it was (quite literally) well-placed to undermine Smyllie's anti-Fianna Fáil commentary across the page" (2008: 151).[47] It is precisely for this reason that the postwar planning debate is important within a study of *Cruiskeen Lawn* and Irish politics: in subverting what he perceived as the follies of the planners, Myles was taking sides in the debate, clearly positioning himself alongside the official policy espoused by his Department and his Minister, which overall was in harmony with the general Fianna Fáil ethos.[48]

Whyte has claimed that "behind Fianna Fáil, one can perhaps detect the influence of the civil service. This is not an easy factor to document, because in Ireland [...] civil servants are anonymous, and that statements of policy are made by the minister or at least in his name. But it would not have been surprising if civil servants had reacted unfavourably to [...] both documents—the Dignan Plan implicitly, and the Vocational Organisation Report explicitly and at length" (1971: 113). While Whyte fails to mention *Cruiskeen Lawn* and its helping hand in the debate, his claim with respect to Irish civil servants and both reports reverberates with O'Nolan's attitude during the controversy. Whether Myles was blandly subscribing to his Minister's official position or not is difficult to tell, since of course MacEntee certainly knew of O'Nolan's *Irish Times* persona and had great esteem for his Secretary's literary abilities (Cronin 1990: 133). In this regard, Taaffe concedes that "understandably, on points of conflict Myles did not usually comment on matters directly relating to O'Nolan's own

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[47] Regarding the planning question, Myles was, in fact, effectively fighting Smyllie, his own editor, across the page. Smyllie was a fervent advocate for planning, as demonstrated in a 13 February editorial, where he put forward the following argument: "The average man [...] takes a narrow view of planning: he conceives it as something to do with the beautifying of towns, and cannot see why towns cannot be beautified without all that 'song and dance.' He is, of course, partly right and partly wrong. He is right in his assumption that planning demands a certain measure of national and civic discipline; he is wrong if he believes that it entails nothing more than the planting of a few trees here and there, or the insistence upon a particular style of architecture for a particular street" (*IT,* 13 February 1943). This passage somehow raises the doubt whether Smyllie was actually responding to Myles's derisive anti-planning discourse or whether it simply followed his usual line of anti-Fianna Fáil commentary.

[48] After the end of the war, Myles did not forget to remind the planners of their extravagant promises. Referring to postwar planning, he declares that "the whole thing was a joke. Some people carried the same joke to dangerous lengths—I instance Sir Albert Beveridge, the British statesman, who went so far as to promise his wards immunity from want and worry evermore. I hold—and held—that his was inadvisable and that the more intelligent citizens would realise that all these grandiose proposals [...] were evoked by a mass war psychosis" (*CL,* May 14, 1945).

Minister or Department" (Taaffe 2008: 151). Entering the realm of speculation, one could also argue that O'Nolan was using the *Cruiskeen Lawn* platform to sing the praises of his Minister so as to be eligible for further internal promotion, or even an access to the political elite. Be that as it may, it is a fact that Myles's open skirmish with the work of the planners and on further social security suggests a sharp conservative outlook on his part. As Taaffe notes, "he also showed a large measure of resistance to the idea that the state—or a body not answerable to the state—should be allowed the degree of interference in the individual's life as would be required by the implementation (and funding) of a national health scheme" (*ibid*: 152). Wills follows this view of Myles's conservatism, and concedes that "it's hard to have much sympathy with O'Brien's attacks on plans for a fairer medical system. After all, he didn't have any alternative schemes to suggest" (2007: 289). What is perhaps more important in this subchapter is the clash between the public order and ideas stemming from the Catholic hierarchy and vocationalism, and his positioning in favor of the former.

3.3 Conclusions

The present chapter has attempted to provide a comprehensive overview of *Cruiskeen Lawn* during the Second World War, a period officially dubbed in Ireland as the Emergency. This period is historically relevant for the country in that it meant the assertion of its independence at the social, political and economic levels. During the war, the government pursued an ironclad—albeit secretly pro-Allied—neutrality, which led to a politics of insularity and self-sufficiency, materialized in rationing and shortages of all essential commodities. According to the leading political force of the country, Fianna Fáil, and Éamon de Valera, the Taoiseach, such an external relations policy could only be safeguarded by the implementation of media censorship (newspapers, radio, cinema and even literature). Domestically, the country underwent two general elections (1943 and 1944), which were won by Fianna Fáil, first forming a minority government and then seizing absolute control of the Dáil the following year. Given the scant amount of resources at the government's disposal, most of the political energies were directed toward postwar planning, first in the form of a National Planning Exhibition, and then through the reports of the Commission on Vocational Organization and the National Health Insurance Society.

On the question of neutrality and censorship, Myles exhibited a duality of views which was essentially shared by most writers and intellectuals living in Ireland during the Emergency: neutrality was a positive policy and one which could only benefit the country in times of widespread disruption in Europe; censorship, on the other hand, was felt as a pernicious and insular force which implied bidirectional impediments: it was impossible to procure or provide unfiltered information. During the war, Myles's political position featured a high degree of indeterminacy: on some issues, he clearly aligned himself with some of the traits of the Fianna Fáil-government ethos; on others, however, he was severely antagonistic and adopted a vitriolic viewpoint on many of the government's strategies during the war, particularly on Lemass, Minister for Supplies, whose efforts he implicitly mocked in several columns. Furthermore, the medium that hosted *Cruiskeen Lawn,* the *Irish Times,* was a hazardous platform from which to take a stance on the war. It was, even by wartime standards, heavily policed due to its pro-Allied tendencies. It was also ferociously anti-Fianna Fáil, which was a problem for *Cruiskeen Lawn* and its manifested political ambivalences. Following Young (1997: 118), *Cruiskeen Lawn* became a dissenting voice within the newspaper itself, as Myles often derided Smyllie's editorials and counterbalanced the publication's political outlook. Whether in relation to the government or to Smyllie's editorials, Myles's columns fiercely contested, and at times staunchly supported, authority. While this was a general feature of the column throughout its lifetime, this aspect is rendered all the more important during the war. Cultural materialists have perceived that it is "through such stories, or representations, that we develop understandings of the world and how to live in it. The contest between rival stories produces our notions of reality, and hence our beliefs about what we can and cannot do" (Sinfield 1989: 23). Myles's direct interpellations of the official narrative of insularity and disinformation were an attempt at distorting de Valera's hegemonic discourse, but also evidence of his own desire to engage in counter-ideological discourse.

Myles was more explicit on domestic issues, since censors were comparatively less fastidious. The 1943 and 1944 elections are important within the *Cruiskeen Lawn* canon, since they open the way for more precise political interpretations of the column. During both elections, Myles showed an acute sense of despondency toward the actual electoral process, eliciting the conclusion that the Irish people exhibited little or no concern about the political

situation in the country, of which they were at best misinformed and at worst utterly ignorant. In both elections, Myles acknowledges Fianna Fáil's clear position of power but demonstrates a fierce distrust toward de Valera. Incidentally, Myles shows no preference for Fine Gael its his Civil War veteran General Mulcahy, whom he mocks repeatedly. Myles's implicit penchant for Fianna Fáil's more conservative ideals is implicit in the column, but he was typically suspicious of any kind of extremism or social hypocrisy, which led him to deprecate de Valera due to his advocacy of an impractical, unachievable Gaelic Ireland. His social conservatism is perhaps most clearly seen in his treatment of the postwar debate, in which he participated to a polemic degree untypical of *Cruiskeen Lawn.* He dismisses all attempts at postwar planning as "foreignism in its filthiest guise", criticizes the more planning-inclined section of the government (particularly Lemass) and becomes the staunchest ally of MacEntee, his own Minister, in the public debate surrounding the proposal for a new health service. The postwar debate, which lived on after the war, is important in *Cruiskeen Lawn* because it is proof of the existence of a deep interest for the political and the social on Myles's part.

CHAPTER 4. *CRUISKEEN LAWN AND THE* YEARS OF STAGNATION, 1945-54

4.1 Introduction

After the war, the Emergency Powers Act and its provisions began to be slowly revoked. While the Act remained in operation in some form or another until September 2, 1946, publications were, for the most part, granted a certain degree of breathing space. This became apparent in the *Irish Times,* particularly Smyllie's editorials—which turned overwhelmingly pro-Allied, even more so than during the war—as well as in Myles's column. Although still subject to meticulous scrutiny both within and outside the paper, Myles managed to engage in subversive commentary on international affairs in a less ambiguous manner and more specifically directed to one side or the other. This has also been perceived by Taaffe, who manifests that "up until the mid 1940s, Myles had always respected certain limits, whether due to the vigilance of the *Irish Times* or to O'Nolan's own circumspection, and perhaps a

certain weariness was showing in his more unguarded attacks" (2008: 169). He certainly took advantage of the increasingly lax vigilance of the censors, as his postwar columns glaringly displayed his abhorrence of Hitler's deeds in concentration camps, but also his absolute disapproval of inhuman war-ending methods such as the atomic bomb and hasty death sentences to war criminals. Furthermore, Myles also addressed the questionable claims of democracy in the postwar world made by the Soviet Union and the United States's self-commendation or patronizing attitude toward Ireland on account of her neutrality. As for domestic affairs, Myles's line of argument initially remained prudent and, to some extent, noncommittal, restricted to some sporadic comments on partition, the 1945 presidential election, and the welfare state model desired by some in Ireland. However, as Borg, Fagan and McCourt intelligently perceive, "there is a slow but noticeable turn, a levelling of temper and timbre from absurd flights to a (somewhat) more grounded focus on the local and concretely political through the various forms of fakery foisted upon The Plain People of Ireland by state and local bodies" (2017: 5). Indeed, as time went on, his political satire became more incisive and abusive at times, an attitude which increasingly became a cause of annoyance for his Fianna Fáil (and, for a short period of time, Fine Gael) employers in the civil service, culminating in his forced resignation on the grounds of ill health in 1953 after a row with his minister over a series of columns. Most importantly, however, Myles intervened to a greater or lesser degree in the elections that took place over the late 1940s and 1950s which saw Fianna Fáil's temporary descent from absolute dominion over Irish politics.

Chapter 4, therefore, will examine Myles's observations on the major political events that occurred during this period. The chapter will consist of two main sections: the challenges of postwar Ireland, and the Inter-Party (1948-51) and Fianna Fáil (1951-4) governments. At the end of the chapter, the conclusions gathered after the discussion of this period of political commentary as exercised in *Cruiskeen Lawn* will be exposed.

4.2 The challenges of postwar Ireland

Shortly after the end of the war, Myles declared, rather candidly, that "we can't simply go on pretending we're not part of the world. We'll simply have to face facts and we'll have to stop

being medieval" (*CL,* March 26, 1946). The comment was in relation to Ireland's position with respect to the Commonwealth. As contradictory as it would later prove in respect to the column's postwar line, it somehow strikes as applicable to Ireland during the late 1940s and most of the 1950s. De Valera's neutrality, executed almost flawlessly during the war, seemed to have become a sort of political status quo in the shape of stalwart protectionism and cultural isolationism from which postwar governments were hesitant to depart. Skelly notes that while "interaction with other states and [pursuit] of the country's interest abroad" was not inhibited, "neutrality remained a priority" (1996: 63). Even though the 1950s laid "the foundations for a decisive break with a mediocre past", they are, for the most part, irrecoverably "etched in the popular imagination as the decade of crisis and stagnation in the Republic" (Kennedy 1989: 13). On account of her neutrality, Ireland did not take part in the San Francisco Conference or was represented in Potsdam, which were in effect meetings destined to shape the geopolitical future of the world.[1] Furthermore, Ireland was not on particularly good terms with any of the victors, which also thwarted any possibility of further short-term international relations.[2] Myles did not particularly foster warm feelings toward any of the victors either and seemed bent on undermining the highly valued and publicly exalted concept of democracy. Myles saw Russia's communist regime as evil, restrictive and undemocratic, but he also deplored the UK's introduction of the welfare state system after the war and the USA's grandiose designs for the postwar world and international interference. Such rancor necessarily extended to the United Nations, which he ironically referred to as UNO (United Nations Orchestra) and to any attempt at international covenants, such as the postwar conferences mentioned above. Myles, who entertained his own conspiracy theories, suggested that these were mere diversions designed by the world powers

[1] Ireland, however, displayed a cautious interest in pursuing international relations with other countries. Its application to the United Nations in 1946 was vetoed by Russia, but the subsequent de Valera and Costello Administrations remained intent on applying for membership: "Behind his mask of public indifference, de Valera strongly endorsed Ireland's entry into the United Nations. In fact, the decision to seek UN membership marked his reassertion of an Irish commitment to international organisations and involvement in international affairs" (Skelly 1996: 69).

[2] Ferriter notes that American perceptions of Ireland at the time were biased and, to some extent, erroneous regarding relations with the Soviet Union: "It was also significant that the US ambassador in Dublin from 1948 to 1950, George Garrett, [...] believed that Ireland was as vulnerable as any other country to communist infiltration owing to its economic depression, despite Ireland's seemingly impeccable anti-communist credentials" (2005: 467). See Murphy (2000) and Whelan (2000) for more on American perceptions of Ireland's relation to communism.

with the aim of "keeping people's minds off what [they are] *really* at" (*CL,* February 19, 1946).

In the domestic realm, Myles's attention followed De Valera's political priorities by rapidly shifting from neutrality to partition; however, much like his Taoiseach, his views lacked the degree of solidity or decisiveness expected from an already notoriously subversive journalist. While the columns of the period indicate that he was partisan to ending partition, the number of instances in which he alluded to the issue is surprisingly low, as Taaffe notes (2008: 245), especially when considering O'Nolan's Northern Irish origins and his Catholic background. Myles also delved, albeit timidly, into the economic realm and disputed many of the government's measures and attempts at dissipating the malaise. He was a direct witness of how, by 1947, "the continuation of war-time dislocation was manifested in rationing, rising inflation, falling living standards, frequent strikes, unemployment and emigration" (Whelan 1992: 50).[3] In relation to this, he was incisively—and, to some extent, insultingly—vocal against the generalized introduction of women in the workforce, which in any case was not considered in Ireland because of "concerns about fertility and threats to 'home life'" (Ferriter 2005: 467). In the political realm, he continued to mockingly refer to Fianna Fáil politicians as peasants who had infiltrated the State. During the late 1940s, Myles joked assiduously about their hats—County Manager's Hats, as he dubbed them—and how these were a mark of inefficiency and unsophistication; or, as Taaffe puts it, "a symbol for all that was officious and self-important in the local bureaucracy" (2008: 167). Myles was markedly belligerent to the State-promoted, but not State-owned, CIE, Lemass's brainchild. During a CIE strike, he rampaged through the company's measures to ameliorate the situation and strongly opposed any instance of what he disdainfully referred to as "state paternalism". This view extended to every single indication on the part of the State of adapting the UK's social service system, thus echoing his critique of Bishop Dignam's planning proposals toward the end of the war. On August 13, 1947, Fianna Fáil managed to pass their Health Act, 1947, an unprecedentedly progressive piece of legislation offering, among other measures, free healthcare to mothers and children: "A health authority shall, in accordance with regulations

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[3] Some have suggested otherwise. For instance, Till Geiger affirms that "Irish living conditions compared favourably with conditions in most other European countries in the immediate aftermath of the war. For example, Irish food consumption remained among the highest in the world" (2000: 194).

made under section 28 of this Act make arrangements for safeguarding the health of women in respect of motherhood and for their education in that respect”.[4] Myles, in the line of his previous social commentary, addressed the Act in a vituperative, anti-socialist tone.

The following subsections shall establish a division between international and domestic affairs during the postwar period, as well as an individual discussion of all the interrelated aspects mentioned above pertaining to both spheres.

4.2.1 International affairs

This subsection will explore in detail Myles’s engagement with international affairs after the war. Special attention will be devoted to his assessment of both the San Francisco and Potsdam Conferences, which were central to the constitution of the United Nations, and Ireland’s role—or, rather, lack thereof—in relation to them. The discussion will then switch the focus to the USA and the USSR, and Myles’s political overlook on the role of both countries during the postwar period. This section will also include a brief collection of Myles’s dissenting mentions of the atomic bomb in light of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings. Myles’s thoughts on Ireland as a recipient for Marshall Aid, as well as the concept of American financial interventionism, will be closely examined.

4.2.1.1 Potsdam and San Francisco Conferences

Myles’s engagement with both post-war conferences mirrored Ireland’s own position in the sphere of world politics: it was marginal, anecdotal, publicly indifferent but privately intrigued. While on the outside de Valera displayed little interest for an active role at the convention, “behind his mask of public indifference, [he] strongly endorsed Ireland’s entry into the United Nations” (Skelly 1996: 69). Since Ireland had remained neutral during the war, however, the Irish government did not receive an invitation to join the rest of the nations in San Francisco and sign the UN Charter, which would officially constitute the United Nations. Nevertheless, the public was well informed on the conference through constant

[4] Health Act, 1947, Part III, Section 21, “Safeguarding the health of women as respects motherhood”.

newspaper reports; in the *Irish Times,* the conference featured repeatedly in Smyllie's editorial. Proof of the loosening of censorial pressures was his leading article published on April 26, 1945, a day into the San Francisco conference, when Smyllie openly and acutely noted that "the great danger that faces San Francisco is the possibility that the British and Americans may not be able to reconcile their views with those of Soviet Russia" (*IT,* April 26, 1945).

Unlike his editor, Myles adopted a more skeptical stance on the rare occasions that he commented on the Conference. His first reference to San Francisco took the form of a pun: "In a day or two I intend to return—refreshed, red-necked, gigantic in polemical muscle—to my interrupted digest of all known constitutional charters enjoying a measure of sanction [...] in the mapped states of this orb so shortly to be made the scene of peace by courtesy of a noble Turkish mediator, the Kaliph Ornia" (*CL,* April 30, 1945). Likewise, his next mention of the Conference retained a mocking tone and lacked any dedicated analysis or specific commentary. His joke evidences, however, that he was at least keeping track of the Conference's proceedings and was apparently kept up to date through Smyllie's editorials. In relation to a TD's statement that Ireland had as much idea of the San Francisco proceedings as "the man in the moon",[5] Myles replied jokingly that such statement

> is pretty well perfect and I do not think I can add anything to it in any way, except to protest against the disrespectful reference to myself at the end. Granted I am usually in the moon, *but* that is not to say that any decisions affecting the economic life of the world (of all places) could possibly be taken without my full privity and consent in writing. I have been kept informed throughout and if need be, I will not hesitate to visit the Conference in person one of these days. And I promise that if I do go, these nations will not be long sitting down. They will be sitting up. (*CL,* May 16, 1945)

[5] The identity of this TD is not revealed in the column, but it could be argued that he was possibly a Fine Gael TD, as he is mentioned alongside James Dillon who also criticized Ireland's continued policy of neutrality after the end of the war and de Valera's indifference towards the San Francisco Conference.

It was the next day that Myles's engagement with the conference began to turn increasingly polemic. As seen in the previous chapter, toward the end of the war, some dissenting voices from within the *Irish Times* and the public began repudiating the country's neutrality and newspaper censorship.[6] Myles's was one of these voices, but he also tended to act out the part of the censor and chastise moralists who resented neutrality and censorship. Adopting a patronizing attitude, he asked his readers the following:

> Let us examine this situation calmly and without passion. Granting the desirability of putting on the military contest as advertised, was your assistance . . . . necessary? Mind you, I say nothing of the purely selfish standpoint and I ignore for the nonce the fact that in this island for every two gentlemen you have five ladies and that one of the gentlemen is a clergyman (the other is a state servant). But . . . . have you been spoil-sports? I think not, nor can I pretend that the presence of a thousand pikemen would have been militarily material. (*CL,* May 17, 1945)

Such comments, in line with the conclusions extracted in the previous chapter, justified Fianna Fáil and de Valera's policy of neutrality and silenced, for instance, Dillon's outbursts against the government's alleged cowardice and lack of gratitude toward Britain during the war. He also acknowledged Ireland's lack of military prowess and her incapacity to engage successfully in a war of those dimensions. Immediately afterward, however, Myles congratulated his readers on their restraint and acceptance of censorship during the war while noting in passing that "a further contest is being arranged in San Francisco" (*ibid*). Not only was this comment prophetic in that it foresaw, following Smyllie's conception, the deep geopolitical misgivings between the United States and the Soviet Union which would later give way to the Cold War, but it also constituted Myles's line of argument against both Conferences and the United Nations as a whole.[7] On another occasion, Myles took advantage

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[6] See Smyllie's notorious article, "Unneutral Neutral Eire" (1946). See also his editorial on July 24, 1945, when he claimed that "in democratic communities it always is bad policy to muzzle the Press. We in Ireland had a bitter experience in this regard during the war" (*IT*)

[7] See, for instance, October 22, 1945, January 14 and February 19, 1946, for Myles's suggestions of a new, United Nations-led world conflict.

of the Conference to vituperate politicians and political speech as a whole, highlighting its unreliable and nonfactual nature:

> Well . . . . I have just returned from San Francisco—there were, of course, other ways of getting back, but that was the one I chose—and I think [...] I have got the answer. The set-up seems to be simply this, that your elder statesmen have an unwritten, international understanding (between them), the effect of which is that they allow themselves at all times, on all public occasions, to say just whatever good thing lies awaiting discharge at the tip of their tongues. (*CL,* June 6, 1945)

Such scathing comments were increasingly common during the late 1940s and early 1950s in the column, as Myles's aggressiveness toward authorities grew exponentially with time.[8] As Lanterns remarks: "But it [*CL*], too, became less playfully satirical as the years went on, relying less heavily than before on wordplay and nonsense devices and becoming less inclined to undermine its own seriousness" (2000: 273). In the same column, Myles responded to a statement made by Edward Stettinius Jr., the United States Secretary of State,[9] during the Conference proceedings the previous week. Stettinius strongly believed that the UN Charter would "be strong in power to prevent aggression and to develop economic and social conditions which will reduce the causes of war. It will be democratic in the encouragement it will give to the nations and people everywhere to extend the application of equal justice in the world and to promote and protect human rights and human freedoms. . ." (*IT,* May 29, 1945). Myles's response, skeptical and pessimistic in tone, revealed his suspicions and mistrust of any world coalition, as well as his view of the United States as overly interventionist and the unreliability of the American concept of democracy:

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[8] Phelan, who knew him superficially, recalls that "it was at this period too that he was often most vitriolic against his superiors, whom he referred to as 'turnip snaggers' emanating from the vast 'peasantarium' of Cork and Kerry to inflict themselves on the pure bred 'Jubbalinman'. In this he was merely reflecting the Dublin opinion of his times, but it must be recalled that some of those he attacked were his friends behind the scenes" (1976: 100).

[9] Edward Stettinius Jr. (1900-49, Democrat) was a member of the Democratic Party and Secretary of State under both Franklin D. Roosevelt and Harry S. Truman.

> Where is this place where ‘equal justice’ is handed out [...]? (I am sorry if I appear stupid but I was always taught to distrust qualified abstractions and unqualified doctors.) I will say this: I like that modest phrase ‘in the world’—there is a sort of honest Yankee humility about it that I find terribly affecting. But I am not so happy when I read that a ‘charter’ will be democratic in encouraging people everywhere to promote and protect human rights and freedoms. Is there some other way of being democratic, because that sounds the hard way to me [...]. And human rights—what on earth are these dowdy liberal artifacts? Do they possibly include the right of free transport from womb to tomb? (*CL,* June 6, 1945)

On the outside, Myles’s comments read merely as shallow skepticism, but a closer inspection reveals that he is referring to the war criminal trials that would take place during late 1945 and most of 1946.[10] Myles seems therefore to be signaling out the hypocrisy displayed by the members of the San Francisco Conference and the Allied powers in general, who spoke proudly of democratic and pacific values but in his opinion failed to exercise them in their prosecution of war criminals. In fact, he would later go as far as to quote from Cardinal Manuel Gonçalves Cerejeira,[11] who allegedly claimed that “there are certain men at Nuremberg accused of crimes [...] which certain of their judges have committed” (*CL,* January 12, 1946).

Myles’s approach to the Conference remained comic in nature. On another occasion, Myles playfully referred to an *Irish Times* statement which affirmed that Ireland would enjoy some sort of representation at San Francisco.[12] Under the heading “Corrigendum”, Myles incisively remarked that

[10] Namely, the Nuremberg (1945-6) and Dachau (1945-8) Trials.
[11] Cardinal Manuel Gonçalves Cerejeira (1888-1977) was the patriarch of Lisbon from 1929 to 1971. There is, however, no account of Gonçalves Cerejeira having mentioned the Nuremberg trials other than this quotation, nor is it likely that a Cardinal would involve himself so openly in an international affair of that magnitude.
[12] While Myles claimed it was a statement, said headline was in reality posed as a question—“Eire to be Represented at San Francisco?”—in the July 9, 1945, edition of the *Irish Times.* The question was raised in relation to Herbert Vere Evatt, Australia’s Minister of External Affairs at the time, and his claims regarding Ireland’s neutral status. Evatt allegedly stated that despite disagreeing as a whole with Ireland’s decision to remain neutral during the war, he respected the country’s right “to make her own decisions” (*IT,* July 9, 1945).

> A curious misprint occurred in this newspaper—called, I think, the *Irish Atlantic*?—the other day and I have been asked by Nichevo, who is in Sabinia with the Sabine women, to correct it and tender apologies for any inconvenience. It was a heading that read like this:
>
> IRELAND TO BE REPRESENTED AT SAN FRANCISCO.
>
> Most people saw the slip, of course—few skirts are perfect. It should have read:
>
> IRELAND TO BE REP. RESENTED AT SAN FRANCISCO.
>
> Would American papers please copy? (*CL,* July 14, 1945)

While the reference to the *Irish Times* as *Irish Atlantic* is interesting in itself for its intimation that the newspaper was attempting to have as internationalist an approach as possible, it is the correction to the previous statement that is most meaningful. The assertion that Ireland was going to become a Republic was made in reference to de Valera's statement in the Dáil on July 11, 1945 in response to Dillon: "We are a Republic" (*IT,* July 12, 1945).[13] Many viewed Ireland as a *de facto* Republic in that all political and administrative ties with the United Kingdom had been severed, but the country would not be formally constituted as one until 1949. In reproducing de Valera's false announcement, Myles was whimsically flagging de Valera's faux pas, but he was also disclosing the potential international outcomes of such a decision; that is, being "resented" by other countries, specially the United Kingdom, in light of Ireland's refusal to openly assist Allied forces during the war. Whether it expressed his own personal desire for Ireland to become an actual Republic is difficult to say. The article in question attempts no further engagement whatsoever with the Republic or the Conference, which induces us to think that it is yet another example of Mylesian wordplay.

[13] As reported by the *Irish Times:* "Mr. Dillon said that he desired to inquire in some detail if 'we are or we are not a Republic,' for nobody seemed to know. Mr. DE VALERA—We are, if that is all the deputy wants to know. Mr. DILLON—This is a Republic! That is the greatest news I have heard for a long time. Now we know where we stand, and the League of Nations in San Francisco knows it too. When did it happen, can anyone tell us? Mr. DE VALERA—You will hear all about it later. Mr. DILLON—May we ask the Taoiseach when we became a Republic? I represent an Irish constituency and I want to know when we became a Republic" (*IT,* July 12, 1945). There was no response on the part of de Valera.

There were no more references to the San Francisco Conference on the part of Myles as he moved on to the Potsdam Conference, which took place in July-August of that year. His approach to Potsdam was as superficial and indirect in tone as the few articles on San Francisco, but some thoughts can be elucidated from his claims. His first mention of Potsdam, while of little import to the event per se, is nevertheless decidedly revelatory and assertive as regard his approach to Irish foreign affairs. Myles devoted a column on July 24 to dissecting Smyllie's editorial of July 20, in which he referred to de Valera's spontaneous announcement of the Irish Republic as delusive and untimely. After mercilessly deconstructing Smyllie's argument, Myles switched back to what was becoming an increasingly characteristic pessimistic tone, offering the following remarks:

> I forgot, just for the moment, about certain *other* small neutral stateens that a world, a too attentive world, happened to remember—back there over the course of the last few years. *Perhaps when all is sad and dun we are just as well off as we are*. Perhaps the attention of certain world-famous specialists practising in Potsdam might be a bit too much of an honour—we might never come out from under the anaesthetic, however successful the operation. There's no use—and I'm always trying to din this into the head of Mr. James Dillon—there's no use in drawing attention to yourself. Better the deVal you know, Mr. D. (*CL,* July 24, 1945) [My emphasis]

The importance of this claim for Myles's political discourse during the 1940s cannot be underestimated. Not only was he dismissing the Potsdam Conference as an event in which Ireland would lack any sort of representation whatsoever, thus distancing the country's interests from the Great Powers, but he was also suggesting that protectionism, isolationism and self-sufficiency—Fianna Fáil and de Valera's political, economic, social and cultural flagships—were, in essence, the best course of action for Ireland at a time when the world was being auctioned off to the victors. It undoubtedly reaffirmed, once again, the neutrality of the country as the most optimal policy in a time of crisis, and the danger that Ireland might have incurred in if she had allied, or were to ally herself, with any of the victors. Furthermore, it displayed as in previous occasions Myles's distrust of international alliances and global

interests. The column also depicts Myles's clear-cut preference at the time for a Fianna Fáil-led government over Fine Gael's pro-British, internationalist outlook, even if led by de Valera, who was once again the object of derisive Mylesian puns.

Two days later, Myles addressed Potsdam again. This time, Myles was invited by a relative to Potsdam and went under the pretension of attending a "horse (stet) party there". Nevertheless, he found that he might "have mistaken the date. No sign of the usual crowd [...]. Place deserted except for some businessmen's Convention which was, inexplicably, being held in one of the ante-chambers!!! Seemed to be mostly tourists—talented looking crowd, a bit eager looking" (*CL,* July 26, 1945). This is yet another example of Myles's intimations that the process of creating a postwar, peace-bound world was being conducted in a business-like manner by the three Great Powers, who were recklessly and unilaterally dictating the future of big and small nations as they pleased. As it was becoming usual with Myles's serialized attacks on people, institutions or political maneuvers, the last column in the series was the one in which he became most outspoken and critical. This was also the case with Potsdam. On August 20, Myles became an angry reporter writing a piece about the Conference:

> The first treasonable eruption took place at St. Souci,[14] County Potsdam, where a number of United Statesmen, meeting secretly in the apartments of Friedrich le Grocer, saw fit to issue a 'Declaration' purporting to effect the destiny of the earth![15] Mark well the devastating presumption of those abandoned men. At a central point on the continent of Europe they convene a conference for the purpose of promulgating a plan for the resettlement *for all time* of European affairs. How many European nations, artificers and custodians of true culture, were represented at that conference? It is laughable, but the answer is *not one*! (*CL,* August 20, 1945)

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[14] Sanssouci, summer palace of Frederik the Great (1712-86), former King of Prussia, located in Potsdam, Germany.

[15] The Potsdam Declaration, or the Proclamation Defining Terms for Japanese Surrender, issued on July 26, 1945 during the Potsdam Conference. This Declaration specified the terms for Japanese surrender after the fall of both Germany and Italy and dictated the political and territorial terms that Japan would be subjected to upon surrender.

These were strikingly unusual remarks for Myles, who was prone to masking his statements with a veneer of comedy and nonsense. While his line of argument on San Francisco and Potsdam was essentially continued and reinforced in this article, he did not hesitate to point at what he perceived as compulsive megalomania on the part of the Great Powers, in addition to uncommonly agreeing with his editor on the sheer secretiveness of the Conference proceedings.[16] His most vigorous criticism, however, was directed at Stalin and the USSR. Later in the column, he added that those nations that were not present were rumored to be "*all dead* and that this conference was in reality concerned with taking out letters of administration, the deceased parties having died intestate!". He claimed, furthermore, that "apparently when you die intestate there, your entire estate goes, as a matter of etiquette, to M. Stalin" (*ibid*). He was possibly referring to Stalin's puppet government in Poland and to the Red Army's administrative control of most of Eastern Europe during and after the war. Although typically modified by Myles's characteristic egocentrism, his condemnation of the entire process seemed resolute: "it is scarcely necessary for *me* to say that the whole transaction is destitute of legality, all the documents pertinent thereto devoid of the requisite initials M. na gC. The men concerned are peace criminals and will be dealt with in time according to my laws" (*ibid*).

Declaring the proceedings of one of the most important postwar conferences illegal, alongside labeling the United Kingdom, the United States and the Soviet Union as "peace-criminals",[17] demonstrates Myles's continuous engagement with foreign affairs, or lack thereof, in Ireland. Not only that, but it also solidifies the notion of Myles's as a politically engaged columnist after the war, and one who did not hesitate to contest the newspaper's unconditional support of the Allies. As occurs with most of Myles's writings, however, the caveat that "Myles can be on whichever side of the argument appears most provocative or most humorous, and even his own personality need not be stable and consistent" (Long 2014: 160) needs to be borne in mind; or, in other words, Myles's opinions could vary, always standing on the disagreeing line. His opinions on both the San Francisco and Potsdam Conferences, which amalgamated a starkly oppositional position against the Allied redistribution of the world, could have simply been the product of a whimsical and playful

[16] See *Irish Times* editorial of July 24, 1945.
[17] Myles used the term on another occasion—August 20, 1945—once again in reference to the Allied powers.

crusade against his editor's unrelenting support to the Allies. As will be seen in upcoming section of this chapter, this partly inescapable sense of ambiguity as regards Myles's political writings during the 1950s remains constant.

4.2.1.2 The USA

Myles's thoughts on England in the postwar period will be meticulously examined when dealing with the newly important postwar issue of partition. Regarding the USA and the Soviet Union—countries which became contenders immediately after the end of World War II—Myles's observations on the foreign policies pursued by each were severely acute and unforgiving, clearly indicative of a robust rejection of either the USA's self-important involvement in European affairs or the Soviet Union's communist political system. As a whole, the *Cruiskeen Lawn* postwar columns on the USA and other international forces betray "a sense of national paranoia" (Taaffe 2008: 160) through the depiction of an Ireland under threat.

As it was the case with Séan O'Faolain (Quigley 2014: 63) and many other Irish intellectuals at the time, Myles abhorred the USSR[18] and any political system resembling socialism.[19] This becomes plainly evident after examining his mordant criticism of the Beveridge plan and the USSR's postwar imperialist and amalgamating tendencies around the world. On several occasions Myles derogatorily referred to Britain as "Soviet" on account of her postwar, welfarist Labour cabinet,[20] but it was once the war and both peace conferences were over that he was the most vituperative toward Russia. Responding to claims by the

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[18] It should be noted that in 1954 O'Nolan and Patrick Kavanagh accepted an invitation from Cronin to travel to the USSR. However, both eventually decided against going: when "it became clear that the acceptance of the Soviet invitation was likely to be denounced from platform and pulpit, they both changed their minds [...]. Brian said that his mother's state of health was such that he would not like to be so far away from Ireland and possibly unable to return in an emergency" (Cronin 1990: 214).

[19] As previously indicated, communism was not only unpopular with Irish writers and intellectuals, but also with the rest of the population as a whole. Emmet O'Connor remarks that "communists were rarely very numerous, suffered chronic problems of organization, and found it difficult to sustain branches outside Dublin and Belfast" (2008: 36). A notable exception was Peadar O'Donnell, co-founder of *The Bell* alongside O'Faolain (Cronin 1990: 214). For more on Ireland and (anti)-communism, see Milotte (1984), White (1997), O'Connor (2004), and Delaney (2011), among others. Myles himself defined Ireland as a "bulwark against communism" (*CL,* January 30, 1946). Ireland's credentials as an anti-communist country lay in its profound Catholic background, as well as in its ties to the USA through continuous waves of emigration.

[20] See, for instance, *CL* September 3, November 28, 1945; May 1, 1946; September 17, 1947.

Soviet government that a democratic regime be established in Greece as soon as possible,[21] Myles wondered:

> Hmmm. Supposing the crowd in Greece don't *like* democracy? I mean I haven't been there since Pericles' time but it struck me that they never could handle the thing at all. *I* don't know what was wrong with Europe but I am not at all happy about the way the political medicos in charge of the case are handling the thing. What do they say to this Greek sick man? Begob, me dear man, there's nothing wrong with you that a good dose of democracy won't cure [...]. Mind you, I've nothing against democracy but if it's so good, why not set up a democratic Government in Russia while they're at it? And it's not that I have anything against a totalitarian government—ran one meself [sic] for a while and everybody was happy—but, em, if your Greek men turned democrat, it might be awkward some day if they found out that their Soviet Santa Clause (stet) didn't love freedom… at all? (*CL,* November 12, 1945)

While some other references in the column to Soviet Russia definitely exist, the majority of them are done in passing or are otherwise purely comical in nature.[22] The present column is an illustrative example of Myles's relentless anti-socialist, essentially individualist ideology, as well as of Myles's unbound polemical muscle after the repeal of the Emergency Powers Act.[23]

Myles's stance on the USA after World War II, more specifically on the atomic bomb and the Marshall Plan, was also reactionary and surprisingly overt in nature. Regarding the Marshall Plan, Myles was not unique among Irish writers of his generation in his negative

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[21] During the war, Greece was occupied by Axis forces and divided into Germany, Italy and Bulgaria. A puppet government, the Hellenic State, was formed and lasted from 1941 to 1944.

[22] A notable example is January 9, 1946, when Myles published a rhyme of sorts about Truman, Attlee ("Clem") and "Joe" (Stalin), in which both Attlee and Truman agree that "He's [Stalin] a sore caution to the pair of us [...]. He's above in the Kremlin edifice/And he won't tell us 'Yes' or 'No'/ Begob, it's the very devil", as well as noticing that Stalin was "sick of talks", thus remarking his undemocratic character. He had also previously advanced the creation of an Irish Department of Aggression which would allow Ireland "to hold her head high among the nations of the earth, even among the Russians" (*CL,* November 20, 1945).

[23] In fact, Myles had already credited himself with being the architect of "monuments to the efficiency of the capitalist system I have been privileged for some centuries to initiate and supervise in your country" (*CL,* May 22, 1945).

outlook of the scheme. While some intellectuals like O'Faolain "vociferously championed the Marshall Plan as part of a necessary new international engagement by Ireland in the post-war era" (Quigley 2014: 62-63), other leftist intellectuals such as O'Donnell "characterized the Marshall funds as a trap that would compel a brutal 'rationalization' of the Irish economy and make Ireland a pawn of American militarism within the larger geopolitical struggles of an emergent Cold War" (*ibid*: 62). On the other hand, the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings show Myles at his most combative—some of the articles that came out on the issue could even be described as openly violent toward the USA, but more particularly toward the scientists in charge of developing atomic energy for military purposes.

As it was becoming the case with his commentary on international affairs, Myles's thoughts on Marshall Aid were unequivocally blunt:

> The Supreme Federal Government at Washington D.C. (formerly A.C.) has bought outright the abendlands of Russia ('Europe' as it used to be called) and intends to develop the entire swamp as a summer camp for the Grand Army of the Holy American Republic. A source close to the State Department announced that "Europe's proximity to Moscow could be regarded as purely coincidental [...]. A Commission would be set up to enquire into the supposed historical, architectural, aesthetic or other values of existing 'European' structures"; those considered worthy of preservation would be removed, intact, for safe keeping to the vaults of the Chase National Bank at New York.[24] (*CL*, December 24, 1947)

Notice that Myles echoes his remarks on Russian geopolitical greediness with respect to neighbouring territories after the war and similarly applies them to the USA. Responding to

[24] The Chase National Bank was formed by John Thompson, a banker, in 1877. Towards the end of the 1940s, the Chase National Bank was among the most powerful banks in the world, with John D. Rockefeller and the Rockefeller family being among their largest shareholders. It is currently known as J.P. Morgan Chase Bank.

President Truman's quasi-paternalist remarks about Marshall Aid to Europe,[25] Myles went on to illustrate what he doubtlessly believed was the true nature of the program:

> Look at it this way. You are interested in a certain small property which you pass every morning coming into town [...]. So. You go to your Board and… you ask them to approve a £70,000 programme of economic aid to the owner of the property [...]. You tell your Board that this step is necessary to presairve [sic] Mr. Mac from the danger of having the property took off him by airrmed [sic] men with guns! Well, next thing is, the Loan is voted without any trouble and the amazed owner is forthwith notified that *in return* he will be expected to enter into agreement with your company to serve them diligently and with sobriety in the capacity of a Temporary Senior Booking Clerk for a period no less than five years and in addition to render up immediately for their exclusive user and benefit the entire of all and those the above-named property!" (*Ibid*)

As can be seen, Myles was plainly aware of the political ins and outs and backstairs maneuvers being performed by international forces and, more particularly, he was keenly wary of America's patronizing idiosyncrasy. As an Irishman he was definitely attuned to the absorbing influence greater powers effected on smaller states, and the Marshall Plan debate was a similar case, as "any wish to isolate Ireland in retaliation for its wartime neutrality was counter-balanced by the security needed to incorporate the country into some kind of American-sponsored organisation. The Marshall Plan provided just such an opportunity" (Whelan 2000: 205). Furthermore, as Ferriter notes, "the debate as to whether Ireland should be a recipient of Marshall Aid funds suggested it was in the interests of the US to have Ireland involved to provide more food for export" (2005: 467).[26] Myles was distinctly convinced that the Marshall Plan would not only arrange for a friendly annexation of western Europe to American-minded ideals, but it also granted the USA the opportunity to prevent war on its

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[25] "The fundamental objective of further United States aid to European countries is to help them to achieve economic self-support and to contribute their full share to a peaceful and prosperous world" (*IT,* December 20, 1947).

[26] Interestingly, Ferriter also suggests that "there was also a perception that excluding Ireland would intensify anti-partitionism" (2005: 467). This would make sense, as stark differences between Northern Ireland and her southern counterpart would possibly have resulted in further diplomatic strife.

national territory: "it's very handy having Europe there for the purpose of fighting them in, because otherwise it might be necessary to fight them in America, thereby ruining an incalculable amount of valuable chromium-plating and priceless pin-striped pants!!!" (*CL,* January 7, 1948). He was also intensely derisive of the "commercial" nature of the procedure—indeed, as Taaffe remarks, the Marshall Plan is "presented as a ploy to buy up European governments" (2008: 160)—and denounced the big vs small state oppressive dynamics by using the word "Treaty": "Each state, apparently, will be bought separately, by private Treaty… a… novel method. The government in each case will be administered by a Gray Eminence—it's a pity David is missing that bit![27]—and the cabinet, which will be thoroughly denazified, will be answerable to him on the usual democratic basis, namely 'or else…'" (*CL,* January 14, 1948).

Myles was equally critical of the Fianna Fáil government and their apparent readiness to accept Marshall Aid. While Ireland did eventually receive Marshall funds, disagreement was rife among Fianna Fáil echelons as to the convenience or desirability of further foreign debt. In general, as Brown notes, "Ireland seemed anxious to emerge from the political isolation of war-time neutrality to play a part in the developing international bodies of the post-war period" (1981: 233), which was evidenced by de Valera's willingness to enter the UN in 1946. In fact, some officials "believed the country to be a deserving case for Marshall aid because it was a predominantly agricultural economy and therefore a relatively underdeveloped country" (Geiger 2000: 200). The Marshall Plan "also forced much debate in the civil service, particularly in the context of the overwhelmingly negative attitude of the Department of Finance and the protective mindset of the Department of Industry and Commerce" (Ferriter 2005: 467). Finance feared "that ERP fund would deepen rather than ameliorate Ireland's problems through increased, heavy and unjustifiable borrowing" while External Affairs "welcomed the opportunity to expand the country's diplomatic horizons in a multilateral context" (Whelan 1992: 53). Whatever the Fianna Fáil internal disruption caused by the Marshall Plan, Myles's response, reminiscent of his staunch critique of the

[27] David Gray (1870-1968), United States ambassador to Ireland from 1940 to 1947. Gray was antagonistic to de Valera's neutrality and was erroneously convinced of the country's collusion with Nazi Germany. He was succeeded by George A. Garrett (1888-1971).

party's obsession with a Gaelic idyll in the midst of an international conflict, took the form of a direct attack on the ideological roots of protectionism and cultural isolationism:

> I see where the yankee Insanity Claus, Field-Marshall Plan, is sending us a New Year's Box. Begob! [...] But… *I thought* we were to make our own destiny here? I thought we were to stand on our (own) (two) feet sinn fein [sic] united we stand divided we fall Ireland sober Ireland free? Where… where is our pride? *Where* is our serf respect—*sorry*! Is… is poor Ireland never to be given a chance? If Ernie O'Malley[28] and myself and a couple of others had thought for one single solitary moment when we were out fighting in the old days that it would have come to this—do you think we would have gone on fighting?" (*CL,* January 14, 1948)

More than a rejection of Marshall Aid per se—something which in any case he had already intimated in a previous column—this article is better understood as undermining the main tenets of Fianna Fáil. The reference to the party can be clearly seen in the word "destiny", as Fianna Fáil means "warriors of destiny". Myles placed special emphasis on the idea that the protectionist policy followed by the party from its foundation in 1926 would be betrayed by the government if American money was accepted. The mock-ironic tone of the article seems to suggest that, even if he disagreed as a whole with the acceptance of Marshal funds, Myles believed protectionism to be an impossible long-term ideal. Furthermore, it must be taken into account that a general election was soon to happen (February 4), so Myles's attack on the party's ideological solidity was all the more important.

Myles's antagonism against American foreign policy naturally extended to the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. His judgment of the event was forthright and candid: "What shall I say of the atomic grenade lately perfected in America and subsequently exported to Japan, duty free? It is an astounding achievement, not so much in physics as in the more familiar sphere of human folly" (*CL,* August 20, 1945). He called it an "outsize

[28] Ernest "Ernie" O'Malley (1897-1957), an IRA officer during the Anglo-Irish war and anti-Treaty soldier during the Irish Civil War. O'Malley was a Sinn Féin TD and helped de Valera obtain funds in America for his nationalist newspaper, *The Irish Press* After independence, O'Malley became a writer, contributing poetry to *The Bell.*

barbarity" and added, ironically, that apparently "scientists and governments are very worried about the possibility that people may not die or expire in sufficiently gigantic numbers, and, *in order to make sure,* have devoted much thought and treasure to research on this subject" (*ibid*). The atomic bomb was a topic on which Myles made no concessions and ambiguity and contradiction were not present. As Cronin perceived, "the explosion of the first atomic bombs over Nagasaki and Hiroshima seems genuinely to have shocked him [...]. His horror was so great that it seemed even to strain his own general expectation of evil" (1990: 173). Myles's horror of what he would later term as the "abombic tomb" turned to an openly violent manifesto, publishing a few weeks after the bombings what would become one of the most shockingly vituperative and anti-diplomatic columns in *Cruiskeen Lawn* history:

> Some people are very despondent about the atomic invention. All the commentators agree that there is no remedy for this awful discovery. Yet My Excellency hastens to reassure humanity. There *is* a simple remedy. Get out expensive invitation cards, vast scientific conference in the earth's noblest city (Belfast?) [...]. Let every big scientist be there, let the party go on for a fortnight, make sure a good time is had by all. Then, very quietly, very efficiently, shoot every one of the ghouls who knows even a little about the atom. Burn all the papers and books on the subject. (*CL,* August 22, 1945)

Such openly violent assertions were certainly untypical of Myles or any of O'Nolan's pseudonyms. In most of O'Nolan's novels, "scenes of violence are always rendered grimly comic, and even the most repugnant acts of murder [...] and rape [...] are undercut by macabre and grotesque humour" (Hopper 2009: 62). The fragment also evidences Myles's, as well as O'Nolan's, unmitigated aversion to the invention of the atomic bomb, as well as a growing tendency within *Cruiskeen Lawn* to pass judgment and find culprits. A few months later, once emergency censorship became considerably laxer, Myles would not hesitate to give names:

> The Americans feel that they are in duty bound to destroy the earth by detonating terrestrial energy simply because they feel that a revival of ‘German aggression’ is inevitable and that the world market for U.S. automobiles, questionable films and shiny magazines will thus be menaced [...]. Is it necessary for the Americans to bring about the end of the world? Contrary, probably, to their belief, they did not make it. (*CL,* May 13, 1946)

Myles’s judgmental and authoritarian finger-pointing in this column has been noted by some: “At issue, once again, is less the specific form of destruction than the assumption of an unwarranted jurisdiction” (Borg et al 2014: 5). The decline of wartime censorship certainly contributed to Myles’s newly acquired patrolling and patronizing attitude, which would inevitably extend to the domestic and local realm and would eventually prove fatal to O’Nolan in terms of employment and reputation. Nevertheless, Myles’s emphasis on the atomic bomb and its recurrence in the column almost a year after the Hiroshima and Nagasaki incidents demonstrate Cronin’s thesis that “the war reinforced his basically pessimistic, Manichaean view of human nature” (1990: 173). Yet his treatment of the atomic bomb does not escape contradictions, as virtually any other critical aspect within the author’s oeuvre. This becomes glaringly evident in his novels, particularly in *The Third Policeman* and *The Dalkey Archive,* where atomic theory plays a paramount part in the plot, thus attesting to a certain fascination with the concept itself.[29] Be that as it may, Myles’s particular vision of the role of the USA in the war emerges as an unexpectedly translucent approach and possibly one of the most militant themes to be found across *Cruiskeen Lawn.* Domestic affairs, however, would be approached using a dramatically different strategy.

4.2.2 Domestic affairs

The first Inter-Party Government in 1948 stands out as the most significant political event in the immediate postwar years. There were, however, some political events of moderate importance on which Myles made his thoughts public. The first was the 1945 Irish

[29] See, for instance, Booker (1991), Spenser (1995), Pilný (2014) or Ebury (2017), for treatments of the atomic theory in his novels.

presidential election—the first to take place ever since the opening nomination by both Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael of Douglas Hyde in 1938. The second was the growing interest in partition, which became a central priority once neutrality in the war became a staple concern in Irish politics and society. It also informed and critically affected many of the country's foreign affairs at the time, especially during the Inter-Party government with Clann na Poblachta's Seán MacBride and his role as Minister for External Affairs. The following section will explore these two aspects as they were originally featured in *Cruiskeen Lawn* with the aim of completing Myles's vision of postwar Irish politics.

4.2.2.1 1945 Irish presidential election

The 1945 Irish presidential election has not been a widely studied affair, nor was it particularly omnipresent in the press at the time.[30] As Gary Murphy and Theresa Reidy astutely note, "much of the 1945 presidential election coverage was overshadowed by the ending of World War II which dominated all the papers" (2012: 618). A total of 1,086,338 valid votes were counted, which resulted in a turnout of 63% of the electorate (*IT,* June 18, 1945),[31] thus rendering the election substantially less engaging than the 1944 general election (69.2%) or the future 1948 general election (74.2%). The election was won—narrowly, by the party's standards—by the Fianna Fáil candidate Seán T. O'Kelly (former Tánaiste), but the hard-fought character of the contest made alarmingly evident that Fianna Fáil could no longer depend on their wartime reputation to get votes.[32] The monochrome character of Irish politics from 1932 onwards was about to be dispelled by the emergence of the new republican

[30] The election figures generally in the 2012 issue of the journal *Irish Political Studies,* which was specifically dedicated to the study of the office of President. See Meehan (2012), Gallagher (2012), Coakley and Kevin Rafter (2012) and Murphy and Reidy (2012) for technical analyses of the event. Few mentions of the election, let alone any of the candidates, appear in general Irish historiography, most of them in passing or intrinsically related to Fianna Fáil's immediate power outflow during the mid 1940s.

[31] On the first count, O'Kelly obtained 537,965 votes, Seán Mac Eoin 335,539 and Patrick McCartan, 212,834. McCartan was eliminated on the first count and O'Kelly won the second count, obtaining a 55.5% majority.

[32] This seemed to be the general perception of the state of affairs. In an editorial entitled "Fianna Fáil's Failures", Smyllie remarked that "while Mr. de Valera and his colleagues may have little reason to be pleased with the result of the Presidential election, they will have even less cause for satisfaction when they come to consider the consequences of their efforts [...]. There is no doubt, unfortunately, that citizens are becoming increasingly sceptical about the values of our political systems and institutions" (*IT,* June 20, 1945).

party, Clann na Poblachta, but also by the ready willingness of the different forces left and right in the Irish political spectrum to become allies against Fianna Fáil.

Myles's engagement with the election was equally limited to isolated remarks on the nature of the election or the candidates themselves. These remarks were not particularly revealing in any sense of political ideology or alignment with any of the parties. About a month and a half after the election, Myles published an article complaining of not having been immediately approached to claim the post held by the outgoing Douglas Hyde. Incidentally, Myles loses interest soon, and capriciously declares that "the foregoing is not to say that I would accept the post of President here if the same were offered to me. Apart from the fact that living in the middle of all that turf would not appeal to me,[33] the forthcoming 'election' will be very misconceived" (*CL,* April 23, 1945). Myles's objections were reliant on the Constitution and on what he apparently perceived as a hypocritical and misleading provision related to the election of candidates. He remarked that "the Constitution [...] blandly states that every citizen over 36 years of age shall be eligible for election to that office [...]. Observers estimate that a 'campaign' will cost each modest candidate for preferment not less than £15,000. Therefore, apart from being over 36, it is also necessary to be rich" (*ibid*). If read amidst Fianna Fáil and de Valera's advocacy for a frugal, non-materialistic Ireland, Myles's comments could be seen as a veiled attack directed at the party's hypocrisy, especially in the context of an economic crisis. As Taaffe remarks, "demagoguery and shrill polemics" (2008: 91) were the usual targets of *Cruiskeen Lawn,* and a party that failed to practice what they preached would easily become a trademark victim of the column. Myles also mockingly objected to the presupposed "democratic" credentials of the election. For him, election requirements were

> as big a lie as the other lie that the people elect the President. They do nothing of the kind. They are permitted, at great cost to themselves, to ballot on a set of names placed before them. Worse, they must take one or other of the candidates, even if the majority

[33] Myles is referring to Áras an Uachtaráin, the official residence of the President of Ireland, located in Dublin's Phoenix Park.

> of the electorate is convinced that the election of any of the candidates would be calamitous. This then is your vaunted democracy. (*CL,* April 23, 1945)

His argument, albeit admittedly weak in political terms, is reinforced by Myles's later reference to Ireland as "this pitiful democratic state, so-called" (*CL,* May 2, 1945). At a time when the word "democracy" was endowed with special resonance and used as a weapon from either side of the conflict, declaring Ireland to be undemocratic, even in jest, was a dangerous move. Such claims, however, may still be interpreted differently from a political standpoint, especially in relation to Smyllie's line of criticism against the electoral event: the editor believed the presidential election, the outcome of which would be an ongoing neutral figure to represent the country symbolically, to be tainted by the venom of party politics, for which he unequivocally blamed Fianna Fáil. A few days before the election, Smyllie bluntly blamed both Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael for fighting the election "on the narrowest party lines", adding that "for this deplorable condition of affairs Fianna Fáil must be held responsible. It has nominated the Tánaiste, a man who is held in high esteem even by his political opponents; but Mr. Séan T. O'Kelly is a party man first, last and all the time" (*IT,* June 12, 1945). On election day, Smyllie went as far as to make the accusation that "the arrangement was made to suit the political tactics of Fianna Fáil's party organisers" who hoped "to stampede voters into support of a policy that would make every authority, whether national or local, subservient to the unchecked will and pleasure of a political party caucus" (*IT,* June 14, 1945). Myles, then, was not the only one suggesting that undemocratic principles were at work in the presidential election.

However, if for a moment Myles seemed to be joining Smyllie in an attack against Fianna Fáil, an article published on a date closer to the election saw him defending O'Kelly from the criticisms of McCartan, the Independent candidate supported by Labour and Clann na Talmhan and, incidentally, Smyllie's preferred candidate.[34] Citing McCartan's claims that, unlike himself, O'Kelly had always worked for a salary—thus rendering the Fianna Fáil

[34] As declared on June 12, 1945: "We believe, as we always have believed, that the office of President should be entirely remote from political controversy. Above all, we believe that it ought to be unblemished by any of the bitterness that was engendered twenty-three years ago by the Civil War. For that reason, we welcome the candidature of Dr. McCartan" (*IT*).

candidate as a sort of political mercenary—Myles turned the candidate's claims into a joke and rose to the defense of O'Kelly: "This I find courageous if obscure. It is very difficult to work for long without *some* salary [...] because, you see, starvation would set in and the work would suffer" (*CL,* June 5, 1945). He later added, for good measure, that "assuming for the moment that I consented to touch money in any shape or form, I would take care to get fees instead of a salary [...]. The fact is that persons who receive salaries have little or no hope of dodging the Commissioners of Inland Revenue Tax and that is a very serious thing indeed" (*ibid*). In that way, perhaps imperceptibly, Myles was defending O'Kelly's credentials and honesty while demonstrating a certain degree of distrust toward McCartan. He would also punctiliously remark that "the Doctor, though bitterly hostile to salaries, would be himself content with a salary of £5,000. Expenses, he feels, should not exceed £2,500" (*ibid*). While unexplained, his negative attitude toward McCartan might be simply the product of Smyllie's unwavering support, his profession (doctors were common targets of Myles's slander) or even his support base composed of the Labour Party and Clann na Talmhan.

Myles's overall nonpartisanism but at the same time veiled defense of O'Kelly seemed to be perhaps the most predictable course of action, as O'Nolan himself had been Private Secretary to O'Kelly until 1941, when Séan MacEntee became Minister of Local Government as a result of a cabinet reshuffle. It is highly likely that both got along well despite O'Nolan's leeriness of Fianna Fáil echelons since, as Cronin suggests, "that he was continued in the post suggests that O'Kelly had recommended him strongly to the new Minister" (1990: 132). In a letter to MacEntee upon his retirement from the Civil Service, O'Nolan would remind the Minister that "I have served yourself, Sean T. and Paddy Ruttledge in a personal capacity over many years. I have in detail kept all those trusts" (O'Nolan 2018: 176).[35] At least regarding the presidential election, O'Nolan—and Myles—fulfilled that promise, but that fails to explain why Myles refused to engage in subversive criticism of the Fine Gael candidate, Séan Mac Eoin. His almost absolute silence on the presidential election feels striking as a result, but might have been the cause of a number of factors which pertain to the domain of hypothesis, among which Smyllie's overbearance in

[35] See p. 221 for further information on this letter.

covering the presidential election himself as polemically as possible or even Myles's own lack of interest on the proceedings could be found.

Myles's commentary on the presidential election would conclude with a display of what many have perceived as "his simultaneous contempt for cliché and exploitation of the stereotype" (Borg et al 2017: 11), especially in the area of newspaper writing. After drafting a sample article reporting on the day of the election, Myles declared that he had to

> reiterate a warning given on a previous occasion. To-day—
>
> **DON'T avail yourself of the rights of citizenship.**
>
> **DON'T go to the polls.**
>
> **DON'T cast your vote.**
>
> **DON'T exercise the franchise.**
>
> Just be a good little man—or woman—and merely… *vote*! I know it is very hard to vote, it calls for high qualities of resolution and austerity. But after it is all over, I promise that you will feel very happy about it. (*CL,* June 14, 1945)

4.2.2.2 Partition

"In October 1944", writes Fanning, "the Fianna Fáil *ard fheis* resolved that the abolition of partition should be the first plank of the party's post-war programme" (2015: 215). Once sovereignty and neutrality during the war became a tangible reality, ending partition was the only obstacle in the way of meeting the party's main ideological objectives during the late 1940s. However, while most Fianna Fáil voters ardently yearned for Ireland to reclaim control over the six counties, for most of the party's echelons partition remained a delicate matter. In fact, de Valera and many of his ministers "believed that to think too much about Northern Ireland was a dangerous exercise because it could expose the party's inability to fulfil its promise of a thirty-two-county republic. Therefore, despite its place at the core of Fianna Fáil ideology, the partition question was deliberately submerged" (Kelly 2013: 27). Such an attitude illuminated a glaring contradiction at the heart of Fianna Fáil's foreign

policy: if partition was so important that it conditioned all of Ireland's attempts at internationalization,[36] why was it not acted upon? Furthermore, why did it seem subordinate to other economic and industrial concerns?[37] In fact, while de Valera embarked on a world-wide tour when relegated to the opposition (1948-51) geared toward gathering international support against partition, it has been recently demonstrated that such efforts were futile and, rather than yielding any tangible pacts or agreements, they inflamed pro-partition sentiments in the North (Kelly 2011). A conspicuous sense of ambiguity and inconsistency surrounded the question of partition at a time when it seemed to constitute the core and agglutinate the party's domestic and foreign policy. Myles's engagement with partition in *Cruiskeen Lawn* from the mid-1940s onwards invariably echoed this generally perceived ambiguity.

His first reference to partition after the war came, as usual, in the form of a joke. Myles, inverting Ireland and Britain's positions, informed his readers that George Bernard Shaw had become the new Prime Minister to an isolated England.[38] Myles quickly congratulated Shaw on his election and communicated him his hope that "he will take immediate steps to implement his plans for the discontinuance of English isolationism. We want England back in the Republic—not, mark you, simply as a respected state, but in full friendship and amity and on terms of perfect equality with the other members of our Commonwealth" (*CL,* August 3, 1945). These members were, according to Myles, "the great city states of Londonbelfast, Londondublin, Londongallaghadereen, together with the mighty communist Reich, the Most Reverend County Londontown" (*ibid*). While once again the comments could be seen in light of Myles's constant mockery of Attlee's welfarist government and his fears of Ireland's insistence on postwar planning, the article nevertheless denotes an incipient interest in the question of partition through the connection between Belfast and Dublin. Myles would go on to acknowledge that ending this inverted partition

[36] Such as the invitations to join NATO, which "were rejected on the grounds that Partition made it impossible to join Britain in such an alliance" (Foster 1989: 567).
[37] At the end of the Emergency, the then Minister for Finance Frank Aiken outlined the problems and challenges that the Irish economy had to face in order to join the level of postwar growth that other European countries were experiencing (qtd. in Fanning 1989: 394-5). He spoke of the country's postwar budget, industry, supplies, imports and exports, but did not assume partition to be a determining factor for the country's future.
[38] George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) was born in Dublin to a Protestant family but spent most of his adult life in England. Shaw was known to have opposed Irish independence from Britain despite being partial to Home Rule: "I am English enough to be an inveterate Republican and Home Ruler" (Bernard Shaw 1907: 9). However, he was equally dismayed at the idea of a partitioned Ireland and was especially preoccupied with the fate of Protestant minorities in the Republic, as well as with Ulster's political uncertainty upon partition.

would be an “apparently simple task” (*ibid*) for which Shaw was exceptionally suited. The article, apparently harmless and lacking in any real argument against or for partition, timidly introduces Myles’s conviction of the irreversible anglicization of Ireland and his growingly clear anti-partitionist discourse, a belief that he would expose repeatedly throughout the column as a whole and especially in the series of articles dealing with partition after the war.

More minor comments followed in subsequent months. The most representative of these would appear in late October, remarking that “we all know the way the crowd below in Belfast are never happy till they pack up their hard hats and move down here for good an’ all, we all know the way they try to copy everything we do, we all know the way nothing would do them only have a small Dáil with clever statesmen, just like yeerselves [sic], above in Stormont” (*CL,* October 26, 1945). Notwithstanding the ironic reference to the Dáil, whose statesmen Myles thought to be far from clever, the reference lacked any substantial argumentation, as he rapidly abandoned the question to mock the city of Cork, which Myles thought to be inhabited by peasants and savages, and Dublin corporation, one of his long-running targets. A few days later, Myles would quote Lemass’s public denunciation of partition. The Minister had declared on October 27 that “partition is not merely a wrong done this country and a source of contention between us and the British, it is a handicap to our free and full participation as a nation in the domain of world politics” (*IT*). Lemass believed that the termination of partition “is an essential condition to our playing an unbiased part in international affairs” (*ibid*). This was an early example of Lemass’s policy of economic expansionism, but Myles’s response to it was not positive, and it used Fianna Fáil’s own arguments of protectionism and neutrality against him: “And yet there are hotheads who would remove Partition—give us the right to participate in the domain of world politics, like… like Poland!” (*CL,* October 31, 1945).

Given Myles’s negative reaction to the USA’s politics of economic interventionism in Europe by means of the Marshall Plan, his response could be seen as consistent with his overall conservative outlook at the time and a perfectly valid ideological position with respect to partition. Nevertheless, contradictions—or ambivalences, a term that Taaffe (2008) repeatedly attaches to Myles’s work—would resurface again toward the end of Fianna Fáil’s legislature. One of these was a column published almost two years after the series discussed

above and showing Myles at his most explicit and outspoken on partition. They were the result of a polemic discussion in the Seanad around the Appropriation Bill[39] which derived into senators arguing over partition. One of them, Senator J. G. Douglas,[40] highlighted the necessity of consent in the abolition of partition and the recklessness that the use of military force would entail. At the same time, however, he claimed that the only policy pursued by the government so far had been one "of talk which seems to have no effect whatsoever on the majority in the Six Counties; or, if it has any effect, it only makes them hostile" (*IT,* July 17, 1947). His solution was, therefore, that they "should stop talking about the border and start an active policy of conciliation and co-operation, especially in economic affairs" (*ibid*). This meant, for Senator Douglas, inviting Northern Irish politicians to become TDs in the Dáil so as to effectively intertwine Northern and Southern politics. Myles, in a rather surprising democratic and diplomatic vein, replied as follows:

> I have read very carefully the Douglas Proposals on Port Hessian (blast!) and, though I admire at all times the heroic attitude, I fear that any scheme envisaging orgies of national masochism will be unacceptable to our people [...]. I do not conceive that any good can come of a scheme that requires so monstrous a perversion of the national character that we should 'stop talking' about a problem. What are problems for if not to talk about? (*CL,* July 21, 1947)

Myles was deliberately exaggerating Douglas's suggestion, but in doing so he was essentially aligning himself with the government's own policy on partition and acknowledging, in contradiction with previous statements, that partition was indeed a problem. Myles's column adopted a diplomatic tone much in line with, if not essentially consistent with, Fianna Fáil's policy on partition. As Brown astutely notes, much of Ireland's foreign policy "was less

[39] Signed into law on July 23, 1947, the Appropriation Act allowed the Minister for Finance to issue out of the Central Bank money to be allocated to a wide range of public services. A second Appropriation Act was enacted on December 20 of the same year for similar purposes.

[40] Senator James Green Douglas (1887-1952, Independent) was a member of the Seanad since the first 1922 Seanad after the constitution of the Free State. Douglas assisted Collins in drafting the Constitution of the Irish Free State. During the 6th and 8th Seanaid (1948-51, 1954-7), constituted with the Inter-Party government in power, Senator Douglas was expressly nominated by Costello. He died in 1954 and his son, John Harold Douglas, replaced him as senator.

directed towards full participation in international affairs than towards the solution of the Irish problem of partition" (1981: 224). Senator Douglas's opinion, in opposition to Fianna Fáil's, was that these approaches, however, lacked incisiveness and were fundamentally tame, and only an open and inclusive parliament—one which would include Northern and Southern TDs—would be able to effectively terminate partition. Determined this time to adhere to official policy, Myles went on to lecture his audience on one territorial aspect of partition:

> But… this question of redeeming Sir Basil Brooke's Province of Ulster is quite a problem. But first, get your terms and facts right. *It is not a Province but a Convince*. Number two, it is incorrect to call it 'Ulster,' since Ulster has 9 counties, while the Convince has only 6, or two-thirds. They are, therefore, entitled to only two-thirds of the word 'Ulster'—the eastern two-thirds—and hence they should go by the name and style of 'STER.' The Dublin Government would thus be proprietors of the areas of Munster, Leinster, Connacht, and Ul. (*CL,* July 21, 1947) [My emphasis]

Labeling Ulster as a "Convince" might have been a mere vague attempt at a pun, but one whose implications incidentally echoed Senator Douglas's conviction that persuasion was the only valid way to end partition. Furthermore, Myles seems to be suggesting that Northern Ireland had not been partitioned from the rest of the country *motu proprio,* but rather through conviction and manipulation on the part of Britain. Later on in the column, Myles would further this idea by mirroring the partition situation in Ireland with that of India: "People north and south should remember that partition is a temporary arrangement. It is a device to induce calm in times of stress, to afford opportunity for reflection and heart-searching. India has just been partitioned but only to facilitate the emergence of native order, pending the re-indiagration [sic] of the national territory" (*ibid*). If the previous comment exposed in a somewhat pedantic manner the erroneous territorial preconceptions held by both sides of the partition argument, this passage savagely ironicized the entire concept of partition by declaring that it was "a device to induce calm in times of stress" in relation to the Indian question, given the enormous loss of life that resulted from the partition of British India into

the dominions of India and Pakistan.[41] It has been acknowledged that "the utility of partition as a problem-solving device is questionable" and that examples of partition within the British Empire "have provided potent material for ongoing conflict. Far from bringing an incipient or ongoing civil war between populations to a decisive end, partition has generally served rather as a watershed [...] whereby what was a smouldering 'hot' civil war between populations is afterwards resumed" (Cleary 2002: 22). Myles was definitely aware of the ongoing conflict in India and also of the latent tensions in Ireland, proof of which would be "the dramatic rise and decline of Clann na Poblachta" (Ferriter 2005: 465), the IRA border campaign (1957-62) and the infamous "Troubles" of the latter half of the twentieth century. In doing so, Myles was both professing his desire for partition to be indeed a temporary state of affairs and laying bare his denunciation and opposition to viewing partition as a political calmative—it had failed to work in India, and it would eventually be equally problematic in Ireland. This view became evident in another column in which Myles replied to Dillon's proposal that the Partition question should be handled by the President of the United States.

> First of all, ye are all Irish. Argue, shout, bleat to the contrary—your protests are to me a nothing. (I have met ye all and I know). [...] What then can Ireland be lawfully and advantageously used for? Surely for nothing if not the pursuit of the pastoral and agricultural staffs, with provision for the housing of the more indigent peasants in state service institutions? That would work and I hold all would be happy—*provided* you regard the matter *integrally.* Instead, impelled by dreadful megalomania, you establish a 'Boundary Commission' and next thing we know you accomplish what sounds like a geometric impossibility—you *subdivide* Ireland!! Conceit and painful arrogance, let me say it at once, could go no farther—there is an almost exact Biblical parallel, except that the litigants in *that* case managed to see the joke and *didn't* cut the baby in two. (*CL,* March 25, 1946)[42]

[41] See Pandey (2001), Hansen and Mohunta (2002) or Talbot and Singh (2009), for instance.

[42] Myles is referring to the story of the Judgment of Solomon. In the story, King Solomon of Israel proposed that two women claiming to be the mother of a child cut the baby in two so that each would have a part of it. Solomon was able to discern which of them was the real mother by realizing that while one of them agreed to the procedure, the other was willing to yield her claim to motherhood so that the baby would live.

He would later on refer to the partition question as "the pakistan [sic] idea" and suggested that "one reason for the survival of Partition is the readiness with which the phenomenon can be perceived and discussed" (*ibid*). He meant by this that Partition was a question so fundamentally simplistic (the division between two pieces of land) that it was comfortable and convenient for the political class to argue back and forth with no solution in view. Interestingly, however, this passage refers to Ireland in a similar way to that of the Constitution—as a boundless, essentially frugal and pastoral whole, exactly what de Valera had promised his readers to help materialize ever since the Fianna Fáil party was constituted. This can be read, then, as Myles's own response to Fianna Fáil and de Valera's cultural nationalism and his inability to deliver on his then almost two-decade-old promises. As Taaffe puts it: "Myles's later preoccupation with incompetence and failure in Irish public life might be read [...] as the most suitable riposte to the grand rhetoric of cultural nationalism" (2008: 169).

Heeding the caveat that Myles's positions on a given question are never to be trusted completely, Myles seemed to advocate for an ending to partition. His columns on partition echoed the official policy, but one perceives an inescapable necessity of finding someone to blame for the torpid and ineffectual manner in which it was being carried out. One highly significant column published the following year could be helpful to determine this. On the occasion of removing Queen Victoria's statue from Leinster House in a bid to create more parking space, Myles suggested that a different statue be erected instead. Mulling over a different set of names, among which his own was inevitably to be found, he considered de Valera as a candidate whose statue could substitute Queen Victoria's. However, he realized de Valera's stature might pose a problem in erecting his statue. He came up with an alternative: "A *part* of Dev—signifying incompleteness, partition, mutilation, that might be an idea?" (*CL,* July 9, 1948). Both de Valera and Myles were opposed to partition, but as a social commentator, Myles was incapable of ignoring the "growing recognition of the immaturity of the 'official' Irish attitude to partition" (Ferriter 2005: 464), as well as the widespread confusion and indeterminacy existing around the question within government and Fianna Fáil ranks as a whole. Incidentally, O'Nolan would ratify his own position toward partition in his Senate election manifesto of 1957, declaring it a problem yet one which should not take priority over social and economic matters: "A parliament in which able hands

and clean hands can work would undoubtedly hasten the solution of the Partition problem, though I think that is less urgent than the […] promotion of the people's social and cultural well-being" (2018: 220).

4.2.2.3 Health Act, 1947

The 1947 Health Act would become, for all intents and purposes, the precursor and inspiration for the 1950-51 Mother and Child Scheme; however, it would not come close in terms of publicity, outrage and polemics. "The Health Services Act of 1947", writes Ferriter (2005: 502), "introduced by Fianna Fáil, sought to provide for the expansion of the health services by taking the financial burden away from local authorities and passing it instead on to a central fund". Specifically, the Act provided for the "safeguarding of health of women as respects motherhood", the "obligation to submit children to medical inspection" or a "grant for mother and child service", among other provisions.[43] Predictably, the Act enraged the Catholic Church and prompted objections on the parts of bishops, who insisted on "the dangers posed to the morals of women and children by health education" (Barrington 1987: 187) and the quasi-dictatorial governmental intrusion and control of the family unit (Whyte 1980).[44] The Irish Medical Association was also deliberately opposed to the Act, mentioning their fear of a "socialization of medicine" (Browne 1986: 149) but in reality masking their vision of the Act "as a threat to private medicine" (Ferriter 2005: 502). Opposition was also rife within the ranks of Fine Gael, and one of its most important delegates, Dr. T. F. O'Higgins,[45] warned that "every woman and every child up to 15 would become a free patient by law, and 60% to 70% of ordinary doctor's income came from attendance on women and children" (*IT,* May 7, 1947). Dillon was also naturally at odds with the Act, reminding the

[43] See Health Act, 1947, Part III "Mother and Child Service", sections 21, 25 and 27, respectively.

[44] Especially in response to Part VII, section 75, "Health inspectors" and Part X, section 99, "Dissemination of information and advice on health". Fine Gael also raised objections as regards Part III, claiming that it was "repugnant to the Constitution" (*IT,* August 11, 1947) and suggested a total of 135 amendments to the final version, none of which were accepted. The Bill was signed into law by president O'Kelly, who did not deem it wise to refer it to the Supreme Court.

[45] Thomas Francis O'Higgins (1890-1953, Fine Gael) was appointed Minister for Defence by Costello upon taking office in 1948. He would remain in the post until 1951, when he would be appointed Minister for Industry and Commerce.

Dáil that its application would "make it virtually impossible for young doctors to set up and start work side by side with the dispensary doctors as they did at present" (*ibid*).

As had been the case ever since Beveridge introduced his welfare state proposal in Britain in 1944, Myles's trigger was the concept of socialism and any of its possible applications in Ireland. His focus would not be placed on the subjects of health and motherhood, preferring instead to switch his attention to the political and ideological implications of the scheme. The Act was signed into law on August 13, 1947, and contrary to other instances in which Myles's commentary ran parallel to the event itself, his analysis of the Act took some time to appear on the pages of the *Irish Times.* His first attack would be directed straight at James Ryan,[46] the then Minister for Health and the person in charge of drafting the Bill: "Jim Ryan is a terribly decent poor soul, none better, but I must regard as monstrously jocose his notion that sickness has been abolished by the foundation of his Department of Social Civil Services. With all the County Manager's hats in the world, it can't be done. Sickness is human and holy" (*CL,* November 5, 1947). Myles's absolutism in describing the Act is reminiscent of his early attacks on Beveridge toward the end of The Emergency.[47] His sneer was obviously directed at Fianna Fáil's championing of the plan as the panacea to all sicknesses, but his tone betrayed the prejudice and preemptive rejection of any measure resembling Britain's welfare project. Once again, Myles was adopting an attitude of unassailable "moral and intellectual authority" (Taaffe 2008: 172) toward his readers and acting, paradoxically, as paternal and patronizing as the government he was bent on criticizing. A few days later, Myles would expand on his analysis of the Act while also throwing the Irish medical profession into the mix, thus intervening in the conflict that had ensued between both sides. On the one hand, he referred to Irish doctors as being

[46] James Ryan (1891-1970, Fianna Fáil) studied medicine at UCD and was one of the founding members of Fianna Fáil. He would be appointed Minister for Finance in 1957 under Lemass and would be in charge of overseeing the process of economic expansionism carried out during the late 1950s.

[47] See section 4.2.3.2. In fact, Myles had mercilessly slandered C.I.E.'s introduction of benefits for workers the previous month as being, once again, examples of how "political communities are now committed to the minute regulation of the lives of their citizens", "paternalism and pauperisation" and remarked how they "dumbly follow a policy which they think is 'modern' and 'enlightened' (*CL,* October 10, 1947).

> simple folk up from the country, unequipped with either education or intelligence, and that not nine out of ten of them have the courage to examine a ‘case’ without recourse to the drug company’s dictionary. These people are merely the clinical messenger boys of the drug cartels. Unfortunately these statements are sl&derous [sic] but the occasion is highly privileged [...]. I have further and other slanders. For example, I say that the most disgusting thing about Irish doctors is their pretence that they are not in the game for the money, only out of pity for the poor. They also allege that if they were paid in proportion to their talents, they would make great cash for tunes. (*CL,* November 12, 1947)

He took the opportunity to equally disparage the Act:

> Some genius named White has got out a ‘Paper’ on Healthy Social Services. This ‘Paper’ announces that we are all going to be sick very shortly, that we will all be X-rayed, and ultimately got into hospital. No doubt it is a great relief to everybody, particularly to those who have hitherto refrained from being sick because they couldn’t afford it. The ‘White Paper’ goes on to make it clear that the sick person will not have to pay for his own sickness, that is to be done by some other person (probably me!). Right or wrong, I regard the whole thing as a joke [...] White’s Paper says that Eire public are to have a ‘Mother and Child Service.’ Apparently this means that each mother in Ireland will be furnished with a child by the State. The present writer records that, from his own observation, Irish women have managed to provide themselves with their own children. Apparently all that is now to go by the board; we are to have this thing called ‘State paternalism’; very new, very Russian, very smart, but not in the view of the present writer, particularly moral or Irish. (*ibid*)

Although he was against the act in principle, he did not align himself with any of the parties involved. On the one hand, he accused Irish doctors of being hypocritical when they were mainly interested in accumulating fees from patients instead of, as they claimed, public health. On the other hand, he was similarly critical of the Act in that basic health needs would become available to the public free of charge, with the consequent increase in taxation.

Interestingly, he also referenced the "Mother and Child Service", which he apparently saw as an intrusion on the part of the state into essentially private affairs such as birth and child rearing. The final lines of his critique of the Act evidence his position as being opposed to it on the grounds of being "very new, very Russian" and not "particularly moral or Irish". Borg, Fagan and McCourt note that "O'Nolan's writing is always, in some way, a writing against the weight of received wisdoms, inherited sureties" (2017: 8). Few examples in the column evidence this attitude as clearly as his chronic misgivings with welfarism—he had consciously and systematically rejected every single one of these proposals on the basis of them being fashionable and talked-of elsewhere. Some time later, his declarations would turn even more conservative, as now he questioned the concept of democracy in relation to state intervention in private affairs such as health as a refusal to raise wages:

> How long is it now since ye got a Department of Health? Say six months. Feel any healthier? Would I be right in saying you *feel worse?* I won't press the point, I'll only say this: parliaments are nowadays being pressed to functions far outside their nature, and even farther outside their capacity [...]. The breakdown of democracy is not far removed from the abuse of parliaments from the expectation of too much from their dialectic analyses of why the country isn't half settled yet. (*CL,* December 8, 1947)

A few days later, in referring to 1947, Myles complained that "morally, the year was [...] deplorable" (*CL,* December 15, 1947), probably in reference to the Health Act. Even though the Act was not comprehensively applied before the 1948 general election, its influence remained latent and Browne, the Inter-Party government Minister for Health, would carry on with its application, making special provision for Part III and refashioning it into a central part of his scheme. The Mother and Child Scheme, as it became known over the politically tumultuous three years that followed, is now seen as one of the most polemical events in Irish politics in that period, as the ensuing controversy between Church and State would shape their future relationship, as well as the Irish people's perception and subjection to it. The next section, devoted to a detailed analysis of the Inter-Party government's first tenure (1948-51), will examine, among other events of political relevance, Myles's part in the controversy.

4.3 The Inter-Party (1948-51) and Fianna Fáil (1951-4) governments

This section examines Myles's attitude to Costello's first administration (1948-51) and the subsequent Fianna Fáil government (1951-4). The density of comment and the variety of political issues that occurred within the span of each government demand that these items be looked at separately.

4.3.1 The Inter-Party government

Fianna Fáil had emerged triumphant from the 1944 snap general election, called by de Valera with the aim of obtaining an overall majority after failing to do so the previous year. At that time, de Valera's discourse had revolved around The Emergency and the need for a stable government to remain in power while the outer world was at war. Nevertheless, many among the voting public were unhappy and desirous of political change. There were a number of reasons for this, mainly economic and territorial in nature. Fanning lists among these "austerity; food and fuel shortages during the bitterly cold winter of 1946-7; a rash of strikes and other industrial disputes, most notably a prolonged strike of primary-school teachers between March and October 1946" (2015: 223).[48] They were also, to some extent, ideological, as many Irishmen and women understood "that it was possible for the twenty-six counties of Ireland to be a nation state without the distinguishing marks of language and a hermetically sealed national culture" (Brown 1981: 216). The economic imaginativeness at work exhibited during the late 1950s by Lemass and Whitaker was not yet considered as plausible by a cautious de Valera, backed by a similarly dubious and conservative-minded Central Bank (Ferriter 2005: 469).[49] Indecisiveness in the partition and republican fronts had paved the way for the emergence of Clann na Poblachta which, added to the tight results of

[48] See, among countless others, *CL* September 3 and 29, 1947, and October 10, 1947.

[49] The most significant instance of Myles's undermining of the Central Bank during the postwar period occurred on October 22, 1947. The Central Bank had just produced a Report outlining the main economic differences between Ireland and Britain, to which Myles responded, rather wildly: "At the end of the 'Report' there is a circle containing the letters 'L.S.' The thing would have been perfect if they had gone the whole hog and put 'L.S.D.' in the circle" (*CL*).

the 1945 presidential election and overall negative results of the 1947 by-elections[50] were indicative of de Valera's debilitating reign.

For all the perceived support for Fianna Fáil and neutrality during The Emergency, Myles's views this time echoed those of the general public, showing a growing disenchantment as the 1948 election drew closer. The years 1945-48 show Myles as openly suspicious of Fianna Fáil's ability to buoy up Ireland and increasingly critical of the government's cultural antics. Examples abound: as early as 1945, Myles referred to the government as "the members of this feeble and despotic Administration" (*CL,* July 27, 1945), "composed for the most part of flabby abandoned men" (*CL,* August 28, 1945). In November of that year, Myles declared to "hold no brief for the Royal Hibernian Fianna Fáil Society" and to "find their claims to indigenousness wholly impeccable—they are echt-irischers (even it if be rather emergency powers echt)" (*CL,* November 10, 1945)[51] to later criticize the government's lack of focus on matters of political relevance, as opposed to their preference for statues and glorification of the past. In December, he admitted that "if I have any charge to level against the Government [...] is that they are too pawnurious, too purse-imoneous [sic] altogether" (*CL,* December 6, 1945), in reference to the crumbling state of the economy. In January 1946, Myles was highly critical of Fianna Fáil's mismanagement of agricultural economy and heavy taxation on taxi drivers,[52] and the following month he would refer to the government as an "organism, so inchoate, so stratumless in its social function, so deranged with unholy and alien distractions (e.g. 'social justice,' 'planning')" who had accepted "the eternal ubiquity of incompetence and the continuing [...] poverty of the poor" and decided that "failing impracticable material comfort, people of Ireland must have good supply of spiritual fare and a guaranteed supply of jokes" (*CL,* February 21, 1946). As the general election approached, Myles's discourse turned more explicit and labelled Fianna Fáil politicians as "natives escaped from the mammoth peasantrium of Cork-Kerry" (*CL,* October

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[50] There were three by-elections in 1947, two of which were won by Clann na Poblachta (Séan MacBride and Patrick Kinane became TDs for Dublin County and Tipperary, respectively), and one by Fianna Fáil (John Ormond became T.D. for Waterford).

[51] "Echt", German for "true", "real", "typical". The use of a German word might point towards a consideration of the Fianna Fáil Administration as nationalist, as well as a pun aimed at national sovereignty during the war ("echt" and "Act").

[52] See *CL,* January 21 and 26, 1946, respectively.

29, 1945) and confessed that “Dev and I have from time to time on various issues eye to eye not seen” (*CL,* December 5, 1947).

Rejecting Fianna Fáil outright did not seem to mean, however, that he was inclined to vote for any of the other parties, or that he was explicit in any way in regards to his political preferences during the election. As was becoming customary, Myles notified his readers that he had once again been approached by certain unnamed parties who had made recourse to him in order to obtain more seats.[53] He used the opportunity to scorn how political parties were diverting people’s attention from the essentials and attempting to entangle them in world affairs of which Ireland was not a participant:

> My attitude is going to be that the elector is [...] too… fine, too intelligent, too… European to care about such matters. Above all my act is that his sense of proportion (if not of PR) is too great to permit him to concern himself with such toys as wheat, tobacco, rural hosing (ok),[54] and that bleak north strand, the coast of living, when all the time on the great horizon of world history problems of so much graver import loom. (*CL,* January 29, 1948)

In fact, the focus of the election was dangerously displaced from social stability and justice, or even ideological clashes between the different parties. The palpable similarities between Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael extended to other parties. For instance, as Foster notes, the Labour Party’s “profile remained oddly close to elements of Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael, and their electoral appeal correspondingly restricted” (1989: 576). Clann na Poblachta, for instance, differed from Fianna Fáil only in terms of their unconditional commitment to ending partition and declaring the Republic, but they were conscious of their ideological similarities. Even

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[53] In September 1947, Myles intimated that Fianna Fáil had urgently asked for his assistance in taking care of the growing social unrest in Ireland derived from emigration, strikes and overall economic stagnation: “Myles, we’re short of good men. You known what I me-an?’ [...] I won’t go into any more details. Suffice it that we discussed the Turf Board, the Tourist Board, the E.S.B., the G.S.R. (now C.I.E.) *and* Aer Lingus. It was all settled. In addition to the job, I was to get a car and a typist” (*CL,* September 29, 1947).

[54] In the late 1940s, unimpeded access to running water in the rural south was still a grave concern among politicians: “In rural Ireland prior to the 1950s living conditions in many houses were also very poor, with no electricity, running water or toilets, and often damp and dark” (Bielenberg and O’Hagan, 2017: 205). See also Daly (1997, 2010).

Smyllie, who was often vitriolic toward Fianna Fáil, conceded that "on all major issues, their policies are so similar that the average citizen is at a loss to choose between them" (*IT,* February 4, 1948). This was perceived by the public and would be reflected in Myles's column on election day. The piece examined in a comic and sardonic tone the different candidates and proposals:

> Séan, for instance, if *he* gets in—will he send us all to hospital, put false teeth into our gobs, give us pinshins *and* do away with pound notes though, musha, indeed, bygor [sic], faith, 'tis little use there is to-day for them latter articles of equipment barring you give them away to waiters to get you a taxi 'home,' which is usually anything else BUT.
>
> Norton and Co.? The Labour Party, if *they* get in, will repayle the Paynal Laws, God bless them, have this much-talked-of Emancipation and Byrne in F.E.G.—sorry—and burn, in effigy, the Messers. K. Marx, Lenin, Stalin and Dillon, at the junction of College street and Braunswegstrasse!
>
> *DILLON?* James Dillon, as innocent as a child and a friend of my own—*put that man into power and he will hale the whole country root and crop man and boy before the House of Lords in London and have yez impeached, tarred, feathered, drawn and quartered for high treason, felony and desairtation*!!![55]
>
> Fair enough but don't say I haven't warmed you, as the cannibal chief said to the missionary. *Fine Gael?* (Throws hands up, shows whites of eyes, takes glasses off, carefully puts them in case, finishes bottle of stout, gets up, buttons overcoat looks at watch which has been stopped for a week, and says:) That crowd? You know *their* act? *Abolish Fianna Fáil!* Lissenfield House? Mick Hayes? Blythe?[56] Comes back, puts battered hat and newspaper on counter, mutters about this C.I.E. crowd, monopolies is the curse of every community upon which, with parasitic avidity, they gorge

[55] Dillon ran as an independent in the 1948 general election and became a member of the coalition government, being appointed Minister for Agriculture by Costello.

[56] Lissenfield House was the residence of Fine Gael's leader Richard Mulcahy; Michael Hayes (1889-1976, Fine Gael) was a pro-Treaty politician and Cuman na nGaedheal T.D. before becoming a Fine Gael Senator in 1938. He remained in the post until 1965; Ernest Blythe (1889-1975, Fine Gael) was a Cuman na nGaedheal TD, a Fine Gael Senator and managing director of the Abbey Theatre from 1941 to 1967.

> theirselves, would you please, Mick, me decent man, put up another one till we see can we deal with it. (*CL,* February 4, 1948)

The general feeling is one of resignation and despondency toward the different political options available at the time, and reflected what Cronin has seen as "a proprietorial claim to be asserted against politicians and other usurpers" (Cronin 1990: 210) regarding the country, but also the public's widespread impatience with the stultifying state of Irish politics as a whole. The first reference was devoted to MacBride, head of Clann na Poblachta, and predictably censored his socialist flank, accusing them of intending to socialize medicine and severing the link with the sterling;[57] he was derisive of the Labour Party for essentially the same reasons. Mentioning Dillon was not unusual in *Cruiskeen Lawn,* but this time the explicitness of the reference was comparatively higher than on previous occasions, being portrayed as intensely pro-British. He showed a similar degree of irritability toward Fine Gael and some of its political figure, and in referring to the CIE he was speaking about Fianna Fáil and Lemass in particular. Later in the column, Myles mockingly insinuates that "**THE DEVIL UNO IS THE DEVIL YOU DON'T KNOW"** (*CL,* February 4, 1948), thus suggesting that the similarities between all parties were too striking to ignore, as well as denoting a profound weariness with Irish politics as a whole. The truth was, Myles seemed to be implying, that Irish politics was not imaginative and creative enough to effect dramatic change in the state of affairs irrespective of the political force holding the reins. With the hindsight of time, historians have acknowledged that "the coalition government [...] deserves recognition as a reforming administration [whose] introduction of capital budgets was a turning point in Irish economic planning" (Ferriter 2005: 482). Garvin (2004: no pagination) has equally commended the Inter-Party government and acknowledged the fact that it "took certain innovative decisions, such as the founding of the Industrial Development Authority, the institution of a separate capital budget and the declaration of the Republic, which arguably needed to be made and which would not have been made as rapidly under a Fianna Fáil

[57] The socialization of medicine would eventually be considered, as Noël Browne was in fact a Clann na Poblachta TD and, as Minister for Health, and solely responsible for the Mother and Child Scheme.

government".[58] At the time, however, the events of the Civil War were still fresh in the memory of the Irish people, and even within the coalition there were internal squabbles between MacBride, a zealous Republican, and some members of the Fine Gael party; in fact, MacBride had demanded Mulcahy, who was responsible for a series of post-Civil War executions, step aside and let Costello become Taoiseach instead.

The columns following the election did not yield a sense of hope or even mere curiosity as to the outcome of the election and the future of Irish politics. In fact, disillusionment prevailed. Upon learning of Fine Gael's intentions to piece together a five-party coalition to oust Fianna Fáil, Myles entertained conflicting views and voiced his discomfort and skepticism at the idea of a coalition working together to remove the Taoiseach from office: "Is it *healthy,* all this acrimony? Is it evidence of a robust democracy, an intelligent people freely expressing its social and political feelings [?] Is it evidence of a vigorous young nation ennobling and purifying itself in the fiery vessel of the ballot? [...] I'm only axing [sic]. Let others answer. Let each man examine his own conscience" (*CL,* February 11, 1948).[59] This did not necessarily imply that he disapproved of the concept of coalition, of any of the parties involved, or even of the fact that Fianna Fáil was no longer in power; in fact, in yet another instance of glowering contradiction within the column, Myles reported on himself that "through all the dark years, however, Myles na gCopaleen has not flinched and he interprets the results of the last election as his mandate from the people to overthrow and root out from their mighty seats the ruthless tycoons who hold at naught the lives of the Irish people and everything they deem secret" (*CL,* February 18, 1948). He was certainly playing the devil's advocate, and to some extent undermining Smyllie's supportive role in the paper, who had fervently championed Costello and his coalition, which he referred to as a "experiment": "Mr. Costello's Cabinet is frankly experimental [...] and he deserves the thanks of the people for the measure of success which already has rewarded his efforts in the direction of national unity [...]. For that very reason, Mr. Costello ought to command the

[58] Others, like Keogh, argue to the contrary: "the Inter-Party Governments of 1948-1951 and 1954-7 did not dramatically change the social and economic landscape. The ideology of protectionism had remained an Irish economic orthodoxy since de Valera came to power in 1932 (2004: 18).
[59] Some have commented on whether the coalition government was beneficial for Irish democracy, arriving at the conclusion that "whether or not it was good for the Irish economy or for Irish social development is another question, but that it was good for Irish democracy is possibly, even probably, the case" (Garvin 2004: no pagination).

unstinted support of every right-thinking citizen" (*IT,* February 19, 1948). It would not be long, however, before Myles had an alleged falling out with the government:

> The question which is on everybody's lips—whether I will do better out of the new crowd than I did out of the old! [...] is now resolved. *They're after me!* The dogs are in full cry and my Excellency, clearing ditches and dykes in great deer-like bounds, is flying for his life [...]. A rumour is going the rounds that the Minister for Agriculture (i.e., Dillon) has made one simple demand, something that he wants, a *must,* his minimum condition for participation in what the Editor of the *Irish Times* terms 'the experiment.' What? Very simple! *My life!* (*CL,* February 20, 1948)

Whether or not Dillon was aware of Myles's constant sneers at him throughout the years, Myles was certain that the new government would not take lightly to his newspaper frolics, and joked that Costello had taken issue with the column. Myles used the occasion to parody Costello's verbosity and legal background: "Costello's first official act was a vindictive dig at myself and my pals, i.e., an Order in Council directing that the persons hereinafter mentioned in the said schedule shall be or shall be deemed to be (may the Lord bless the legal mind!) persons who are persons unfit to travel on the inauguration flight of Aer Línte" (*ibid*). Myles was once again resisting the urge to adhere to any side, not even the winning one, and consciously employing what has been pinpointed as "a strategy of internal policing [...], a rhetorical manoeuvre [which] creates an impossible flux of shifting perspectives which clash and interact unpredictably" (Hopper 2009: 31). The column did not seem to make up his mind as to what political side to support; he castigated de Valera's Fianna Fáil with personal vindictiveness, but he was not especially encouraging toward the coalition government either. As had occurred with previous governments, Myles rapidly demanded an official post in return for his assistance as advisor to the government, or even in exchange for his silence: "Mind you, I've nothing, really, against the new crowd. (I *do* hope there won't be any false shyness about offering me anything that's going. There'll be absolutely no question of a… rebuff if I'm told in time. I mean I don't want to open the paper some morning and read—as

news—that I'm being given Washington, say, or Canberra)" (*CL,* February 27, 1948).[60] Interestingly, however, he demonstrated an interest in the new government's future economic and foreign policy, and wondered whether the coalition was willing to do away with Fianna Fáil's political staples:

> I wonder is the new crowd going to unnationalise—it doesn't necessarily mean anglicise—the hotels and the turf and the transport and so on? Bring back competition? It's a big question, mind you [...]. No, the trouble about nationalisation is that it involves bringing into being a lot of new officials who are inclined to regard efficiency as a synonym for effeminacy and who think the public should be put in their box—I don't mean that one in the Capitol that Séan T. sits in when the Radio Eireann b& [sic] playing. Oi nade [sic] hardly say. But wouldn't it be simpler to explain the real situation to the officials than to unnationalise? Believe it or not, things is [sic] going that way. (*Ibid*)

Myles was thus reflecting widespread concerns regarding the economy during the late 1940s and 1950s, which questioned "whether the Irish economy should be open to trade and investment flows with the wider world economy" and "whether there was to be a break with an almost total dependence on the British market" (Bradley 2013: 47). In essence, *Cruiskeen Lawn* was consistent in its criticism of economic planners influenced by welfarism, even if masked by harsh denunciation of the indolent behavior exhibited by Irish officials. Myles was attempting to undermine a crossing of economic protectionism and booming state enterprise, which had essentially become a mainstream political direction in the country (Garvin 2004). Even if Myles was only trying to expose the faults of the previous government, this piece perceptibly indicates that he was arguably opposed to the inward, more socially-minded view exhibited by the de Valera Administration and that he tentatively leaned toward a different course of action in Irish economic planning, one in which the

[60] In fact, he claimed to begrudge Fianna Fáil the fact that he had not been invited to occupy a position within their government, therefore suggesting that Costello consider having him in or else meet Fianna Fáil's destiny: "*What are the Government waiting for*? They know my views. Needless to say I don't want to force myself on them, but why pick on me to *leave out*? I have a very nice letter here from the other crowd in which they freely confess the only mistake they made in office was not having me in with them" (*CL,* March 12, 1948).

revitalization of the economy would be the top priority for policymakers. However, and as will be seen in the following chapter, Myles would also find himself at odds with this change of direction.

The new government was cautiously commented upon in the column during its early existence. There were, however, two key events which shaped the destiny of the coalition government, and on which Myles deliberately lingered: Costello's impromptu declaration of the Republic in 1949 during a diplomatic visit to Ottawa, and the conflicting events of the Mother and Child Scheme, which took place between 1950 and 1951 and involved the coalition government as a whole, but in particular Dr. Browne, the Clann na Poblachta Minister for Health. The following subsections will explore Myles's contributions and participation in the ensuing debates in order to offer a panoramic view of his general appreciation of the first Costello Administration.

4.3.1.1 The declaration of the Republic

On first hearing the news that Costello was determined to repeal the External Relations Act of 1936 and affirm Ireland's republican status in name, de Valera replied: "Go ahead… You will get no opposition from us" (Fanning 2015: 228).[61] It was one of the few instances in which government policy aligned with the interests of other parties in the Dáil. In fact, most of the dominant figures in the 1948 cabinet had private reservations or simply objected to the existence of the Act, as McCullagh (2015) indicates.[62] The decision to abandon the Commonwealth was enunciated by Costello while on a state visit in Canada, on September 7, 1948. McCullagh (2010: 210) recounts the strange diplomatic circumstances in which the declaration occurred. During Costello's visit to Canada, he was arguably offended on a personal level by the Governor-General of Canada, Lord Alexander, whose Northern Irish

[61] In fact, as Fanning (2015: 227-8) recounts, de Valera had already drafted legislation to repeal the External Relations Act shortly before the 1948 general election. What de Valera privately objected to was the secession of the Republic from the Commonwealth, an association which the former Taoiseach believed fruitful and positive for Ireland's economic prosperity. It has been argued by some that de Valera wanted to wait until the Indian issue was solved (qtd. in Ferriter 2005: 485).

[62] McCullagh mentions Costello, who had reservations as to the imprecisions of the Act in legal terms, and MacBride, who actively campaigned during the 1948 election against the Act and even included in its electoral manifestos. He also mentions Norton, the Tánaiste.

origins prompted him to place a small-sized replica of the Roaring Meg, a cannon which was used during the siege of Derry against the Jacobites and by extension a powerful Protestant symbol.[63] Being thus affronted, Costello announced in a speech to the Canadian Bar Association that Ireland was to become a Republic in the near future. Some have disputed Costello's honesty in affirming that said decision had been previously discussed among cabinet members. The general consensus is that while "Costello's decision may have been impulsive, [...] he perhaps believed that he was merely enunciating government policy" (Ferriter 2005: 485). McCullagh (2010, 2015) backs this theory, but the fact of the matter is that even MacBride was surprised. In any case, Costello was not mincing words when he spoke of the urgency of repealing the External Relations Act: the Republic of Ireland Act was signed into law by President O'Kelly on December 21, 1948, and came into force on a symbolic date, April 18, 1949, Easter Monday.

Myles's response to the declaration of the Republic was overall in line with his approach to the 1948 Inter-Party government: tame, cautious and, for the most part, very conservative. In fact, there are only a handful of columns which even mention the issue. The late 1940s and early 1950s denote a lack of political imagination on the part of Myles, and the declaration of the Republic is no exception. Myles's first substantial approach to the idea of Ireland becoming a Republic, published a year prior to the Ottawa declaration, was actually critical, and warned the Irish people of the dangers of moving the spotlight away from Ireland's political efficiency as a country toward the hypocritical celebration of a mere symbolic ideal:

> I think you Irishmen should pay more attention to this great discovery that a lot of problems arise from a preoccupation with words and definitions [...]. What you are 'politically' does not interest you at all, but whether you call it 'republic' or 'commonwealth'—that is so critical a question that the effusion of blood is an essential rite in the ceremony of searching for an answer. (*CL,* May 26, 1947)

[63] The Siege of Derry (1689) was preceded by an attempt by Jacobites to take control of the city of Derry. Williamite supporters responded by closing the gates and Derry was besieged for 105 days. About half of the city's population is said to have died during the event, many from starvation.

This came from the writer of a column oftentimes devoted to the minute and meticulous clarification of the definition of certain words, often directed in a humiliatory manner to incautious and shortsighted public figures, such as during the Alfred O'Rahilly controversy in the midst of the Mother and Child Scheme.[64] This contradictory strand in *Cruiskeen Lawn*, however, has been noted to be one of Myles's most distinguishable traits as a polemicist: "He can exercise a real irritation yet remain comic; he can write in pedantically grammatical fashion while remaining playful; he can mint fine phrases without appearing too proud of them; he can exaggerate and invent at will, while lambasting others for their insufficient attention to the facts" (Brooker 2011: 27). His response to Costello's declaration came a few days later and, as customary, C.I.E. became the object of invective. Responding to demands that Irish transport should be nationalized, Myles suggested the following:

> Maybe you could go even farther and tie up the projected exit of Ireland from the British Empire by having Canada, South Africa, Australia, etc., absorbed in C.I.E. (—the Consolidated Irish Empire?), giving gentlemen like Dr. Evatt, LLD.[65] a seat on the Board? [...] If one could get that much carried into effect, my ideal of the Irish Transport Republic would be at last in sight. It is the best development to aim for after severing the last imperial tie. I assert again that Britain is bankrupt and finished and that there is nothing to be gained, financially at all events, by further association with her. (*CL,* September 10, 1948)

It was, admittedly, a fairly explicit response. However, it rested on the long-used argument that Britain's postwar socialist tendencies were detrimental to Ireland and that links between both countries should be severed on that account. It is also relevant to note that a comparison of the newly announced republican status with C.I.E. might be read as declaring the

[64] See section 4.3.1.2.

[65] Presumably Herbert Vere Evatt (1894-1965), an Australian doctor in law, politician and writer. See p. 162 for further information on this figure.

administration's inefficiency. Indeed, as Taaffe notes, "his gripe was with the running of this vaunted republic, not with its symbolic political status" (2008: 168).

His pronouncements on partition were essentially limited to what has been discussed above and a few other individual mentions. For instance, on April 13, 1949, he claimed to have come up with a sentence which summarized the history of Ireland: "**DE VALERA BOYCOTTS REPUBLIC**". As discussed above, this was far from being the case. On the same day, he reminded his readers that the following Sunday "the last remnant of monarchal mummery will be shed" (*ibid*). He also mentioned the Republic on April 11, in connection to the illegality of pub owners to show any political allegiance in the form of flags, and referred to Ireland as a Republic after the declaration on April 22. Myles was definitely aware that declaring Ireland a Republic was but a symbolic move thought by many to be a political stratagem by Costello, directed at stealing de Valera's spotlight (Ferriter 2005: 485). Even if this was so, it is therefore unequivocally surprising that Myles neglected to address it in detail. While finding a reason for such a conspicuous absence of substantial commentary in his body of work, it seems to have been a case, as with much of *Cruiskeen Lawn,* of not conforming to the stereotype of the political commentator and the expectations of his audience. In relation to *At Swim-Two-Birds,* Long speaks of the novel as being "an anarchistic revolt against the concept of a linear succession of events that have a stable beginning, a section of development and complication, and a definite ending" (2014: 17). In some way, *Cruiskeen Lawn*'s disorderly approach to Irish society and apparently random exegesis of political events reflects that view.

4.3.1.2 The Mother and Child Scheme

That the Mother and Child Scheme was in all likelihood one of the most controversial political events to take place in Ireland ever since the 1937 Constitution was enacted is an understatement. It has dubbed a "first class, even epoch-defining, dispute" (Bartlett 2010: 477), "one of the most celebrated and vitriolic controversies of twentieth-century Ireland" (Ferriter 2005: 502) and "the first of its kind in the history of the state" (Brown 1981: 223). As such, it became a common feature in leading articles and front pages, particularly so in the *Irish Times.* In essence, the Scheme revisited Fianna Fáil's previously discussed 1947

Health Act and dramatically extended benefits in an attempt to provide medical insurance to mothers and their children up to the age of 16. It was championed by Clann na Poblachta's Nöel Browne, who was also the Minister for Health in the Inter-Party government. It was a time when "there was a general re-evaluation of the role of the state and, by extension, local authorities in relation to public health. As a a result, the need to be more interventionist, with a concentration on the principles of preventive rather than curative medicine, was recognised" (Ferriter 2005: 561). It was at this point that the Catholic Church intervened, paternally warning the country of the dangers of potentially bestowing upon the government such a great power over the health of families, but especially women and children, thus likening the scheme to communism. The Irish Medical Association similarly stood in opposition: in 1950, an internal referendum of the association yielded overwhelmingly negative results for Browne's Scheme: over 80% of the doctors who took part in the referendum declared themselves against supporting the Scheme publicly or otherwise (Counihan 2002: 113).[66] There also existed a substantial degree of opposition within government ranks, with O'Higgins, acting this time as Minister of Defence, openly airing his unconditional disavowal of the Scheme and arranging meetings between the Irish Medical Association and the Taoiseach and Tánaiste (*ibid*),[67] and most of "his governmental colleagues had been unpersuaded of Mr Browne's wisdom on some points of his scheme", while others "found it distasteful" (Brown 1981: 222). As advanced earlier in this dissertation,[68] the Scheme was a resounding failure and precipitated the government's early demise. Even if the revolutionary nature of his Scheme has been generally recognized, Browne has been seen as "relatively innocent of the reality of power politics" (Ferriter 2005: 503), failing "to appreciate the political seriousness of the hierarchy's opposition to his scheme" (Counihan 2002: 113).

The national debacle caused by the Scheme did not escape commentary on the part of leading artistic figures, such as Séan O'Faolain. His 1951 essay "The Dáil and the Bishops",

[66] The degree to which the Irish Medical Association were vocal on the issue, and the influence they exerted over other members of the government was proof that, even though the Scheme has often been "referred to as a Church-State clash, it was in reality far too multi-layered for such a label to do justice to it" (Ferriter 2005: 502)
[67] William Joseph Norton (1900-63, Labour) occupied the position of Tánaiste in both Inter-Party governments.
[68] See section 2.4.2.

published in *The Bell* shortly after the Scheme was discarded, was clearly vocal against the Church's interference in the State, and implied the existence of a Catholic Parliament alongside the Dáil,[69] the latter being subjected to the former.[70] Myles's occasional drinking companion—and fellow Catholic—Patrick Kavanagh, took a different view and castigated Browne for trying to separate motherhood from spirituality: "Dr Browne—the wan man who was true—was foolhardy or just silly in supposing that you can separate social welfare from religion when the social welfare has to do with maternity. It is right that the religious ideal should be the ruling voice in such matters" (1952: 2).[71]

Such a nation-wide debate which, as David McCullagh evidences, "has it all: bullying Bishops; arrogant doctors; devious politicians; and a clean cut hero, wronged by them all" (McCullagh 2015), would seem to be a perfect fit for *Cruiskeen Lawn*, a column which fed on debate, controversy and polemics to survive when Myles's creativity waned. However, the Scheme figured only parenthetically, being merely tangential to Myles's row with Alfred O'Rahilly's articles in the *Catholic Standard.*[72] This might have been due to a number of different reasons, the most important one being that Myles's views on any Mother and Child scheme—and by extension on any welfarist proposal on the part of the government—had already been made public on previous occasions.[73] As early as 1945, Myles was against any state-sponsored configuration which reeked of socialism. Declaring that a State Medical Service was "an ideal for which I have been long working", he clarified that he did not "refer to this evil scheme whereby whole communities are to be given the states of concentration camps and put in charge of dispensary doctors. I will tolerate no regime that seeks to imperil

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[69] This view was also held by Smyllie and the *Irish Times* editorial committee. Speaking for the Six Counties, and linking the Scheme to the question of partition Smyllie declared: "To that majority, the domination of the State by the Church—any Church—is anathema, and from now onwards it can plead some justification for all its fears. It seems that the merits of a theocratic Twenty-six Counties outweigh those of a normally democratic Thirty-two. Has the Government made its choice?" (*IT,* April 12, 1951b).

[70] O'Faolain would go on to publish an article in *The Bell* titled "The Bishop of Galway and 'The Bell'" in September 1951, responding to criticism on the part of the Bishop towards *The Bell.* For more on O'Faolain's opposition to the Catholic Church as regards their intervention in the Mother and Child Scheme, see McCaffrey (1956), Brad Kent (2016) and Carson (2016), among others.

[71] This article was published in Kavanagh's own journal, *Kavanagh's Weekly,* to which O'Nolan contributed. The journal included more pieces of a political nature, much of them showing an anti-Fianna Fáil rhetoric on the part of Kavanagh himself. See Shovlin (1998) for an analysis of Kavanagh's political commentary in his journal.

[72] Alfred O'Rahilly (1884-1969, Cumann na nGaedheal) was President of University College Cork from 1943 to 1954. He was a devout Catholic and defended the bishops' right to oppose the Mother and Child Scheme.

[73] See sections 3.2.3.2 and 4.2.2.3.

the right of the ill to be sick" (*CL* May 23, 1945). He had spoken in similar terms regarding the 1947 Health Act, and seeing as the Mother and Child Scheme, if put in practice, would rely heavily on dispensary doctors and not on private practitioners, it is safe to assume that his views on the Scheme would be similar in nature to those any on previous iterations of a more progressive approach to medicine. Another reason might have involved Smyllie and a preference on his part to retain close control of the newspaper's line of argument, thus censoring Myles. This is unlikely, however, as Myles surprisingly rose to his defense at a point in the controversy.[74] It was most likely a case of Myles "congealing into a parody of himself" during the early 1950s: "the persona was [...] firmly established as a bullish and often cantankerous representative of the Plain People of Ireland" (Taaffe 2008: 174). As such, a meticulous and politically-motivated analysis was not to be expected this time; in contrast, his participation in the Mother and Child Scheme took the form of an inter-newspaper, verbally violent dispute between himself and O'Rahilly, who was called a "self-licensed demagogue", a "wee Cork nuisance" (*CL,* May 2, 1951), "the Cork *thooleramawn*", a producer of "scurrility, falsehood, ignorance and illiterate writing" (*CL,* May 16, 1951) or a "Cork *gawskogue*" (*CL,* May 17, 1951).[75]

The controversy flared up when Smyllie decided to publish Browne's correspondence with the bishops regarding the scheme and after continuous defamation of the Church's role in what was essentially a political process. Browne's resignation from the government took place on April 11, 1951, and the following day, the front page of the newspaper was explicitly partisan: "Dr Browne replaced by Mr Costello: Minister's Scheme killed by hierarchy ruling" (*IT,* April 12, 1951a). Smyllie's editorial was even more so:

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[74] Nevertheless, while "*Cruiskeen Lawn* maintained an illusion of wayward freedom" (Taaffe 2008: 175), the fact is that O'Nolan—or Montgomery—struggled to publish the entirety of the material he produced during the early 1950s. At that time, Smyllie was "becoming wilful and erratic in his judgment" and "for [that] reason and also because the column was becoming ever more polemical, a larger number of pieces than before was being rejected" (Cronin 1990: 194).

[75] Alfred O'Rahilly was not the first member of the O'Rahilly family to engage in controversy with Myles. Alfred's brother, Thomas Francis O'Rahilly (1883-1953), had sued, alongside the Institute of Advanced Studies, the Irish Times in 1940 when Myles poked fun at O'Rahilly's "hypothesis that there were two different Christian missionaries to Ireland who had been confused historically as one figure, St Patrick" (Cronin 1990: 194). The quarrel cost the *Irish Times* £50.

> His tragedy is that he failed to perceive the extent and power of the forces that were both openly and covertly arrayed against him. It was dangerous enough that his 'Mother and Child' scheme aroused the fierce hostility of a considerable part of the medical profession; it was fatal when his views came into collision with the Roman Catholic Hierarchy [...]. He was left to fight a single-handed battle when once again the Church entered the arena. Thus—not for the first or second time in Irish history—progress is thwarted. (*IT,* April 12, 1951b)

Furthermore, he also implied that the Church was nominally against universal healthcare for financial reasons: "A Mother and Child scheme, embodying a means test,[76] is in accordance with Christian social principles; a Mother and Child scheme without a means test is opposed to them" (*ibid*). O'Rahilly rapidly retorted by smearing the *Irish Times* journalistic credentials and accusing Smyllie of opposing the Church's views on the matter only because he was a Protestant. Myles, who had previously demonstrated an almost reckless fixation with his editor, decided to assist Smyllie, who took no more part on the issue:

> The *Irish Times,* having taken up an attitude, permissible but apparently hostile to general public thinking, throws its correspondence open to all and publishes many letters in defence of the bishops. What does the Professor say? 'The other papers,' he says, 'so far as I have seen them, have taken refuge in green silence.' If this paper also said nothing, I suppose the silence would be described as 'sinister'. (*CL,* May 2, 1951)

Cronin writes that Myles "had, in some ways, a soft target [who] was regarded as a member of the lunatic right and had been an intellectual apologist for the now discredited Blueshirts" (Cronin 1990: 195). Indeed, Fallon defines O'Rahilly as "the champion of the Catholic right, being particularly outspoken and extreme" (2004: 36). This extremism was translated into a

[76] One of the most controversial aspects of the Scheme is that it purported to operate without a means test; that is, offering healthcare irrespective of family income. Some members of the government, and many among Church echelons, feared that the costs would be a heavy burden on the taxpayer. The Church also feared the universalization of gynecological care, a controversial brand of medicine strictly regulated by Catholic social teaching.

censorial and quasi-dictatorial attitude toward the *Irish Times* for having exposed the role of the Church and demanded they apologize for their overt reports. Myles, evidencing once again his impatience with any form of censure or blanket ban, responded that "shutting up independent newspapers is a commonplace as the first move of the totalitarian. Hi there, *La Prensa!*" (*CL,* May 2, 1951).[77]

As determined above, it is unlikely that Myles's opinions on the Scheme were any different to his previous pronouncements on medical progress. There are, however, a number of instances in which Myles showed, or intimated, his views on the controversy and on the role of the hierarchy. The Catholic Church had not figured greatly in the column so far, but most of his pronouncements on it had been non-committal. Notable exceptions were the case of Bishop Dignan's proposals, utterly savaged by Myles in 1944, and the 1949 dispute surrounding Dr Michael Brown,[78] bishop of Galway, and the Galway Corporation. The latter consisted of the rejection by Galway Corporation of a school site proposed by Brown, simply to later yield to the bishop's political pressure. This time, Myles "quixotically declared himself on the side of the bishop—who had at least stood by his convictions—unlike the public representatives concerned" (Taaffe 2008: 170).[79] Incidentally, Myles did actually offer his views on the controversy:

> My own real view?
>
> The Editor, in writing the leading article in question, lacked prudence.
>
> The bishops, *making a perfectly legitimate intervention on a vital matter*, should have done so overtly, if only for the benefit of the faithful. Lenten Pastorals are obvious occasions for the enunciation of their views.[80] In *failing* therein, *they lacked prudence*. (*CL,* May 2, 1951) [My emphasis]

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[77] *La Prensa* is a Nicaraguan newspaper which underwent different periods of partial or total censorship during the 1930s and the 1940s for being excessively critical of the government.
[78] Dr Michael Brown had been the Chair of the Commission on Vocational Organisation, and as such likely the object of little sympathy on the part of Myles (Taaffe 2008: 170).
[79] See *CL,* September 7, 1949.
[80] Speeches or sermons given by Christian priests during Lent, a period of special religious devotion observed from Ash Wednesday until Holy Saturday, the day before Easter Sunday.

His complaisance in such a measured riposte is hardly surprising. After all, O'Nolan was a Catholic all his life (Cronin 1990: 57), even if at some point during the controversy (*CL,* May 17, 1951) Myles declared himself not to be one so as to distance himself from O'Rahilly: "I do not lightly take on the grandiose title of Catholic. If AOR is a Catholic, it follows that I am not: the contrary would suggest the equation AOR=MC, which is perfectly preposterous",[81] However, the fact that he discredited their intervention in at least its covert nature is evidence that "even highly orthodox, conservative Catholics began to feel that the church had over-reached itself by dictating to the state on matters of public health, which was not its proper sphere" (Fallon 2004: 36). In fact, the bulk of the public ended up viewing the controversy as the story of "a dedicated pioneer in the area of state provision of healthcare for mothers and children had been brought down by an obscurantist and elitist hierarchy" (Bartlett 2010: 480). Interestingly, Myles never conceded that the bishops were right. In fact, a few weeks later, upon being accused by O'Rahilly of agreeing with him on the "vindication of our Bishops", Myles declared that "I have nowhere expressed any opinion whatever on the validity of the views expressed by their Lordships" (*CL,* May 28, 1951). In fact, he seemed to think that the controversy had been taken too far by both sides and quietly played down O'Rahilly's fears of socialist medicine debunking the priests' right to health management: "If he had a few drinks for himself he would see the absurdity of his idea that the Catholic Church in this country is in danger and in need of his protection, and that this protection must be afforded by something next door to foul-mouthedness" (*CL,* May 2, 1951). Early in the article, Myles had already made public his lack of interest in contributing in any detail to the ongoing controversy: "A number of readers have written asking me for definitive adjudication on this Mother and Child row. This invitation I must decline—for two reasons: I deny that I am a child and I can *prove* I am not a mother" (*ibid*).

[81] The John J. Burns Library Archive in Boston College which holds O'Nolan's papers includes a "Certificate of Membership of the Crusade of the Miraculous Medal" signed by O'Nolan himself on October 10, 1948 (MS.1997.027, box 1, folder 1). Clissmann (1975: 34) also adds that O'Nolan received his last rites as a Catholic in his deathbed. In his interview with Wale, O'Nolan defined himself as "a Roman Catholic, while not always agreeing with the representatives of that faith" (1965: 49). Additionally, O'Nolan's novels—especially *The Third Policeman*—have been seen as containing glimpses of profound Catholic beliefs. In fact, Davis argues that the novel "shows that without that little country church, without faith, without God, all we are left with is meaningless drivel" (2012: 350).

It is undeniably surprising that that was the extent of Myles's engagement with a controversy that had been raging for almost a year—Browne had been requesting the assistance of Irish Medical Association doctors to draft the Scheme as early as spring, 1950, when they received the Minister's proposal (Counihan 2002: 112). And while Cronin claims that Myles was "in dazzling form throughout the exchanges, [which] showed Myles at his agile best" (1990: 195), there was little or no political commentary. The only isolated commentary, which essentially reflects Myles's previous views on the 1947 Health Act, indicated his unwillingness to substantially contribute to the ongoing discussion: "I haven't followed this other dispute about the Mother and Child Service, but unless the situation is carefully handled, I'll tell you what'll happen—the mother will be left holding the baby" (*CL,* December 11, 1950). All in all, the general conclusion extracted from a discussion of Myles's timid participation in the Scheme reveals that Myles showed scant interest in offering an opinion which, at any rate, he had already made public on previous occasions. Above all, there was no public condemnation of the bishops, the implication being "that the confusion of Church and State was less the fault of a pushy Catholic hierarchy than of a spineless public service" (Taaffe 2008: 170). Myles's clamorous silences, once again, betrayed an inherent conservatism which, if not strictly political, was by all means social and civic in nature.

4.3.2 Fianna Fáil government (1951-4)

The First Inter-Party government succumbed to pressure and called a snap election on May 30, 1951, shortly after the Mother and Child debacle. The blame did not fall entirely upon Browne and his Scheme, however. There were a number of causes, most of which economic in nature, as to why the Costello Administration ultimately failed to shine past Fianna Fáil. Gary Murphy (2009: 75) lists among these an aggressive balance-of-payments crisis after Marshall Aid was discontinued, excessive Government spending on public concerns, widely available bank credit and, overall, the country's growing tendency to live beyond its means. Furthermore, in one way or another Costello's decision to repeal the External Relations Act, thus prompting Ireland to exit the Commonwealth, "was bound to have serious implications for Irish trade" (McMahon 2000: 185). While it had been proved that a five-party coalition

could, if precariously, sustain itself, de Valera's rhetoric remained encroached around anti-coalition and anti-partition discourses. The election yielded similar results for Fianna Fáil, which gained 3 seats despite obtaining over 60,000 more votes, and Fine Gael, whose increase in number of votes was similar but it was reflected in an 8-seat increase; however, Clann na Poblachta lost 8 seats which, added to Labour's 3-seat loss, made the possibility of coalition harder to attain. Eventually, Fianna Fáil were able to form a government with the support of five Independents, one of which was Noël Browne.[82]

As the general election approached, Myles began to show a certain degree of interest in its outcome. Two weeks before the event, he remarked the dryness and lack of imagination of Irish politicians:

> Now that a generelection [sic] has been proclaimed—why not spell the word as commonly pronounced?—I am rather dismayed at the absence of any *new* talk from the campaigning statesmen, any new policy even in a minor regard [...]. For instance, social insurance, the succouring by subsidy of the indigent and the sick: it is permissible to debate how this can best be done, but, since the principle must be conceded, such debate is routine. The same is true of agriculture, unemployment. Something new and imaginative is what will get votes this time. (*CL,* May 14, 1951)

This is one of the first instances in which Myles only expresses discontent over traditionalist approaches to Irish politics and economy, emphasizing a crucial need for innovation and regeneration of the entrenched and worn-out politics of independence. These "campaigning statesmen" essentially constituted the old guard of Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael, most of which would prove to be "highly resistant to new thinking and each clinging to the detritus of the failed policies of economic self-sufficiency, language revival and rural development" (Bartlett 2010: 476). There are also a number of elements in Myles's claim that merit mention: the first is Myles's concession that social insurance had become a given in Irish politics, which is certainly surprising in view of his vitriolic opposition to it on a number of

[82] Apart from Browne, the Independents in question were Michael ffrench O'Carroll (1919-2007), Patrick Cogan (1903-77), John Flynn (d. 1968) and Peadar Cowan (1903-62).

past occasions; and the second is the absolute omission of emigration—which had not been discussed in *Cruiskeen Lawn* to date—and partition.[83] Once again, this general election was proof that ideology was not a differentiating or decisive factor in terms of the voting public. During a debate celebrated on the day that the 14th Dáil was constituted, Dillon invited the rest of TDs to reflect: "What ideological differences, if words retain their meaning, divide any two Deputies on any side of this House? I think of ideologies as representing democracy, dictatorship, Fascism, Nazism, Marxism. Who says that there are differences of that character between any two men in the public life of Ireland?"[84] Even de Valera could not help but convey an acute sense of administrative weariness, particularly in regard to partition. When asked in the Dáil shortly after returning to office if he had any solution for partition, de Valera replied: "If I am asked: 'Have you a solution for it?' in the sense: 'Is there a line of policy which you propose to pursue, which you think can, within a reasonable time, be effective?' I have to say that I have not and neither has anybody else."[85] De Valera's discourse, and by extension most politicians' approaches to the political problems that Ireland faced at the beginning of the 1950s, "largely preached to the converted" (Keane 2006: 111); or, as Myles put it in the same article, "most discussion and recrimination seems to centre on matters long past discussion, here and throughout the world" (*CL,* May 14, 1951).

A few days later, Myles continued his discourse on the election in a similar manner. This time, he referenced the government's determination to adopt a nonchalant attitude to the growing territorial and ideological tensions overseas, preoccupied as they were on solving intrinsically domestic affairs such as the Mother and Child issue; however, he did not condone or reaffirm the opposing posture either:

> What do you make of this election business?
>
> I have fairly solid inside information that a world war will be started within the next two months at latest but many of the speakers seem to me to be preoccupied not with

[83] At a time when emigration had become an almost institutional problem, with half a million Irish leaving the island during the 1950s (Bartlett 2010: 477), such an omission was certainly glaring, particularly when Irish intellectuals were addressing the topic fervently.
[84] See Dáil debates (June 13, 1951).
[85] See Dáil debates (July 19, 1951).

> death but with foetal life. Whether that's a cheerful statistic or not I lave [sic] to yer honour. I can only remark in passing that it looks a bit contrary to the British idea; which gallantly insists on sacrificing some of the cost of free dentures in the interest of making guns. (*CL,* May 25, 1951)

Myles was referring to Britain's upcoming 1951 general election, which would be won by Churchill and the Conservative Party by placing a much more intense focus on defense spending and underscoring their reluctance to expand Attlee's nationalization program and welfare state model.[86] Ireland's isolationism and stagnation were therefore glaringly evident in Myles's eyes, and while he did not necessarily imply that Ireland should join any sort of international military enterprise—indeed, as has been seen previously in this chapter, Myles was cautiously suspicious of any internationally sponsored organization—he seemed to be an advocate of the idea that it was high time for Ireland to leave its cozy, secluded nest and engage in matters fit for an independent, adult state; in fact, it was during the Fianna Fáil 1951-4 government that Minister for Finance MacEntee and Minister for Industry and Commerce Lemass began colliding assiduously in debates over protectionist versus expansionist approaches to economy (Murphy 2009: 168).[87] As Brown notes, the Republic—especially under de Valera's leadership, was excessively wary in this regard: "the state tentatively breaking out of the political isolationism and neutrality of the war years was required to exercise a caution it did not necessarily find burdensome, even when it was inhibiting" (1981: 255).

On election day, the *Irish Times* published one of Myles's most politically explicit columns to date,[88] referencing parties and naming politicians directly without, however, publicly endorsing or personally defaming any of the contenders himself. He astutely resorted

[86] For more on the British 1951 general election, see Butler and Butler (2000), Kynaston (2009) and Reynolds (2013).
[87] Myles was definitely aware of Ireland's postwar economic dependence on the weakened British market and, more particularly, on American aid. His apparent proposal of a country open to external and foreign influence did not necessarily imply the need for a relationship of economic, or even political, dependence; in fact, he despised the idea: "How about presentation by rich American of cheque for $1.000,000 to US State Department's Dáil Eireann?" (*CL,* June 1, 1951)
[88] A column similar in nature, but decidedly less antagonistic in tone, was that of February 4, 1948, published in reference to the 1948 general election. See pp. 193-4 for a detailed analysis.

to a dramatic, hypothetical dialogue dressed in Dublin slang—reminiscent of the style of sharp political satire underscored by a sense of "windy futility" used in *Faustus Kelly* (Taaffe 2008: 178)—between two indistinct characters: an Irish man, and a Dublin man. The former arrives in Dublin at the time of the election and bumps into the latter in a pub. The Irish man, naturally interested in the Dublin man's perception of the elections, prompts him into a casual discussion of the different parties and their candidates. The following conversation ensues:

> I.M.: Well, do you think Fine Gael will form a Government.
>
> D.M. (*expression of absolute incredulity*): Do you mean the Cosgrove crowd?
>
> [...]
>
> D.M.: THAT crowd? My dear man, I seen that crowd. I knuwn [sic] that crowd very well. I seen them and I seen their fathers. I will tell you one thing about that crowd. That crowd is no————good.
>
> I.M.: Well, I mean…..
>
> D.M.: Nor never was any good. That crowd was all Free State Army privates in the old days. For about 48 hours. After that the whole crowd was all Generals [...] not one Dublin man in the whole bunch, the greatest crowd of impostors and hooks that was ever got together in one bunch, don't be talking to me.[89]
>
> [...]
>
> I.M.: Perhaps you think Fianna Fáil should form a Government?
>
> D.M.: I suppose you're joking? That crowd is all mad. But they done all right out of their madness.
>
> I.M.: Perhaps then a coalition of all parties under the leadership of de Valera?
>
> D.M. (*look of blank inquiry*): Who? Say that AGAIN.
>
> I.M.: De Valera…

[89] The reference to the Generals might be directed, among others, to General Mulcahy and General Eoin O'Duffy (1890-1944), both prominent members of the Fine Gael party.

> D.M.: Dev….a….lera? You mean the fellow that went to America?[90] But shure me dear man that fellow's as mad as a hatter.
>
> [...]
>
> I.M.: Maybe the country might, for a change, try a Labour Government, with Bill Norton at the helm.
>
> D.M. (*gesture of holy resignation*): I met all that Labour crowd in the old days. I seen them. I built suits on their fathers. I seen them marching and countermarching before you were born. And I'll tell you one thing about that crowd. They're no darn good to anybody. Nor never was any good to anybody.
>
> I.M.: (*smiling*): Well, how about Peadar forming a Government?
>
> D.M.: (*suspiciously*): Which of the Peadars? Doyle or Cowan?[91]
>
> I.M.: Oh… either.
>
> D.M.: I will tell you what I would do with that pair, I would tie the two of them into one good big sack and put them into the Liffey at high tide and it would be good riddance to bad rubbish now do you understand me?" (*CL,* June 13, 1951)

The conversation, which was enacted to represent what Myles saw as "the quality of utter DISILLUSION" (*ibid*) in Irish politics, as well as the urbanite's aloof and apathetic attitude toward the election, should not be readily read as Myles's own political opinions. Rather, it feels as an attack against all that was chauvinist but at the same time slovenly in Irish society; or, in other words, what has been perceived as "a strong sense of public complacency" (Murphy 2009: 19) with the status quo in Ireland during the 1940s and 1950s. After witnessing the Dublin man's political uncertainties, the Irish man asks: "Tell me, what will you have?" to which the Dublin man responds: "(*look of sourness, reluctance, disdain, replaced by one of resignation*): Oh… the same, I suppose." (*CL,* June 13, 1951). However, even if this is yet again one of Myles's sneers at the unsophisticated Plain People of Ireland

[90] Myles is referring to de Valera's American tour between 1919 and 1920 with the aim of obtaining international recognition for the Irish Republic.
[91] Peadar S. Doyle (d. 1956, Fine Gael) was Lord Mayor of Dublin between 1941 and 1943, and from 1945 to 1946.

and their political ineptitude, it is still an explicit account of the main political figures and parties in Ireland at the time, and one of Myles's most overt pronouncements on Irish politics to date. If it were to be interpreted as such, the extract shows a sustained approach on the part of Myles: all in all, Fianna Fáil managed to escape Myles's visceral conversation almost unscathed, especially when compared to Fine Gael, who were mercilessly lampooned as impostors and country-dwellers, or Labour, vaguely disregarded as merely ineffectual. While the nature of the column is essentially parodic, it is necessary to remember that Myles has been invariably defined as feeling "a certain public vocation for the writer: a right to speak out and strike stances about [...] society, whether or not society was listening" (Brooker 2014: 103). The fact that Fianna Fáil is not the object of Myles's—or the Dublin man's—concentrated rage as opposed to the other parties is, therefore, worthy of mention, especially when considered in light of Myles's apparent preference for a Fianna Fáil-led Administration during The Emergency.

All in all, the government of the 14th Dáil poses a special challenge with regards to *Cruiskeen Lawn* for two particular reasons: first, de Valera's return to power was not synonymous with a reinvigoration of Fianna Fáil policymaking. De Valera, by then elderly and virtually blind, appointed like-minded ministers to both External Affairs (Aiken) and Finance (MacEntee) with the aim of undoing the coalition government's timid expansionist efforts and reverting to neutrality and protectionist policies. Second, O'Nolan was not at his prime, and this became reflected in the column; to begin with, *Cruiskeen Lawn* was discontinued for most of 1952,[92] a year which would see the enactment of the Social Welfare Act,[93] Fianna Fáil's reformulation of their 1947 Health Act and Browne's Mother and Child Scheme. As such, no commentary on the Act appeared in the column. That year also exacerbated O'Nolan's quarrels with the civil service, which would culminate in his definitive retirement from the civil service the following year. Bearing all this in mind, the

[92] *Cruiskeen Lawn Catalogued* (2019) lists only a total of 27 columns in 1952. Cronin is unspecific in his explanation for Myles's absence from the paper, asserting that 1951 had been a year of illness and that much of what O'Nolan wrote during 1951 and 1952 was discarded by the newspaper (1990: 196). McNally ambiguously attributes it to "a mixture of ill-health and ill-feeling" (2014: 26). However, O'Nolan was certainly active intellectually over 1952: he contributed letters and articles to *Kavanagh's Weekly* (April 26-June 14) and even offered his services to write an Irish-language edition of the Guinness Handbook (O'Nolan 2018: 168-9).

[93] Introduced by James Ryan, it "consolidated and introduced benefits such as disability and maternity benefits, and it laid the foundation for future social welfare benefits" (Meehan 2013: 8). The Act attempted "to establish a co-ordinated system of social insurance and to provide for the benefits thereunder".

following subsection will limit itself to scrutinizing two relevant and interrelated events which took place during the 1951-54 Fianna Fáil government and which featured prominently in the column: the An Tóstal celebrations and the controversy surrounding Andy Clerkin's clock or, as it became known in the column, "ACCISS" (Andy Clarkin's Clock Is Still Stopped).

4.3.2.1 "ACCISS" and An Tóstal

Upon his return to power in 1951, de Valera predictably resorted to reinforcing the economic and cultural policies enforced during his previous 16-year tenure. The former have been previously discussed on several occasions throughout this dissertation; the latter took the form of government-sponsored organizations and events: the Bord Fáilte (the Irish Tourist Board) and the Gael-Linn (which promoted the Irish language and its literature) are two notable examples, as well as international dance or film festivals (Dean 2001: 137). One of the most popular initiatives, however, was An Tóstal, a country-wide festival inspired by the Festival of Britain,[94] funded by the government and organized by the Irish Tourist Board. The festival, which materialized into events in the shape of parades, sport competitions and art exhibitions, took place from April 5 to April 26, 1953, coinciding with Easter week, thus rapidly becoming a cultural staple of the Easter period up until 1958. It was first announced in the *Irish Times* on April 8, 1952, and was ambiguously described as a "national festival" whose "name is meant to convey the scope and meaning of the events which will take place, and is meant as an expression of Ireland's national life" (*IT*). Not only O'Nolan but also many of his fellow intellectuals were strongly against the concept. Cronin recalls how the country "was encouraged to whip itself into an orgy of self-congratulation. Local and national politicians spouted high-flown humbug about making the world more aware of Ireland's ancient culture, its missionary role and its heroic traditions of self-sacrifice" (1990: 201). Myles's own response to the 1953 An Tóstal took the form of a series of columns entitled "Titostalatarianism". Myles coined the title in response to Marshal Josip Broz Tito's visit to

[94] Organized during the summer of 1951, the Festival of Britain attracted thousands of visitors and cost millions. It was the brainchild of Labour Deputy Prime Minister Herbert Morrison (1888-1965).

London,[95] an event which, he seemed to think, symbolized the undesired stream of visitors predicted for the celebrations, as well as yet another example of Myles's misgivings about socialism: "I am convinced that there is a connexion between this Tito visit and the Tóstal—*and,* possibly, the Coronation" (*CL,* January 28, 1953). He also published an article, "How Are You Off For Tostals?" (May 10, 1952) in *Kavanagh's Weekly* upon the announcement of the event a year in advance.[96]

Given the local and anecdotal nature of the Tóstal columns, few scholars have substantially delved into Myles's reaction to the event. Brooker (2014: 31), for instance, highlights the quality of "wilful incongruity" in Myles's approach, while Cronin dismisses the *Cruiskeen Lawn* pieces specifically as "neither particularly witty, nor, in terms of Brian O'Nolan's career, wise" and "neither very stylish nor even, sometimes, very coherent" (1990: 201-202). Both make a compelling case, as the Tóstal articles certainly rank among the most destructive and unconstrained in the history of the column, targeting not only the organizing committee of An Tóstal, but also many of Myles's preferred objectives, including among these the Gaeilgeoiri, de Valera's government, the ESB. or the CIE. In his article for *Kavanagh's Weekly,* Myles declared himself to be wholeheartedly convinced that these bodies, among others related to tourism, had their sights on a common objective: "getting their claws into the pockets of American visitors to get dollars to secure, among other things, the importation of more American motor cars, and more jam for the motor trade spivs" (na gCopaleen 1952: 4).[97] Not only was Myles at odds with his perception of the final purpose of An Tóstal, but also with its nature as a whole: the event had been initially presented as a yearly celebration rather than as a standalone occasion. In the vein of his attack on the politically-motivated promotion of the Irish language, such a prefabricated vision of Irishness at the service of the tourist industry doubtlessly incurred his anger, prompting him to

[95] Josip Broz Tito (1892-1980) was a member of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia and the architect of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. He became Prime Minister and President for Life from 1953 to 1980. Tito was a founding member of Cominform, an international congregation of communist countries spearheaded by Stalin's USSR, but abandoned it in 1948 to pursue his own vision of communist Yugoslavia.

[96] The present article was not O'Nolan's only contribution to *Kavanagh's Weekly.* Some other pieces appeared during that year: "I Don't Know" (April 26, 1952), "The Sensational New 'Phoenix'" (May 3, 1952, signed by Our Motoring Correspondent), "Motor Economics" (May 24, 1952) and two Letters to the Editor (May 17 and June 14, 1952). All the pieces were collected and published in *The Parish Review,* 2.2 (2014).

[97] He would reaffirm this belief nearly a year later, declaring his conviction that "this whole Tóstal racket is based on the delusion that every American is a millionaire and that he fires money about in the prodigal fashion that tradition insists on attributing to the use of snuff at an Irish wake" (*CL,* February 13, 1953).

allegorize the conception of An Tóstal with a mass-production money-making machine through a fictional conversation between an Irish industrialist and a client:

> ‘Tostals?’ he said, glowering slightly but pretending to be undismayed by his own ignorance. ‘I think we have a fair stock on [our] hands. I don’t mean that we’re not in the market for more if they’re cheap. Stockpiling, you know. Have you much of the stuff?
>
> [...]
>
> ‘Tell you what I’ll do,’ said the selfless philosopher. ‘I’ll give you three a bale. There’s a great glut of that stuff at the moment, you know. The crowd in Ceylon, Malaya, Hong-Kong—they’re all pouring it in. I heard last night that the Japs are coming into the market. (*Ibid*)

It is difficult to resist an interpretation of this column as the government (de Valera could easily be the “selfless philosopher”, given his own self-promoted scholarly image) and the tourist bodies clandestinely manufacturing a business-like scheme under the misleading premise of Irish cultural promotion.[98] McNally, however, sees the article as “not overtly political” and “peripheral to the main event” (2014: 27). Brooker, in contrast, has noticed the underlying satirical current in Myles’s scathing allegory: “it literally belittles them [Tóstals], while also suggesting their excessive frequency. They appear to be mass produced, rather than a celebration of authentic folk culture that is precisely produced in opposition to mass production. And as an import, provided from ‘Ceylon, Malaya, Hong-Kong’, authentic Irishness seems to be a quality the Tóstal noticeably lacks” (2014: 31-2). If so, Myles is once again symbolically dilapidating one of de Valera’s ideological pillars of Irishness—the nation as an agricultural and frugal idyll—by applying the terminology of industrialization and capitalism to the elaboration of the nation-wide Tóstal festivals. This would not be a unique instance of exacting and precise political symbology through the use of industrial

[98] This idea becomes even more plausible when considering Myles’s constant jibes at politicians due to their ignorance of the Irish language, which is reflected in the businessman’s incomprehension when asked for Tostals. Curiously enough, the word “Tóstal” prompted an Oireachtas debate on its correct use on June 16, 1953.

imagery, as it has been suggested that O'Brien's short story, "John Duffy's Brother" (1940), uses the protagonist's metamorphosis into a train as a symbol for the rapid changes in Fianna Fáil policy during the late 1930s (Tivnan, 2010; Hopper, 2014).

A cursory overview suffices to determine that the Tóstal *Cruiskeen Lawn* pieces lack that degree of subtlety. In fact, it could be easily said that An Tóstal was a watershed in terms of Myles's openness of opinion: the column's expressive constraints, evident during the 1940s, were critically loosened up during February 1953, with the resulting fatal outcome for O'Nolan's career. "Tóstalatariansm II", the second article in the series, is a prime example of Myles's relentless vitriol:

> I proceed with my theme of Wednesday concerning the connexion between Tito's London visit and this other outrage known as 'An Tóstal.'
>
> *Who invented this thing?*
>
> And what unfortunate Poor Scholar dug out this word *tóstal* which—never mind the foreigners—was ever heard of by more than half a dozen people alive in Ireland today?
>
> [...]
>
> Bad enough as it is to use for international purposes a word of which practically nobody in the whole wide world ever heard, the prefixing of the Irish definite article for use in English contexts, is plain illiteracy—like 'it is expected that An Taoiseach will speak.' Who has ever expected that Der Fuehrer might speak?[99]
>
> [...]
>
> I am still without an answer to my original question—*who invented this thing?* But I will give you my wild guess. It was invented BY THE CROWD WHO ARE GOING TO CLEAN UP.
>
> And who is going to be cleaned down? The certain answer to that is The Plain People of Ireland.

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[99] The association between de Valera and Hitler is very present here, as both the Irish word "Taoiseach" and the German word "Führer" mean "leader, chief".

> [...]
>
> Some things, of course, are neither scarce nor dear; they are unobtainable. At the moment of writing, there is no milk to be had. But by the time the Tóstal comes, at least our New Zealand visitors will feel at home. By then we won't have any butter. I read that 6,000 tons of that unholy brown synthetic mess known as 'New Zealand butter' is on the way.
>
> [...]
>
> The E.S.B. is imploring the owners of all business premises to flood-light them during the Tóstal, and has offered to install meters and like gear at nominal charges. You know what *that* means, of course, FOR US?
>
> *It means the strict rationing of electricity, the absolute prohibition of the use of electric fires or water heaters with severe restrictions on cookers. We, after all, only live here.* (*CL,* January 30, 1953)

In essence, Myles's picture of An Tóstal was that of a government-sponsored farce designed to plunder visitors and locals alike, spending the taxpayer's hard-earned money on fabricated cultural chauvinism while being cognizant, yet passive, of the severe economic problems facing the country during the early 1950s; namely, immigration and shortages. Generally speaking, his view of the Tóstal only reinforced his vision of Ireland as a "nonsensical country that is only on the other side of the looking-glass" (Taaffe 2008: 2), but he nevertheless went a step beyond such a harmless critical enterprise by implicitly referring to foreigners in unprecedentedly pejorative terms, something which Cronin has similarly perceived (1990: 202). For the duration of An Tóstal, Myles turned the event into a multi-headed chimera—The Tóstal was dubbed "the great clean-up"—accusing its organizers of inviting "communist ruffians" to Ireland, and attacking what he saw as preposterousness and intrusiveness on the part of the government and the Tourist Board, both of whom were inviting Dubliners to emblazon their residences with the sole purpose of amazing American visitors: "And remember [...] a proper painting and gardening job on your house shouldn't cost more than £500, and would cost considerably less if you gave up all your spare time between now and the Tóstal and did the job yourself" (*CL,* February 3, 1953).

It was becoming commonplace for Myles to undermine any sort of officially propelled initiative in the column, but also—to O'Nolan's detriment—to name well-known Dublin names. Ever since late 1951,[100] some *Cruiskeen Lawn* columns began to attach the subheading "ACCISS" or to cursorily include a reference to it in the text.[101] The acronym stood for "Andy Clarkin's Clock Is Still Stopped". Andy Clarkin was Lord Mayor of Dublin and a Fianna Fáil heavyweight, and the clock outside his coal merchant's shop in Pearse Street was always stopped. Clarkin and his Dublin Corporation ranked among the usual targets of the most virulent brand of Mylesian satire possible; in October 1951, for instance, Myles had joked that Clerkin was "the virtuoso who can define the nature of art but cannot induce his clock in Pearse Street to go" (*CL,* October 10, 1951). Myles found in it "a microcosm of the lack of civic pride among those who governed Dublin" (McNally 2009: 15). The article that triggered O'Nolan's backstairs dismissal from the civil service was, in fact, "Titostalatarianism IV", one of the main articles in Myles's An Tóstal series. In this article, Myles referred to local politicians as "shaymuses", as opposed to the more Mylesian "turnip-snaggers" or "thooleramawns", the reasoning behind it being that "the word was needed because these urban persons could not be described in the usual rural terms of abuse" (Cronin 1990: 201). In previous "Titostalatarianism" columns, Myles had complained of Irish politicians and their implied demands that Irish residences should undergo a process of beautification prior to the arrival of American tourists. This, he thought, was evidence of the shaymus's "great admiration for the whited sepulchre idea—the cult of the external—and no better exemplified than in what is permitted to go on in 70% of the city's public houses—dirty premises and utensils, adulterated drink, short measure, and toilets of indescribable filth" (*CL,* February 5, 1953). While not referring explicitly to any "shaymus" in particular, Clarkin was mentioned repeatedly in the column in reference to his disproportionate salary: "In two years Clarkin has got (or will have got) £5,000 of the ratepayer's money, and since there is not a dee of tax payable on it, it effectively amounts to about £7,000 [...]. Surely to goodness he can AFFORD to take his own advice?" (*ibid*).[102] However, what sparked

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[100] For reference, see *CL* August 17, September 10 and December 19, among many others.
[101] It also stood for "I'll axe [sic] Cis", the Lord Mayor's riposte to enquiries beyond his knowledge. Cis was Clarkin's wife, who was known in Dublin to be better equipped intellectually than her husband. Furthermore, Clarkin had a tendency to pronounce the word "ask" as "axe", hence the acronym (McNally 2009: 15).
[102] In a letter to MacEntee regarding his retirement from the civil service and the controversy surrounding the present *Cruiskeen Lawn* article, O'Nolan tried to dissuade MacEntee from thinking that he had criticized

controversy and sounded the alarms in the government was a graphically derogatory reference to one of these shaymuses:

> If you asked one of the latter what they thought of Tito, they would reply that he wouldn't have a chance unless the distance was at least a mile and a half. If you then wittily asked whether it would be a good thing to bet on the tostalisator [sic], the great jaw would drop, the ruined graveyard of tombstone teeth would be revealed, the eyes would roll, and the malt-eroded voice would say 'Hah? (*Ibid*)

Many erroneously perceived this person to be Clarkin himself, but Cronin asserts that Myles was actually portraying the Minister for Local Government, Patrick Smith (1990: 202). More rural in origin than O'Kelly or MacEntee, Smith was likely to entertain "less tolerance for literature than his predecessors" (McNally 2009: 15). Furthermore, he was cognizant of O'Nolan's authorship of *Cruiskeen Lawn* and, this time, determined not to fall for the argument—used with an increasing frequency by Gavin, O'Nolan's supervisor—that the column was actually authored by two other stand-ins.[103] In fact, in a letter to MacEntee on March 13, 1953, O'Nolan said in his defense that "anybody with a nose for literary judgment must know I could not have written it. While I claim to be dirty in my own way, mine is supposed to be elegant and subtle and the more deadly way [sic], and quite apart from the hatchet-work complained of" (2018: 173).

Rare laudatory reference to his own work in *Cruiskeen Lawn* notwithstanding, it is hard to say whether O'Nolan himself wrote any of the An Tóstal columns—Cronin (1990: 201-02) seems to assume that this was indeed the case. Despite O'Nolan's resignation from the civil service, Myles would vigorously pursue his denunciation of An Tóstal over the following days, but his tone would turn more sombre with every passing article. The day

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Clarkin at any point: "It is is [sic] ironical to recall that while you were sponsoring Andy's upward climb, I was your personal assistant; hardly a day passed when he was not in the office, and a word against that genial and harmless man I would not say in a lifetime" (2018: 173). O'Nolan claimed not having written the "ACCISS" columns; whether MacEntee believed him or not is hard to say, as there is no record of any reply on the part of MacEntee himself.

[103] See chapter 2, section 2.4.3, for further and more detailed discussion of O'Nolan's retirement from the Irish civil service.

following Smith's condemnation, Myles hypothesized what would happen if Tito were to come to Ireland. Fabricating a response from An Bórd Fógra,[104] Myles would question once again the validity of Irish democracy: "it would be salutary for a man like Tito to see democracy at work, to see a happy, prosperous and contented people, residing in a beautiful land amidst abundance of food and drink, with the lowest price and taxation structures in the world" (*CL,* February 7, 1953). A final comment, in which he warned the Fógra official that the "*term 'our people' is strictly the personal property of Mr. De Valera. Be careful*" (*ibid*) wryly linked Tito's totalitarianism with de Valera, whose policy-making and moral authority was perceived by many to be tainted by dictatorship. Such an overt and spiteful political comment might have been inconceivable for Myles a few days back, but it was now probably acceptable, and perhaps darkly satisfying, for O'Nolan.

4.4 Conclusions

This chapter has examined the presence of *Cruiskeen Lawn* during postwar Ireland. This historical period, which for convenience and following leading historians I have termed "Years of Stagnation", extended from 1945 to 1954.

I have begun my discussion of the *Cruiskeen Lawn* articles of this period with a broad section titled "The challenges of postwar Ireland". These challenges were both international and domestic in nature. For Myles, the growing geopolitical tensions after the end of World War II became evident in the Potsdam and San Francisco Conferences; so did Ireland's isolationist intention and growing disagreements with the Allies on account of the country's neutrality. Myles was explicitly critical of the patronizing and interventionist role of the USA, as well as of the government's readiness to accept Marshall Aid in order to fulfill their British-inspired planning prospects. These concerns were carried over to his discussion of postwar domestic affairs, where he was chiefly interested in commenting on the 1945 Irish presidential election, the partition issue and Fianna Fáil's Health Act of 1947. Firstly, Myles's intervention in the presidential election was cautious, but a close reading of the

[104] An Fógra Fáilte and An Bord Fáilte were two separate but interlinked organizations; the former dealt with tourism in general, while the latter was in charge of publicity. In 1954, when a new coalition government came to power, both offices merged.

articles selected for analysis suggests that he secretly supported his former ministerial boss, Seán T. O'Kelly, who eventually emerged victorious. Secondly, Myles also remained prudent in his assessment of the partition question, which was rapidly gaining relevance after the postwar period. As demonstrated throughout this dissertation, O'Nolan was decidedly against partition, but he was not especially vocal about it either in his letters or as Myles in *Cruiskeen Lawn*. This was possibly due to the fact that he still retained his civil service job and felt compelled to exercise caution in airing controversial political opinions. Thirdly, Myles's dissection of Fianna Fáil's 1947 Health Act was unambiguously coherent in terms of previous discussions of social welfare: he declared his opposition to the act, arguing that the fiscal impact on the taxpayer would be too great to compensate for the benefits of the Act. He also rejected the idea of further governmental intervention in health matters, a discourse which was often employed by the Church.

The late 1940s and early 1950s were devoted to meticulous commentary on the First Inter-Party Government and the subsequent Fianna Fáil government with a focus on individual political events that took place within each tenure. On the one hand, Myles was ambiguous in welcoming the idea of political change as embodied by the Fine Gael-headed coalition of parties that formed a government after the 1948 general election. Surprisingly, neither the declaration of the Republic in 1949 nor the Mother and Child Scheme of 1950 and 1951 prompted much in the way of Mylesian commentary. On the other hand, however, the column did not sing the praises of the Fianna Fáil government that emerged after the 1951 general election. Myles satire was centered around the ageing Fianna Fáil politicians and was especially derisive of the Fianna Fáil-led An Tóstal festival as a cultural fabrication to mislead rich Americans. This section has also included a brief analysis of the columns, subtitled "ACCISS" (Andy Clarkin's Clock in Still Stopped) that led Myles to lose his job in the civil service. While brief and, according to critics, devoid of Myles's usual satiric brilliance, the articles analyzed in this subsection are relevant in that they evidence how the column transcended the printed medium and, if minimal, effected change in the social and political world. This ideological change implied forcing the resignation of a civil servant who had been constantly debunking the civil service and the state it served for years. In terms of cultural materialism, Williams spoke of how "relating the literary process to the social production, or the social product to the literary process" (1980: 29) is an essential ingredient

to illustrate the ideological balance of a given society, while admitting that the latter instance is far more common. In O'Nolan's case, his column notoriously achieved the former condition; that is, to actively relate the "literary process" of writing a subversive column to the "social production". If we understand "writing as intellectual resistance" (Sinfield 1989: 2), O'Nolan's writing in particular emerges as a clear case in twentieth-century Ireland of active engagement in counter-hegemonic politics.

All in all, this section is of central importance in my analysis of the politics of *Cruiskeen Lawn,* as it moves from an engagement, from the Irish perspective, with the international forces shaping the postwar world to turning his gaze inwards and tracing the irregular development of national politics. I believe some of the articles included in this section depict Myles's changing views and the meandering quality of his political discourse, one which eschewed consistency and allegiance and was also subject to momentary passions.

CHAPTER 5. *CRUISKEEN LAWN* AND THE YEARS OF EXPANSION, 1954-66

5.1 Introduction

Toward the mid-1950s, the Irish state became painstakingly aware of the fact that "Ireland did not exist in a vacuum—either political or economic—where events in Western Europe could be ignored and where the better standards of living on offer in Britain and the United States would not entice Irish people" (Murphy 2009: 19). They were, in fact, enticed by the thousands in what became a large-scale emigration ramp, the likes of which had not occurred since the Famine. This prompted a sense of national alarm crystallized in John A. O'Brien's seminal *The Vanishing Irish* (1954). Such enticement did nevertheless alleviate many of Ireland's domestic problems: "the drain of population from the Irish countryside and from the small towns of the rural districts to the suburbs of English cities and the Irish districts of London meant that internal emigration was of manageable proportions" (Brown 1981: 217).

This rapid depletion of population also cooled Ireland's weak economic engine, which had been incessantly castigated and hampered since the inception of the state, thus setting off a process of "capitalist modernization effected through mass emigration" (Quigley 2014: 58). Irish and world economy started to feature more frequently and professionally in newspapers, and a new school of Irish economic thinkers, politically headed by Whitaker and Lemass (and Costello, to some extent)[1] began working on a reversal of the course of the economy, which would see results by the end of the decade. While Costello's Second Inter-Party Government (1954-7) stirred financial innovation, the country's economic revitalization actually stemmed from Whitaker's *Economic Development* (1958), a plan accepted by the Fianna Fáil government and then turned into a White Paper. It saw rapid results: foreign investment was attracted to the country in the shape of over 300 companies; the economic growth rate ascended to 4 percent and remained stable during most of the 1960s; and emigration was cut by three quarters, from over 50,000 per annum to just 15,000 (Bartlett 2014: 493).[2] Irish civil servants were slowly realizing that as a sustained policy, protectionism was "an economic crisis that held the country in a vice" and also "a crisis in national self-confidence, brought sharply into focus by the latest census returns" (Chambers 2014: 112). Politically, this was reflected in the government's willingness to join the European Economic Community—which would not become a reality until 1972—and in strengthening ties with foreign nations after Ireland's admittance to the United Nations in 1955. Domestically, the relatively calm postindependence period would nevertheless be disturbed in 1957 with the beginning of the IRA bombing campaign in the North, a brief yet threatening foreshadowing of the Troubles of the later half of the century. The late 1950s and early 1960s would be a period of intensive legislative activity, especially in the areas of radio and television service and the long-discussed question of compulsory Irish. Other central events of the period were the formation of the Voluntary Health Insurance Board,[3] created by the Minister for Health Tim O'Higgins in 1957 and later established by MacEntee, as well

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[1] See Barry and O'Mahoney (2017) and McCullagh (1998, 2010).

[2] According to John Bradley (2005: 114), some historians have hyperbolized the importance of Whitaker's achievements. He prefers to see the Programme as "a transition between old and new perspectives, and not a whole-hearted embrace of a modern view of the economy" still reluctant to do away with dependence on agriculture.

[3] Known today as Vhi Healthcare, the company exists as a statutory corporation offering healthcare insurance to over a million people in the Republic.

as the 1957 general election and de Valera's ascension to the presidency of the State in 1959 due to his inability to continue leading the country as Taoiseach. He would be succeeded by Séan Lemass.

The author's path during the late 1950s and 1960s, however, was diametrically opposed to that of the country in which he lived and worked. Frank McNally has summed up general perceptions on the late *Cruiskeen Lawn:*

> Ironically, 1960s Ireland, with its first surge of progress on the back of the Lemass-Whitaker economic plans, was not as conducive to Mylesian brilliance as the petrified 1940s. There were other factors too, no doubt, including the drink, ill-health and general burn-out. But at a time when even the Plain People of Ireland were getting notions about themselves, O'Nolan's comic touch was not as sure in 1960s Ireland. (2014: 28)[4]

Biographical details aside, the numbers speak for themselves: while from 1954 to 1960 Myles managed to appear in print from 155 to 243 times a year, the 1960s show a sharp decrease: 129 columns in 1961, 87 in 1962, 51 in 1963, 23 in 1964, 73 in 1965, and 24 in 1966 (9 of which were reprints).[5] It is therefore clear to see "that *Cruiskeen Lawn* came to a gradual end from 1956-1966, when publication rates steadily decreased with each year" (Ahearn 2019). This decade in *Cruiskeen Lawn,* according to Young, has been approached with "a remarkable unanimity of opinion" summarized in the argument that "the column declined in frequency of publication and in quality, and moreover this work was a burden to the writer and a hindrance to the production of a novel or novels that would live up to the promise of *At Swim-Two-Birds* and *The Third Policeman"* (1997: 112). Kiberd, for instance, has remarked that the switch from na gCopaleen to Gopaleen indicates Myles's subconscious

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[4] Part of the reason for this decrease in publication quality may also lie with O'Nolan's reengagement with narrative, as he published two novels during those years (*The Hard Life,* 1961; *The Dalkey Archive,* 1964) and wrote almost half of a third one (*Slattery's Sago Saga*, incomplete, published posthumously in *Stories and Plays by Flann O'Brien,* 1973; reprinted in *The Short Fiction of Flann O'Brien,* 2013).

[5] Data extracted from Catherine Ahearn's online *Cruiskeen Lawn* catalogue (2019). See Appendix 2 for a detailed graph showing the publication rate of the column, likewise retrieved from Ahearn's catalogue.

acknowledgment of a loss of authenticity (1996: 512).[6] Long's thoughts on the issue follow a similar line, adding financial necessity as the likely cause for O'Nolan's turn from a more "sophisticated" style to one more reliant on quick and easy rewards: "as O'Nolan aged and his talents were awarded with neither real respect nor financial reward, he turned towards social commentaries, political diatribes, laboured novels and clichéd scripts that he thought would generate more income than avant-garde works" (2014: 6).[7] Indeed, toward the end of his life he acknowledged in private conversation with an English journalist, Michael Wale, that money was a far greater preoccupation for him than mere recognition: "It's the money end of it I'm interested in. If Sago made £50,000 I would not write another line again, except a very very [sic] few lines on cheques" (qtd. in Wale 1965: 49). Mostly owing to poor health, Myles's very last columns show a sharp decline in quality, most of them being reprints of 1940s articles.

Whether the column's overall quality decreased or not, Myles's interest in political developments remained sharp, as he was now especially alert to any sign of misdemeanor on the part of public figures;[8] so much so, that in early 1957 he declared, in the shape of New Year's resolutions, that he would "be more merciless toward the blameworthy, more ferocious to the deficient, more contemptuous of the politicians than in any former year. Some people may ask in amazement whether that is possible. Yes it is." (*CL,* January 2, 1957). Myles was certainly less energetic in terms of persevering in a daily publication rate, but his political commentary remained a constant in the column, being vocal in all of the

[6] The switch from na gCopaleen to na Gopaleen occurred on December 9, 1952. On that day, Myles jokingly informed his readers that "GOPALEEN is the detritus resulting from the bombarding of NA gCOPALEEN with deadly gamma rays" (*CL*). According to some *Irish Times* colleagues, "the change to Myles na Gopaleen was made [...] after he had begun to gain some celebrity outside Ireland, in deference to the Anglo-Saxon epiglottis" (White 1973: 63). Kiberd has also seen the elimination of the eclipsis in the genitive as a way for O'Nolan "to indicate a loss of authenticity, a regression to the botched identity of Boucicault's clown" (1996: 499).

[7] During the mid-1950s, O'Nolan was also seeking opportunities for column-writing other than *Cruiskeen Lawn* in the *Irish Times.* He wrote letters to the editors of *The Kerryman* (to whom O'Nolan assured his material would not "be concerned with politics, serious crime, or anything controversial"), the *Mayo News,* the *France Dimanche* or the *Longford Leader,* among many others. See O'Nolan (2018: 186-205) for further details.

[8] Apart from Myles, there existed in the early 1950s a growing culture of intellectual approaches to Irish politics. Kavanagh, for example, was known to be personally and professionally acquainted with Costello; another was Tuairim (Irish for "Opinion"), an intellectual group which "produced pamphlets that challenged outmoded practices in arts, education, the law and the treatment of children, as well as critically questioning the culture of Irish politics and the merits of economic nationalism" (Ferriter 2005: 526). The column "Pinpointing Politics" by Afkenton—according to Brad Kent, a pseudonym for three different authors (2016)—was also very popular at the time.

elections that took place during the 1954-66 period (1954, 1957, 1961 and 1965) and, to a greater or lesser extent, on a series of more particular events of political nature. These will be analyzed in accordance with their occurrence within either the Second Inter-Party Government (1954-7) or the subsequent Fianna Fáil De Valera-Lemass hegemony (1957-66). Particularly interesting to this chapter's analysis of the late *Cruiskeen Lawn* are the following events: Ireland's admission to the United Nations; Costello and Sweetman's contrastive economic policies; the start of the IRA bombing campaign of the late 1950s (1956-62, also known as Operation Harvest); de Valera's resignation as Taoiseach (1957) as a result of his failing health, his election as President and Lemass's consequent nomination as Taoiseach, with the ensuing dramatic change in direction for the economy; and, finally, John F. Kennedy's official visit to Ireland (1963), which strengthened international relations between Ireland and the United States and contributed to Ireland's international recognition.

5.2 Second Inter-Party Government (1954-7)

Many would argue that the Second Inter-Party Government should not be included in any survey examining Ireland's process of "opening up to the world". Indeed, the silence expressed by most academics discussing Irish politics during the 1950s seems to have relegated this particular government as being as a dark appendix to the more widely discussed period popularly known as de Valera's Ireland. However, dismissing the Second Inter-Party Government as yet another strand in Ireland's long-tried tradition of economic protectionism is not necessarily accurate. While de Valera, as Whitaker recalled, "regarded economic matters as an inferior discipline" (Chambers 2014: 71), Costello seemed to be much more interested in finance. As Foster indicates, "by 1955 economic expansion with foreign capital was becoming the accepted wisdom among all parties", especially in the case of the coalition government, who "first opened up the question of Ireland's admission to the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank" (1989: 578).[9] Costello's 1954-57 government, the first to enlist Whitaker's help, was also responsible for introducing innovative legislation which

[9] During the First Inter-Party Government (1948-51), Costello had already promoted the Industrial Development Authority (1949), and in 1953, he advocated for the abolition of the excessive restrictions to manufacturers stipulated in the Control of Manufacturers Act as a means of attracting foreign investment (Bielenberg and Ryan 2013: 19).

promoted tax relief for foreign companies in order for them to settle more comfortably in Ireland.[10] The Second Inter-Party Government ascended to power as a result of the 1954 general election, which followed a similar pattern to the 1951 general election but with a 8-seat gain by Fine Gael. This, coupled with Labour's 3-seat improvement over the previous election and Fianna Fáil's poor 65-seat result, gave Fine Gael and Costello the opportunity to form a 74-seat strong Inter-Party Government, this time only supported by Labour and Clann na Talmhan, thus dispensing with Clann na Poblachta's problematic influence and hegemonizing ideological positions within the cabinet.[11]

The 1954 general election took place on May 14. This time, Myles's coverage of the election was among the most explicit and partisan to date, being as he was free of the shackles of the Official Secrets Act, a binding piece of legislation to which he had been submitted since joining the civil service. Myles's started with one of his old attacks on democracy as an institution and, surprisingly, on his former Minister, MacEntee:

> Just look at this. Poor Sean MacEntee comes on the radio to inform the nation and the world that the cost of living here is falling so fast that it is in danger of disappearing. Jameson's chose the next day to announce another jump in the price of their malt.[12]
>
> [...]
>
> These broadcasts cast a sinister beam on the mocracy [sic], and on the Great Lie that it is the People who choose Governments. There is a good card trick wherein you offer to bet a man £5 that you will name the card he draws at random from a pack. The card is the Ace of Spades and well it might be, since it is drawn from a pack of 52 such Aces. Electors can vote only for candidates, usually subsidised by parties. They cannot vote for the persons they think should be in charge of the country. (*CL,* May 1, 1954)

[10] Such as the Export Profits Tax Relief Act of 1956.
[11] Dr. Browne, a member of Clann na Poblachta in the First Inter-Party Government, has been widely seen as one of the parties to be blamed the most for the disintegration of the coalition in 1951 due to the Mother and Child Scheme debacle. In fact, Liam Cosgrave (Minister for External Affairs in the Second Inter-Party Government) would claim many years later that there was "less nonsense talked with MacBride and Browne missing" (qtd. in McCullagh 2010: 231). Nevertheless, Sean MacBride, Clann na Poblachta's leader, decided to support the Second Inter-Party Government from the outside.
[12] Broadcast on April 26, 1954. For the price increase in Jameson's products, see *IT,* April 27, 1954.

MacEntee's remarks were, as Myles suggested, entirely inaccurate, for prices had peaked in 1954, the highest since the Emergency due to problems in the balance of payments (Coogan 2009: 387). As "an ardent conservative preoccupied with the idea of sound money" (Murphy 2009: 93), MacEntee pursued policies resulting in a raise in wages which could not, however, meet the already elevated prices.[13] However, Myles's point went beyond merely commenting on the economically obvious and attacked the long-running Fianna Fáil candidate indirectly, musing that being forced to elect individual party candidates like MacEntee interfered with the individual's right to designate the person he felt entitled to represent the country. Admittedly, Myles's argument against democracy and the Irish voting system lacked solidity, and it seemed to stem from a sense of vendetta toward MacEntee rather than a well-thought political proposal.[14] Myles's attacks on MacEntee did not stop there, however. A few days later, he signaled the Minister's hypocrisy in another diatribe against C.I.E.:

> Last Wednesday, shortly after MacEntee had congratulated these taxpayers on being so prosperous and under-taxed, while piously pointing out the wisdom of living within one's means, C.I.E. came forth proudly with an announcement that it had got Government approval to embark on a 2-year scheme to spend 10 and a half million pounds of new money for the purchase of diesel and diesel-electric engines, and for the construction of other vehicles [...]. The whole proposal is scandalously irresponsible.[15] (*CL,* May 8, 1954)

Myles, who was known to be knowledgeable about trains, added pompously that "the large diesel-electric locomotive is justified only on transcontinental haulage, as in America. But these plain facts are unsuspected by the C.I.E. savants", while also suggesting that "this may be a political manoeuvre arising from the conviction of the present Government that they

[13] Costello had responded to this by claiming that they would "follow a policy of maintaining incomes at a level capable of sustaining prices [...] but also hope to be able to reduce prices" (*IT,* April 30, 1954).
[14] See p. 221 for a detailed discussion of O'Nolan's letter to MacEntee after the former's resignation from the civil service. There is no recorded response from MacEntee (O'Nolan 2018).
[15] See *IT,* May 6, 1954.

have no chance of being returned; but that they will leave behind them a mass of grandiose commitments to embarrass a succeeding Government" (*ibid*). A need for "significantly increased public expenditure and [...] state-led economic intervention", instigated by Lemass, was slowly becoming a centerpiece policy within the outgoing Fianna Fáil cabinet (Murphy 2009: 99). As a well-trained civil servant and long-time critic of the State, however, Myles was quick to read through this uncalled-for transport proposal, and unhesitantly put the blame on Fianna Fáil. In fact, he had been doing so for a time. As early as June 1953, Myles was already advocating for a change of government in an explicit manner. One of such examples is a column entitled "KTO and KTO", which stands for "Kick Them Out and Keep Them Out", in reference to the 1951-54 Fianna Fáil cabinet. Describing the party as the "FF gang", he first asked the voting public of the Wicklow and East Cork by-elections to "get the feet of these incompetents off their necks. Deny them their candidates just this once and there will be a general election" (*CL,* June 17, 1953). Later, he remarked "the monstrous and provocative debácle known as the Tóstal when, in Dublin [...] tens of thousands of pounds were poured out to deface the city at the expense of the beggared ratepayers what [sic] time the FF Government was flogging hundreds of thousands of the taxpayers' money" (*ibid*). More importantly, he acknowledged that "when a country is in very bad shape, its people should see to it that they have the best government they can get [...]. Heaven help us if the present crowd is the best we can do" (*ibid*). He then proceeded to evaluate the careers and education of a number of Fianna Fáil ministers, determining that only Lemass and Séan Moylan[16] were skilled enough to take part in government and expressing his preference for some figures of the First Inter-Party Government.[17] He was also surprisingly vocal about de

[16] Séan Moylan (1888-1957, Fianna Fáil), IRA Commandant, Sinn Féin and Fianna Fáil T.D. Moylan was Minister for Lands (1943-8), Minister for Education (1951-4) and Minister for Agriculture (1954-7).

[17] "Examine the rostrum of ministers. Leaving aside Dr. Ryan and possibly Erskine Childers, how many university degrees have they between the lot of them? Just the wan [sic]. Derrig has a B.Comm. What accomplishment can any of them claim outside the yap-yap of party politics? I can discern none. How many of them can be suspected of moving in any artistic or cultural sphere? I can concede some showing on that front to only two. None of them can speak Irish, or even French, except of [sic] the baby variety. And bar two more, I cannot recall that any of them has been gainfully occupied outside politics, unless perhaps at the unintellectual chores of agriculture [...]. Consider the 'top brass' of the former Coalition government whom these fellows have the impudence to assail—three senior counsel who lead in their profession, two *practising* doctors PLUS characters of such acumen as Mulcahy and James Dillon. All these are people of learning and wide culture. They will not all reassemble, but the essential heart of the last government is still intact" (*ibid*).

Valera, whom he had only referred to publicly in neutral terms.[18] While declaring that he would "express no opinion on this gentleman's life work", he remarked that it was "not an opinion to say, however, that he is an old man. Why does he not retire?" (*ibid*). Comparing him with Churchill, he claimed: "We wish him a long life, but that is not to say that the country can be allowed as time goes on to drift into the situation wherein Britain finds herself, with an important public man doting. I earnestly appeal to De Valera to retire… *now*" (*ibid*). He concluded the column with an encouragement for voters to elect a Coalition which "containing such elements [Lemass and Moylan] might put a merciful end to this appalling harkback [sic] to the civil war, fought when tens of thousands of electors weren't born. But first things first. I hereby endorse this discourse **ACTION THIS DAY.** Remember——KICK THEM OUT AND KEEP THEM OUT!" (*ibid*).[19]

Incidentally, O'Nolan had written "K.T.O and K.T.O" on the back of his letter to MacEntee (Long 2018: 176). In many ways, this general election showed Myles at his most aggressive toward a Fianna Fáil campaign which, led by the usual old glories of the War of Independence and the Civil War, was becoming stale and unpromising. A few days before the election, he did not hesitate to scientifically predict that "the next Prime Minister of this country will be Mr. Costello. My grounds for this prediction are various. The reader may base his calculations on the unusually low poll in certain western islands", while subsequently advising that "one must vote this week, and for the best and most sincere people. (Actually, there are none other up for election.) One must be cold and objective, for once" (*CL,* May 17, 1954). Myles seemed to have given more thought this time around to the general election and the series of issues that had caused the Fianna Fáil government to fall from grace. As in previous elections, some of Myles's points of contention were prices and the Irish banks. He voiced people's thoughts on the disproportionate increase in prices since the Emergency:

[18] Privately, however, he had expressed distaste and even plain hatred on a number of occasions. See p. 138 for extracts from his letters.

[19] There was one more article using the slogan "KTO and KTO" in June. See *CL,* June 29, 1953.

> The election just gone by was a sombre and statistical affair. The decimal point became the point-of-no-return. People who had paid a shilling and eightpence for 20 cigarettes during a shattering world war refused to believe that two shillings and fourpence was a fair price in opulent peace-time. They had similar ideas about milk, bread and eggs. If in need of reverie, they bethought themselves of our British-controlled banks and currency.[20] They did a lot of sums in long division. (*CL,* May 22, 1954)

Fianna Fáil's greatest defeat was in Dublin. Murphy notes how "the Fianna Fáil vote in Dublin [slipped] to 39.3 per cent—down from 46.4 per cent in 1951" (2009: 104). There was, as Ferriter recounts, talk of communism on the streets as a result of people's inability to procure basic commodities. Associations were formed: "In 1953, a year when unemployment reached 86,604, a Dublin Unemployed Association emerged [...]. The demands such groups were making were basic, in terms of payment of benefit for each child and the reintroduction of food subsidies" (2005: 491).

On this occasion, Myles did not entirely abandon politics after the election itself. Instead, he continued commenting on the general results and his personal expectations for the incoming government. His commentary alternated between a serious, civil servant-like approach to a lighter, more jocose tone. An example of this occurred a few days after the election took place, when he mocked a recurring strategy widely used by politicians at the time:

> I *do* have it on very good authority that the incoming Government [...] intend to enact, with brutal celerity, if need be—a measure aimed at safeguarding the sanctity of individual thunders. It will be called the Thunder (Theft) (Prohibition of) Act, 1954 [...]. This thing has been under consideration for some time. It first arose when Mr.

[20] As Chambers (2014: 109-10) notes, there was an increase in the banks' sterling assets of £12 million which, however, remained almost unavailable for the government, thus resulting in its impossibility to counter emigration and rising prices. Myles was also especially anathema to the idea that Irish banks should be controlled by Britain. He noted in a later column that Irish banks were "either directly British-owned or under British control; all are bossed by the Bank of England. The British Labour Party nationalised the Bank of England, causing it to become in effect a British Government Department. This means that all matters affecting currency and credit in this country are directly decided by the British Government" (*CL,* June 3, 1954).

> Costello declared an Irish Republic in the course of a Canadian dinner. Herein he was shamelessly poaching in Mr. de Valera's territory—and he damn well knew it.[21] (*CL,* May 20, 1954)

While not very revelatory in terms of Myles's own thoughts regarding the soon-to-be-formed Second Inter-Party Government, it nevertheless evidenced to a certain degree his distrust at their honesty in policy, and his acknowledgment of the ideological flux at work in Irish politics. As he put it in his previous May 17 article: "Disdaining the plough, I look to the stars. Unlike politicians, they never change" (*CL*, 1954). Pat Coogan speaks of "political inertia and economic mismanagement" (2009: 386) common to all political approaches during the 1950s—Myles was certainly aware of such a state of political affairs, so he quickly set out to prevent further damage to the country by devoting two columns to lend political advice to Costello, the new Taoiseach. These specific columns would be titled "Dear Mr. Costello…" These are an example of what Young (1997: 117) has termed "Myles's mastery of many voices", as he resurrected the uninspiring, straight-to-the-point style of the seasoned bureaucrat and peppered it with bits of Dublin pub-talk by blatantly offering the Taoiseach and his readers a number of potential improvements to the country, economic or otherwise. Throughout the column, Myles entreated Costello to reduce the price of pints, whiskey and essential foodstuffs. More important, however, were his economic proposals, which took central stage in the column:

> A new and cavalier attitude to the use of the national wealth is, of course, implied in such an iron-fisted policy. The L.F. kindly agreed recently that perhaps there was a case for examining the impact of taxation in its present form on industry—this after twenty years in the snug rug of office. What in fact is required is a bomb on the official slum that is known as the Department of Finance.[22] (*CL,* June 3, 1954)

[21] See section 2.4.2 for a detailed description of the events surrounding the declaration of the Irish Republic, and section 4.3.1.1 for Myles's commentary on the issue.

[22] Myles's harsh words about Finance might partly stem from a dispute with Sean Moynihan (Fianna Fáil), Assistant Secretary to the Department of Finance, in 1951. Moynihan had "appointed himself a scrutineer of the column" (Cronin 1990: 201) after objecting to *Cruiskeen Lawn* material on the Pope-sponsored Holy Year of 1950. Moynihan complained to John Garvin, Secretary of the Department of Local Government and

This was, in effect, yet another blow directed at MacEntee, who was Minister for Finance in the 14th Dáil. It was then widely known that both "de Valera and MacEntee [...] still believed in the pre-eminence of agriculture over industry" (Murphy 2009: 109), which partly constituted the reason why the latter was offered the position instead of the more broad-minded Lemass.[23] As former Private Secretary to MacEntee and retired senior civil servant, O'Nolan was especially aware of the economic mindset which predominated within the Fianna Fáil inner circle and was likely aware of the destructive—or, rather, anti-constructive—effects it had on the Irish economy. And, as *Cruiskeen Lawn* demonstrated on an almost daily basis, O'Nolan was also "the man in the street", which granted him a first-hand perception of the effects of Fianna Fáil's economic policy in daily life. He would conclude the column by suggesting that the taxation system should be reorganized internally to allow for an increase in total revenue:

> Present modes of taxation, using the phrase in its broadest sense, with their unfair impact, discrimination, overlaying, duplication and what-not, simply shriek for immediate investigation. It may be that under a completely new system, tax revenue could be doubled and the prices of essential commodities halved. No committee of country boys will discover how this can be done.[24] Any suggestions? (*CL,* June 3, 1954)

These were Myles's most explicit comment on economic matters to date; in a way, they were also illuminating remarks on his political position at the time in that, at least in financial

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O'Nolan's superior, who failed to defend O'Nolan and hampered his hopes of further internal promotion. He described the attack in a letter to Garvin as "reckless, unfounded and defamatory" (O'Nolan 2018: 164).

[23] Lemass was Minister for Industry and Commerce during said government but had little leeway to execute innovative policy due to constant clashes with de Valera and MacEntee on economic matters. See Horgan (1999), Evans (2011) or Feeney (2011), among others, for further accounts of the relationship between the two Fianna Fáil ministers and their Taoiseach.

[24] Fianna Fáil politicians were generally likened to countrymen by Myles or other intellectuals, whereas Fine Gael members were perceived to be more urban and sophisticated (Cronin 1990: 106).

terms, Myles was akin to the Second Inter-Party Government.[25] In fact, Costello himself had given a speech in 1953, which would be later published in pamphlet by Fine Gael as *Blueprint for Posterity.* In the speech, Costello assailed Fianna Fáil's protectionist approach to economy and argued that "we cannot be content with mere exhortations to harder work and increased production, but must instead take steps to change the conditions of production in such a way as to lead to that greater creation of wealth which alone can bring a greater measure of prosperity" (qtd. in McCullagh 2010: 214).

The second "Dear Mr. Costello…" article simply set out to discuss the wisdom, or lack thereof, of some of Costello's ministerial appointments. Myles believed that Costello had "thoughtlessly been rushed into something", and added: "You have been presented with a list of Ministries to be filled, and you have filled them. I think you should have paused to ask yourself whether they were real or necessary" (*CL,* June 5, 1954). Especially interesting were his comments regarding the post of Minister for Finance, a post which, he thought, should have been filled by John O'Donovan,[26] a Finance official: "I think you have made a mistake in not giving John O'Donovan a ministerial post. Not only is he educated, but he derived some of the education from myself. (Can I say more? Yes, I will, too). He had the guts—in Ireland unique—to march out of the Civil Service because he found life intolerable there" (*ibid*). He was actually offered the post of Minister for Finance by Costello, but he turned it down (Coogan 2009: 384). The post went instead to Gerard Sweetman, whom Myles would wish luck in straightening out the Finance mess a few days later (*CL,* June 11, 1954), something which he would eventually be unable, and unwilling, to do.

Realizing that his political coverage had gone on for too long, Myles would declare that "in the interest of readers, I hope I may be distracted from this subject. It can become an obsession liable to drive us all mad!" (*ibid*). Political commentary would thus be discontinued for a time, but the Second Inter-Party Government was undoubtedly a period of incessant activity for Myles and one which he would exploit by commenting at length on the apparently

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[25] While it is unknown whether O'Nolan voted for Costello or any of the coalition parties, McCullagh (2010: 220) has confirmed that Kavanagh did. Costello had a keen interest in the arts, as evidenced by his patronage of Kavangh and O'Faolain. The latter was appointed director of the Arts Council in 1956.

[26] John O'Donovan (1908-72, Fine Gael) became instead Parliamentary Secretary to the government of the 14th Dáil. After losing his seat in 1957, he was elected to the Senate, where he remained until 1961. He joined the Labour Party in 1969, shortly after his retirement.

incurable Irish economy and on other local and international matters to be discussed in subsequent subsections.

5.2.1 Admission to the United Nations

As seen in previous sections of this dissertation,[27] Ireland's initial application for membership of the United Nations was vetoed by the USSR for a number of reasons, chief among which being Ireland's neutral status during World War II and its ironclad anti-communist credentials. Ireland had not been invited to the San Francisco Conference either, which placed the country, diplomatically speaking, in a marginal position despite her active, under-the-counter role in assisting the Allies. De Valera, however, had advocated at the League of Nations for "the importance to smaller, weaker countries of justice and order in international life, and of the need, therefore, for an effective international organisation to achieve this" (Dorr 1996: 41); such desires would somewhat suddenly and belatedly become reality, as the USSR succumbed to US pressure and surprisingly lifted the veto imposed on Ireland and other nations[28] and allowed for their admission into the United Nations on December 14, 1955.

Myles's intervention in the United Nations debate was as brief as the debate itself, as even de Valera "made no attempt to become personally involved" (Fanning 2015: 229) and the novelty of Ireland's membership dissipated from the front pages of newspapers over the course of a few days. In fact, the news had caught both Myles and the government equally off guard. Myles's first comment was of little substance, simply linking United Nations membership with contracting influenza and becoming bad-tempered (*CL,* December 20, 1955). That Ireland's "involvement with the United Nations indicated a willingness to expand foreign-affairs horizons" (Ferriter 2005: 464) seemed not to matter, as United Nations membership prompted yet again questions of domestic (mostly economic) nature in the Dáil the days following the announcement. De Valera merely asked Costello whether Ireland was as ready to commit, both economically and militarily, as back in 1946: "Surely there is a

[27] See sections 2.4.1, 2.4.2 and 4.2.1.
[28] Namely, Albania, Jordan, Portugal, Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria, Italy, Austria, Finland, Ceylon, Nepal, Libya, Cambodia, Laos and Spain.

question of legislation involving our application? We have been kept nine years waiting on the doorstep. I think we should have some opportunity of considering the matter" (*IT,* December 16, 1955). He also demanded Costello explain the obligations entailed from membership. Costello simply replied: "So far as I know, ratification is not necessary, nor is any legislation required" (*ibid*). In reality, what worried Irish politicians, and possibly Myles, were the military implications arising from belonging to the United Nations, a concern which would manifest itself during Ireland's military intervention in the Congo during the early 1960s. What Myles first detected, however, was insult on the part of the organization itself:

> As if to keep pace with such disreputable domestic conduct, it was casually announced last week that Ireland had been elected to the United Nations Organisation. It was a 'package deal,' to repeat a phrase courtesy of the U.S.S.R. This country was put into the same box as Cambodia, Rumania, Libya, Jordan, Italy, Hungary, Finland, Ceylon, Austria and Spain. Ireland has now become a fully-fledged nation, just like Libya or Jordan. We are home at last. (*CL,* December 21, 1955)

Those countries, Myles seemed to suggest, were either colonies of the great powers or else nations which had plunged into revolution and domestic strife very recently. Libya and Jordan, for instance, had recently become independent from Italy and the United Kingdom, respectively, and were about to enter further conflict. In this article, Myles was mirroring what some critics and historians have described as an "inherited sense of second-rate status, inherited from the days of empire" (Garvin 2015: 77), an attitude which would be corrected during the early 1960s and early 1970s by the energetic leadership of Lemass and Fitzgerald, respectively. Myles used the opportunity to launch a series of micro attacks against de Valera, pointing out his political inconsistency in "talking with two tongues, two-timing and double-dealing" and on taking two hours to produce answers which "on examination," have "no meaning at all" (*CL,* December 21, 1955). Despite Myles's usual diatribes against de Valera, Costello became Myles's target this time around, in surprising accordance with de Valera, if conceptually. He deplored Costello's authoritativeness in imposing UNO membership without prior Dáil discussion: "Mr. Costello, the Tea-Shuck [sic], said their [sic] was no

necessity for debate or ratification. The thing was there. It was done. *Jacta erat alea,*[29] to be technical" (*ibid*) while remarking the Plain People of Ireland's impotence on the issue: [they] have, of course, no say in any of this play-acting. They are standing on the side-lines, full members of U.N.O., hoping for cheaper tea" (*ibid*). A few days later, Myles would give his final pronouncement on the United Nations and Irish politics, blaming Costello again: "According to Mr. Costello, not only did it not require parliamentary approval, but the matter could not even be discussed. What utter nonsense! A referendum would have been arranged if the people had any say in the running of the country" (*CL,* January 6, 1956).

Cronin has described O'Nolan and Myles's attitudes to politics as "a form of megalomania" (1990: 210), an idea which can also be attached to his treatment of the United Nations. Myles had previously been sufficiently clear in his opposition to Ireland's self-serving isolationism, but he was definitely not a fan of Ireland standing shoulder to shoulder with the nations and organizations responsible for many of the world's military disasters. This apparent ambiguity, I believe, is partly derived from what Borg, Fagan and McCourt have described as an "anti-authoritarian temperament" in O'Nolan's prose, which "remains poised between *avant-garde* and conservative approaches to the authorities of [...] politics" (2017: 6).

5.2.2 Economy

Myles, then, cherished the hope that the Second Inter-Party Government would take Irish economy in a fresher, more efficient direction. Shortly after the election, the government had manifested their belief that "private enterprise should provide the country with the industrial development it requires [...]. The State Capital Development Programme will be supplemental to and not in substitution for private investment, which it will be the Government's policy to safeguard as the mainspring of economic activity" (qtd. in Murphy 2009: 105).[30] This was Sweetman's task as Minister for Finance, and one which, by all accounts, he failed to successfully carry out. As Coogan indicates, Sweetman "certainly knew

[29] Latin for "the dice was already cast."
[30] Upon being named Taoiseach, Costello released a list of the 14 main aims of the Government.

how to deflate an already flat economy, meeting balance of payments difficulties by imposing a set of swingeing import levies on a wide range of products in March and July 1956" (2009: 384). The building trade in particular had to face an aggressive crisis as a result of Sweetman's policies; as a result, the level of employment in construction fell "from 74,000 in 1955 to 56,000 in 1958" (Ferriter 2005: 492). Garvin even recalls how Sweetman denounced that the IRA bombing campaign of 1956 was "distracting the authorities from thinking clearly about the economic crisis" (2011: 54).

Myles was quick to see through the unfulfilled promises of the Costello Administration. As early as January 1955, a mere seven months after the general election, Myles wryly declared: "I will tell you a thing I am beginning to think this country could do with: a Government. Most other countries have them; they may not be essential, but it can be shown that many are useful" (*CL,* January 19, 1955). The reasons for his critique were a rapid increase in the price of basic commodities such as bread, potatoes or meat; in fact, Sweetman would advocate to discontinue food subsidies at a later stage in government, which caused uproar and prompted certain ministers to threat to resign (Coogan 2009: 385). Myles unambiguously reported that "the price of spuds has shot up. The price of certain classes of bread has increased. Eggs are out of the reach of many. Bacon is very dear, and much of it uneatable. And the shopkeepers are not to blame. They are severely losing business" (*CL,* January 19, 1955). At this point in his journalistic career, Myles was prone to switching tones dramatically, even within a single article. Such an example was another economy-related article, "A New Deal" (January 29, 1955).[31] This "New Deal", however, was apparently not Myles's brainchild, as was the case with many of his occasionally outlandish economic proposals, but that of a correspondent. In a list of measures which included, among others, to "put a stop to the present betting offices, and confine legalised betting to men who stand up at race-courses, sorely taxing them for this privilege" (*ibid*), some others were incisive, bringing to the fore many of the political grey areas at the time. For instance, Myles's correspondent proposed to "abolish the Customs and Excise boundary between the Twenty-Six Counties and the Six", to which Myles added: "this may seem a small, almost a casual

[31] Interestingly, he would later (*CL,* October 15, 1956) refer to Costello's October 1956 speech "Policy for Production" as Costello's New Deal, in a clear reference to President Franklin D. Roosevelt's homonymous economic measures to halt the outcome of the Great Depression between 1933 and 1936.

order, but it often appears to be more a matter of affectation than of politics: one can, with no trouble at all, meet the same class of bores, guttersnipes, rowdies and Gaelic speakers in Belfast as one can in Dublin" (*ibid*). Some other radical yet expansive measures included to "abolish imports from any country which does not take Irish exports", to "tax severely uneeded luxuries from far away, such as perfumes, furs, jewellery" or to "abolish all income tax on doctors, nurses, students, dentists working in hospitals" (*ibid*). Myles also reiterated his impression that "Irish trust funds should be invested in Ireland, rather than in Britain, which was intrinsically an exporting nation" (*ibid*).

The economic debate continued as the Second Inter-Party Government outgrew his one-year trial period and started to be deemed by all responsible for the current situation of the country. Norton, leader of the Labour Party and Tánaiste in the Costello Administration, spent over a month touring American cities in a bid to attract foreign investment. Norton, whom Garvin (2009: 32) teams with Lemass, Whitaker or Costello himself as holders of a modernizing economic agenda in the 1950s, had not traditionally been a favorite of Myles's.[32] In a February 1956 column, Myles did not hesitate to condemn what he felt was an overly exaggerated picture of Ireland's economic boons for American firms:

> 'How would you like the following? An equable climate, an unlimited labour force, a pleasant and easy-going people, an abundance of good and cheap food, low taxation, and great room for successful expansion in industry and agriculture'?[33]
>
> Bedamn but I fell for it.
>
> 'I am getting fed up with this joint here,' I said. 'I am not even the director of a carpet factory. Better men than me have emigrated. Where is this other Eden?'

---

[32] Upon the formation of the Second Inter-Party Government, Myles had claimed in reference to Michael Keyes (Labour, 1886-1957; Minister for Posts and Telegraphs during the Second Inter-Party Government) that "he is one man whom adherence to the Labour principle does not involve the necessity for being personally unpleasant" (*CL,* June 10, 1954). For past examples of Myles's disdain towards the Labour Party, see pp. 156, 182, 202, 246 and 268 of this dissertation.

[33] I have not been able to find evidence of these being Norton's exact words. They were likely to be rephrased, and somewhat enlarged, from a February 10, 1956 report on the end of Norton's American tour: "In the short space of time at our disposal, I believe we have effectively presented Ireland to Americans in a new light. We made it clear that Ireland is not a poor, distressful country, but, instead, a sturdy, independent nation with an expanding economy" (*IT*).

> ‘Better men *than I*,’ he said severely.
>
> ‘All right,’ I countered. ‘But where is it?’
>
> ‘I am sorry to disappoint you,’ the ruffian answered, ‘but what I have read is a report of what Mr. William Norton said to an assembly in the United States. He was referring to Ireland.’ (*CL,* February 11, 1956)

Even if the fragment above might come off as a direct attack at Norton himself, it is also symptomatic of Myles’s crusade against political conceit and his refusal to accept politically fabricated narratives of the country, thus echoing his lifelong rebuke of a Celtic vision of modern Ireland. It is crucial not to forget that “decades before cultural historians got there, *Cruiskeen Lawn* served as a warning to resist cliché, to resist the urge to order miscellaneous materials into neat narratives, to remain alert to the contradictory elements of the cultural data” (Taaffe 2017: 32). Norton’s rendition of Ireland at the time as an industrialist paradise was far from accurate, especially given the rapidly degenerating economy, causing Myles to automatically contest this vision. In bemoaning his credulity—“Bedamn but I feel for it”—, the unnamed speaker in the article is embodying the entire Plain People of Ireland and their unrequited faith on a State built on promises of fertile independence.

In reality, Myles’s renewed expectations after the Second Inter-Party Government came into power had fallen flat. Tom Garvin writes that “1956 was to be a year of economic crisis, and it was seen as such by the newspapers” (2015: 53). For Myles, the blame fell entirely on Finance and its systems of taxation. In the summer of that year, the *Irish Times* published the most critical *Cruiskeen Lawn* article toward Costello’s government to date:

> Taxation has been defined as the redistribution of income. Two gentlemen, the one a Belfast religious poet, the other an attorney, neither having any academic or other accomplishments in the scene of public finance, have brought things to a state wherein old definitions must be rethought: taxation is now a technology for the invention and distribution of new and virgin poverties, the will and urge to earn is discountenanced, and income approaches the stage of being illegal. (*CL,* August 4, 1956)

Those two gentlemen were, respectively, Séan MacEntee, former Minister for Finance, and the incumbent Gerard Sweetman. MacEntee's economic cautiousness, more in line with de Valera's own temperament than Lemass's, has been already discussed.[34] It is interesting that while Lemass advocated for "eliminating all taxes which yield insufficient revenue to justify the public inconvenience of higher prices which they involve" (Feeney 2009: 195), MacEntee opposed those recommendations and preferred instead to keep a high-taxation profile. Sweetman was to follow a very similar ideological line during most of his tenure as Minister for Finance. Fergal Tobin has set out the three evils of Irish economy until the late 1950s, most of which were proudly upheld by MacEntee and Sweetman: "a reliance on native capital for the generation of wealth; the employment of that capital behind a protective wall of tariffs and quotas; and the concentration on social rather than productive objectives in the public investment programme" (1984: 5). The country, Myles thought, needed a figure versed in modern economics, someone to steer the country away from the storm of stagnation in which Ireland had been trapped since the mid-1940s. That role would eventually be filled by T. K. Whitaker; until then, however, Myles's complaints did not cease. In the same article he accused Sweetman of "having taken steps to make the £ practically worthless" and "one of the most preposterous pieces of clowning heard of in a political clime [sic] notorious for peasantarianisms and gaucherie: he offers a fiver a skull to any of the 37,000 civil servants who can suggest ways of saving money in the public service" (*CL,* August 4, 1956). He then moved on to list all the uneconomic patterns of a normal day in the civil service, among which he included tea and lunch breaks. Myles concluded, however, that taxation was necessary; what was unnecessary, as Lemass had also remarked, were certain types of misplaced taxation. He turned to health, one of his topics of preference when castigating the Irish taxation system, as an example:

> Taxation is necessary, of course. Almost daily there comes from under that long upper lip of the Minister for Health exposition of the multitudinous measures being taken to

[34] See, for instance, pp. 86-89. Ó Grada (1997), Murphy (2009) and Coogan (2009) are very revelatory in terms of the MacEntee-Lemass economic squabbles.

> safeguard and strengthen the young—the men and women of to-morrow. Horrid diphtheria must be strangled. T.B. already wilts before X-ray units, deposits mount at the Blood Bank; free milk, free school meals mean stronger, whiter young bones and teeth. How is some of the money found? By a 37 *per cent* import duty on fresh oranges, the only accessible vehicle of critical vitamin C; and there is the same tax on grape-fruit and other fresh fruit which cannot be grown here.
>
> What is the word for that class of carry-on? If I use the word criminal, it is because I cannot think of any other that would be milder and still fair. (*Ibid*)

Underlying Myles's argument was a harsh critique of Ireland's model of self-subsistence, one which had been used as a rallying cry by politicians, especially by Fianna Fáil, since the inception of the State. Myles was thus pondering what was the use of maintaining such sophisticated levels of health benefits when health could not be kept by naturally ingesting biologically crucial yet financially unaffordable foods and nutrients. In a final attack against aggressive protectionism and preference for native goods over imported ones, Myles declared in a fit of irony that "we lay chaps must for heaven's sake stop importing stuff. Buy Irish. Be exorcised of that slave mind that thinks British is Best. The country's economy calls for the sternest tightening of the belt. Remember that the Big Squeeze is on. Learn to live on native goods and on as little as possible of them." (*ibid*). Vintaloro (2017) has highlighted Myles's anti-authoritarian tendencies in *Cruiskeen Lawn,* and examples such as this seemed to hint at the existence of an economic dictatorship in Ireland, one which systematically prevented citizens from acquiring foreign goods by taxing them heavily and thus forced them to consume native goods instead. In a way, the economic school of protectionism had been, and was still being, glorified by its political and ideological counterpart, the concept of a self-sufficient Ireland.

The suggestion of a State-induced preference for restrictions on spending would later materialize in Costello's repeated insinuations that Irish people should save money instead of complaining about rising prices. One such example took place on September 30, when Costello implored the Irish people during a Radio Eireann broadcast to save as a means to increase production:

> The appeal is a national appeal made to secure—and essential for securing—the prosperity of the nation [...]. Without savings there would be no sustained employment, and jobs would be scarce and badly paid. If we wish to increase production, to provide more employment to improve our standard of living and to develop our resources, we must have more productive investment, and the only sure, safe and lasting foundation for increased investment is increased savings. (*IT,* October 1, 1956)

Myles was quick to launch his countermeasures. Aware of the fact that Australia had recently refused to appoint an Ambassador to Ireland on the grounds that the Republic was wantonly claiming the Six Counties as being within her political jurisdiction,[35] Myles reported the event and suggested that Costello respond in kind:

> Then, the vacant continent of Australia refuses to send an ambassador to Dublin because our politicans [sic] insist that Dublin is in Ireland. There has been yet no street-fighting over *that* loss. Part of this lexical loutishness is to be attributed to Mr. Costello, who made a silly speech at a lawyers' hooley in Canada, confusing State pronouncements with the extravagant flamboyance of language that is suitable for the court-room.[36] With another voice he tells us all to stop spending money we haven't got and to 'save.' I suggest he recalls our own man from Australia, put an end to the pretence that there is any necessity for him among all those sheep, and save a neat £10,000 or so *p.a.* (*CL,* October 2, 1956)

Whether the term "sheep" referred to the widespread sheep rearing practices in Australia or, more pejoratively, to the overwhelmingly pro-British Australian politicians is hard to say. Be

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[35] According to reports on this political misunderstanding: "The Irish Government wanted the letters [of credence of the Australian Ambassador to the President] addressed to the President of Ireland, but the Australian Government insisted that they be addressed to the President of the Republic of Ireland," with the consequence that the "Australians felt that Ireland in the letters would include Northern Ireland, and would impinge on the status of that area" (*IT,* September 28, 1956).

[36] Myles is referring to Costello's declaration of the Republic in Ottawa in 1948. For more on this episode, see section 4.3.1.1.

that as it may, Costello was not alone in his pro-savings measures, as this idea was spurred by Whitaker, who "argued that saving and production should be encouraged, and excessive consumption discouraged. This would stimulate capital development of a productive nature" (Murphy 2009: 111). Asking the common people to save money in support of government policy was, however, not perceived by Myles as a plausible solution, ever wary as he was of the welfare of the Plain People of Ireland. He would, then, persevere in his campaign to undermine the government's feeble attempts at economic recovery. On another occasion, Myles would claim that "both myself and my friend Dr. Schacht[37] are 4-square behind Mr. Gerard Sweetman, Minister for Finance, in his campaign to conserve finance" (*CL,* October 29, 1956). It is, again, difficult to tell whether the Schacht mention stands as a reference to economic dictatorship or as mere companion to the idea of efficient deflation. However, Myles added: "There is a serious lacuna, however, in this *modus operandi* of universal co-operation. It overlooks the quandary of people who have no money to put into the post office, into Government stock or industry, yet who are anxious to help" (*ibid*). That Myles specifically referenced Sweetman and not Costello speaks volumes of his knowledge of the ideological nuances within the government. While Costello wanted to promote savings, he was also in favor of seeking "to persuade the Irish banks to swap their overseas assets, chiefly sterling and UK Government IOUs, for Irish Government bonds" (Coogan 2009: 388), a policy which was at the forefront of Myles's economic preferences. A few days later, however, Myles criticized again the bureaucratic hypocrisy behind the savings policy, this time attacking the government-backed GAA: "While the rest of us hurry to the Post Office with our tanners, ever-careful of Erin's weal, various strong, personable farmers' boys are getting ready to take plane across the blue and perilous Atlantic Ocean to play ball with a congregation of our own emigrants" (*CL,* November 2, 1956). He added: "There will also be a small sect of subs, and 'officials'. The cost will not be slight. I think that it would look much nicer tucked into the Post Office savings account" (*ibid*).

All in all, Myles's approach to the economic measures put out by the Second Inter-Party Government shows a high degree of political alertness and engagement and sustains

[37] Hjalmar Schacht (1877-1970) was Hitler's Minister for Finance. He introduced innovative deflationary policies and promoted public investment. Critical of Nazi anti-semitism, Schacht was suspected to be conspiring against the regime and was forced to resign.

his wayward political attitude: Myles was comparatively more receptive to political developments surrounding the 1954 general election and, one could say, somewhat hopeful that a renewed cabinet could turn the economic tide for the better. However, he would soon dismiss the role played by many Fine Gael Ministers and demand his rightful place in the cabinet to set things right: “Some day, perhaps, our politicians will wake up to the parlous conditions existing at our crossroads and do something about it. If they cast round with an honest eye to find the right man, there will be no doubt at all about their choice. It will be none other than me” (*CL,* October 2, 1956). In a way, Myles had launched a reformist economic campaign from the pages of the *Irish Times,* pointing out apparent problems and offering, at times, plausible solutions. These proposals, as Ian Kilroy (2014: 14) shrewdly remarks, were unlikely to be meant as a step-by-step guide to Irish economic rejuvenation, but they are nevertheless proof that economic thinking was very much to the fore in the Mylesian canon of the 1950s. This period in *Cruiskeen Lawn*, which many have pictured as already colourless in style and destructive in intent, has been seen by others, such as Giordano Vintaloro, as “thought-provoking and revolutionary” (2017: 275). While mid-1950s *Cruiskeen Lawn* did actually do away with the linguistic inventiveness and creative echoes which, to a certain extent, helped the column become an overnight success, it is inaccurate to consequently portray the Myles of the times as a harbinger of sourness and destructiveness. One cannot ignore the perception that Myles simply transitioned to a more “journalistic” persona, better attuned thematically to the social and political realities underpinning the Ireland of the 1950s, a country trapped in a limbo separating the well-trodden path of tradition and the uncharted roads to expansion and openness. Nowhere is this change in Mylesian modes of commentary more apparent than in his brief yet decisive interventions during the IRA 1956-62 border campaign, later known as “Operation Harvest”.

5.2.3 IRA border campaign

Between December 1956 and February 1962, the IRA launched an offensive campaign against British rule in Northern Ireland with the aim of forcibly ending Partition and effecting a 32-county Republic. My analysis of Myles’s column-writing during this critical period is, however, restricted to the years 1956 and 1957, as that was the height of IRA activity at the

time. While literature on the IRA as a whole is extensive, few have tackled the border campaign of the late 1950s and early 1960s in particular.[38] As a northerner raised in a Catholic household with secret anti-British sentiments,[39] a member of the administration of the Free State, Eire and the Republic and friends with Brendan Behan,[40] O'Nolan was surely well positioned to comprehend the ideological intricacies of the conflict. This makes the question of why Myles had not explicitly referred to the IRA prior to the Second Inter-Party Government remarkably intriguing, especially considering that the 1956-62 campaign was not the first period of military activity for the IRA.[41] The only remote trace of the IRA in O'Nolan's writing life prior to the mid-1950s is Tom Walker's (2014) sound argument that *The Third Policeman* was conceptually based on the murder of detective Timothy O'Sullivan in the 1920s, thought by many to have been perpetrated by the IRA.

While I think it is far from sensible to associate Myles's IRA columns with any political party or tenure whatsoever,[42] this subsection is included within the 1954-7 period simply for chronological reasons, as the first instance in which Myles referred to the organization took place shortly after Costello formed his government. In this article, titled "Them I.R.A. Crowd", Myles claimed to have been invited to a "War of Independence Ball" to be held at the Metropole Ballroom and organized by the likes of Séan MacBride, Andrew Clarkin and Frank J. Hugh O'Donnell; all of whom, Myles jokes, compose "an exceptional

[38] For the IRA in general see, among a myriad of other sources, Coogan (1994), Moloney (2002) and English (2003); for the border campaign specifically, see Maguire (2008), Flynn (2009) and Treacy (2011).
[39] O'Nolan's brother recalls how on one occasion their father expressed disgust at the presence of British aircraft flying towards Dublin during the Rising. See Cronin (1990: 12-3) and Ó Nualláin (1998: 18).
[40] Behan was widely known to be a Republican and was given a special IRA funeral. Both Behan and O'Nolan were drinking companions. For more on Behan and O'Nolan, see Davis (2005) and Fagan (2019). Myles proposed Behan stand as a candidate to the 1959 presidential election (*CL,* December 4, 1958). See also O'Nolan's article on Behan, "Behan: Master of Language", published in *The Sunday Telegraph* (October 22, 1964).
[41] Aside from the period of analysis, the IRA had emerged during the War of Independence, had two brief periods of activity during the Emergency (1939-40, 1942-4) and a final long-term campaign which came to be called The Troubles (1966-98).
[42] It must be mentioned, however, that Myles was at times extremely derisive towards Clann na Poblachta, the self-appointed republican party prior to the reemergence of Sinn Féin during the 1957 general election. One such example was a 1956 column in which he dubbed the party "Clown Publuckta" and made fun of suggestions that MacBride was responsible for an alleged "spectacular prosperity" in the country (*CL,* February 10, 1956).

spectrum of military talent" (*CL,* November 6, 1954).[43] Myles would quickly show his discontent at the necessity of celebrating the War of Independence itself:

> I do not know what the word 'Ball' evokes in the mind of today—if to-day has a mind at all. To me it means Mozart, minuets, gavottes, the Congress of Vienna: daintiness and lace, even lutes. The idea of celebrating a war of unique savagery and torture with a 'Ball' seems to me the absolute last word in *gaucherie.* It's like having a wedding breakfast to celebrate a funeral. (*Ibid*)

For Myles, a ball was synonymous with culture, elegance and sophistication, a set of characteristics unassociated with the idea of war or, it seemed, with any of the political personalities mentioned. While representatives of the IRA showed no signs of being present at the ball, or in charge of it for that matter, Myles seemed to have automatically linked the organization with MacBride's organizing role. Immediately afterwards, the article takes a sudden turn for the violent and macabre: "Yes. I will attend the dance. I will arrive disguised as a violinist. My violin-case will contain a submachine-gun. I will personally exterminate the I.R.A. It will be a terrible blow to de Valera, who has been keeping the I.R.A. in check and getting dinner invitations to 10 Downing street" (*ibid*). Explicit violence is indeed a rarity in *Cruiskeen Lawn,*[44] but this article blatantly manifested a high degree of contempt for the actions of the organization while at the same time undermining de Valera's role in containing IRA activity, unequivocally felt by Myles to be an example of political haughtiness and opportunism. R. W. Malsen has claimed with regards to "The Martyr's Crown" that "Ireland's bloody history serves as the raw material for an elaborate rhetorical scheme for fleeting self-promotion" (2006: 97). For Myles, the involvement of these political figures,

[43] The Metropole Hotel used to stand next to the GPO in O'Connell Street, but was demolished in the early 1970s and sold to a British company; Frank J. Hugh O'Donnell (1894-1976, Fine Gael) was a prominent senator during the 1940s and 1950s. He was also a notable playwright during the 1920s whose works were intermittently banned by the Abbey.

[44] Myles's suggestions to execute atomic scientists as a way to prevent atomic technology from spreading are one of the few examples to be found across the column. See p. 173.

regardless of political banner, on questions remotely related to the conflicts of the early 1920s was probably one such example, as will be seen later on.

Unambiguously linking the IRA to politics, then, is perhaps more important than his intention to obliterate the paramilitary organization, as further references to the IRA would eventually prove. On December 17, five days after the first multi-target attack on the border, Myles would briefly allude to the conflict:

> The events of last week in Northern Ireland were promptly commented on by our Editor, and his remarks met the approval of many. He condemned the actions of the 'physical force' group as futile and harmful in any scheme to re-integrate the country. I am personally often told to mind my own business on the assumption, usually quite unjustified, that I know what my own business is. Of one thing I am sure: comment on the Irish political scene, north and south, is not my business. Very few decent persons care to be associated with any political party whatsoever in this country, unless they are in search of overt commercial concessions. (*CL,* December 17, 1956)

Despite his reluctance to return to discussions of political nature, Myles would once again pessimistically deplore the bellic state of affairs in Ireland and the world in general: "That term 'world war' no longer means the massive slaughter by machinery of tens of thousands of massed conscripts; rather the eruption of military pus in innumerable trouble-spots all over the globe. Everywhere people are looking for their 'rights' at the point of the gun" (*CL,* January 2, 1957).[45] The previous day, 14 IRA volunteers had unsuccessfully attempted an attack against a RUC/B Specials barracks in Brookeborough, which resulted in the deaths of republicans Fergal O'Hanlon and Seán South, aged 20 and 25, respectively. Myles's response to this event would appear on the pages of the *Irish Times* the following week. Unlike his previous reference to the IRA, which was jocose in tone and trivial in intent, the following article reads as one of Myles's most serious and temperate articles to date. A close reading of the article prompts a division into two parts: the first, in which he manifested his impotence

[45] Myles was likely referring to a number of worldwide conflicts such as the Suez Crisis (1956), the Hungarian Revolution (1956) or the Algerian War (1954-62), among others.

and sadness at the senseless nature of the conflict, and the second, in which he blamed Irish politicians, north and south, for the unstable ideological situation:

> The situation of this country is parlous. The year 1957 has made a start that can be described only as startling. Blood has been spilt. Stupid antagonisms have again alerted this small branch of mankind and people are dying in some holy cause [...]. The free use of guns (again) on this small plot saddens us older people. We had hoped that that phase was passed. I had personally hoped that my lectures from this rostrum for twenty years had instilled into the mind of the Gael some sense of discipline, some awareness of the fact that great reforms are brought about by exercise of the mind rather than by the strong arm.
>
> [...]
>
> Ireland has two governments, one north, one south. I believe both are incompetent and unrepresentative. In the north we have a company of chaps who profess an external allegiance without a soul in that company who can claim any sort of distinction outside chancing the political arm, winning pensions and making suitable speeches at fixed dinners. Those whom I often quote here—the Plain People of Ireland—groan under the burden imposed on them by various political chancers. How can we sweep the room clean—at least in the Twenty-six Counties?
>
> Of one thing let us be sure. This is not a democracy. Citizens are permitted to vote only for stooges put up by the main parties, namely Fyn Gayl, Labour, and Feena Fayl. The last-named caucus is led by a gentleman aged about 75. The first-name party is led by a gentleman who is still hoarse from shouting in the courts. He is one of the innumerable people who think that an Irish national assembly would be incomplete and defective unless the son was present.[46]
>
> [...]

[46] Costello's son, Declan Costello (1926-2011, Fine Gael) would also become a Fine Gael TD and, like his father, Attorney General. De Valera's son, Vivion de Valera (1910-82, Fianna Fáil), was also a Fianna Fáil TD. from 1945 until 1981. Even William Cosgrave's son, Liam Cosgrave (1920-2017, Fine Gael) would become Taoiseach (1973-7).

> It seems to me intolerable that the sons, cousins, daughters and cleevaunistigh [sic] characters should be deemed to be the Government having charge of this tax-racked country. The plain, intelligent people of the land should organise themselves. They should put a permanent interdict on those fellows whose destinies stem from the Civil War and elect to office (under whatever catch-cry) educated persons, persons who can show attainment in other spheres.[47] Let us get it into our heads that politics is a noble profession and not the refuge of fellows who failed at the job they opted for, nor still a warm corner for young chaps who were unsuccessful in their collision at school with sums. (*CL,* January 5, 1957)

The implications of this particular *Cruiskeen Lawn* article in understanding Myles's political views, especially given the untenable political situation of the country at the time, are crucial. Early in the article Myles distanced himself from any sort of ideological positioning with respect to either side of the conflict; instead, he adopted a melancholy and condemnatory tone, admonishing the IRA for resorting to violence as a means to an end, echoing a view held by many; that of the IRA "prosecuting the good old cause in the good old way and getting nowhere" (Tobin 1984: 3). However, he rapidly moved to point his finger at Irish politicians as being chiefly the ones to blame for the IRA's violent campaign, neither side of the border being, in Myles's opinion, truly intent in their attempts at ending, or easing, partition. Myles thought that Northern Irish politicians were especially disingenuous in their support of partition purely for political and financial profit; in the case of the Republic, Myles blamed the three traditional political parties of producing candidates unsuited for office: his arguments were, as always, the deeply rooted rural pedigree of most politicians in the Republic, with the Civil War as the common background from which all these figures originated. It could thus be said that the Civil War—the *de facto* consequence of partition and igniter of IRA military drive—was to blame, with most of its instigators then occupying positions of political power and influence. Myles had already placed the blame on Irish politicians on a previous occasion: "Fundamental as apparently this dislike is, it has been magnified, stressed and made as permanent as possible by politicians; and the latter have

[47] Myles had, in a way, already put forward this idea in his discussion of the economic policy of the Second Inter-Party Government, particularly in relation to both Lemass and Sweetman being simply unfit academically to play the role of Minister for Finance. See p. 233.

shown, quite unwittingly, that politicians on the make, north or south, are the same sort of bad news" (*CL,* October 26, 1956). Fanning has also found the causes of the IRA resurgence closely connected to anti-partitionist political propaganda: "The relentless pounding of the anti-partitionist drums by politicians such as Éamon de Valera and Seán MacBride [...] nourished that same sense of unfinished business in young men such as South and O'Hanlon" (2015: 240). Also, by highlighting, for instance, de Valera's old age, Myles was voicing a growing concern within the Irish voting public; that of gerontocracy in Irish politics. Like Myles, Garvin has linked this problem to the countryside: "The reluctance to cultivate a younger generation of political leaders, even though such a generational change was inevitable, seems to have been linked to a traditional Irish peasant farming resentment of the young and to the fear of being dispossessed" (2015: 52). Myles was, however, carefully explicit in not blaming politics as a whole, but only a selected group of Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael politicians whose actions during the Civil War resulted in the breach of the island; he would refer to them later on as "a horde of parliamentary ownshucks, who think 1921 was the *annus mirabilis*" (*CL,* February 14, 1957).

5.3 Fianna Fáil's resurgence (1957-66)

Toward the end of the Second Inter-Party Government, "it became increasingly evident that the situation as regards unemployment and emigration was even grimmer [...] than it has been in the early 1950s" (Bew and Patterson 1982: 100). As early as mid-1956, the *Irish Times* was speaking of the Costello Administration as having "lost the common touch" (September 19, 1956). While, as Foster (1989: 578) notes, the 1954-57 cabinet was energetic in their aspirations to welcome free trade to Ireland, they "struggled to counteract economic stagnation" (Ferriter 2005: 537). In fact, on the very same day that Costello's 16 reasons for supporting Fine Gael in the 1957 election were published (among which he listed the need to allow the coalition government to continue their "policy for production"), a report of a lecture by Dr. Labhras O Nuallain[48] (no relation to O'Nolan) declared that "this country's entry into the Free Trade Area may well be the shot-in-the-arm so badly needed by our

[48] Dr. Labhras O Nuallain (1912-2000) was an Irish economist born in Manchester who later became a professor at University College Galway.

present economy. The pressure of external forces may well compel us to take the action necessary to bring about a viable and expanding economy" (*IT,* March 1, 1957). This left Fianna Fáil with its already tried and trusted policies. In fact, as Lee notes, their triumph was "more of a vote of no confidence in other parties than of confidence in Fianna Fáil, whose popular vote rose only marginally" (1989: 327). Eventually, Fianna Fáil obtained 78 seats, a far superior amount than the sum of the rest of the parties.[49] The election became possible due to the decision taken by Sean MacBride's Clann na Poblachta to withdraw support from the Second Inter-Party Government after Costello's strong anti-IRA measures. Sinn Feín obtained 4 seats, which "appears to have partly reflected its apparent commitment to a radical social policy in a period of economic crisis as well as support for the border campaign" (*ibid*); however, they decided to abstain on the grounds of partition, a fact that Myles would comment on during the election.

The cabinet that de Valera put forward this time around was, once again, headed by himself and flanked on both sides by Lemass as Tánaiste and Minister for Industry and Commerce and Seán MacEntee as Minister for Health. There were few new faces,[50] but the aura of forthcoming change was perceptible by some. With de Valera's descent into semi-blindness and a number of intrigues and scandals concerning his relationship with the *Irish Press*[51] came the possibility of retiring honorably into a much less political yet equally dignified position, that of President of Ireland; or, in Lee's words, "the ideal paddock for the old warhorse" (1989: 330). With de Valera out of the Fianna Fáil scene, at least in theory, Lemass was the first in line to become his successor. His appointment would take place in June 1959, and with it came a new style in policing. Even before Lemass's ascent to the office of Taoiseach, the *Irish Times* was already advancing "the new role of the State as industrial entrepreneur" (June 4, 1959). Later on, as we have seen, Lemass's name would become associated with free trade, attraction of foreign capital to Ireland by means of heavy

[49] Fine Gael (40), Labour (12), Sinn Féin (4), Clann na Talmhan (3) and Clann na Poblachta (1).
[50] Namely, the Minister for Education, Jack Lynch (1917-99); Minister for Posts and Telegraphs, Neil Blaney (1922-95); Minister for Defence, Kevin Boland (1917-2001); and Minister for the Gaeltacht, Mícheál Ó Móráin (1912-83).
[51] Between 1958 and 1959, Browne made public his charges against de Valera, whom he thought was benefiting both financially and electorally from his chairmanship of the *Irish Press.* Browne thought de Valera's role as Taoiseach was incompatible with that of the head of a newspaper agency. See, among others, Fanning (2015: 243-5), for an expanded version of the controversy.

tax relief schemes and an overall pro-European attitude. As early as July 1960, the future Taoiseach and leading economist Garret Fitzgerald spoke of "good times coming" in an *Irish Times* article.[52] Lemass's premiership signified to many in the public sphere the onset of what Tobin would look back to as "the best of decades". As he put it in his homonymous book:

> The sixties swung all right. It was a time of rude energy, a contempt for tradition, in which the material fruits of post-war sacrifices and reconstruction could be enjoyed. Like all such times, it threw up a generation that believed itself to have discovered the world anew and to have cracked codes that had eluded its elders. (1984: 1)

Indeed, Lemass would categorically oppose many of the traditional patterns of internal promotion which had previously informed the Irish political system and which Myles openly denounced in *Cruiskeen Lawn.* In fact, Bew and Patterson speak of the Lemass Administration as one which stood "above all for the principle of 'career open to the talents': rewards were to be allocated on a basis of merit rather than nepotistic or other criteria. He saw the acceptance of planning required the fostering of new mentalities—even new moralities—in the civil service" (1982: 10). This attitude, in a way, is surprisingly reminiscent of several of Myles's articles during the 1950s, in which he deplored political sleaze and dynasties and demanded a more professional approach to Irish politics.[53] Given these unexpected similarities in their mentalities as regards political and even economic matters (Myles had traditionally objected to heavy taxation systems such as those enforced by previous Fianna Fáil governments and, more recently, by the Second Inter-Party Government), the question arises whether resonances between Myles's political thought and the Lemass era are to be found during the 1959-66 period, and whether Myles would harbor more benevolent views of the new government during this new era. These questions, among

[52] *IT,* July 20, 1960.

[53] See, for instance, *CL* February 3, 1956 and January 5, 1957. He would also hold similar opinions in an unpublished article, "A Writer's Writhings", produced at some point near his death: "it should be stated that Ireland has neither a Chancellor of the Exchequer nor a Treasury; a member of the reigning party is styled Minister for Finance and, since politics is not regarded as a respectable activity, it follows that persons of standing and intellectual accomplishment are not available for any of the ministerial appointments" (qtd. in Cronin 1990: 261).

other individual political events, will constitute the focus of the present subsection, always bearing in mind that the upcoming period was one in which O'Nolan's writing activity, despite Montgomery's efforts in filling in as Myles, would gradually decrease, fighting as he was against "the long disused talent, the inveterate drinking, the profound self-distrust" (Cronin 1990: 233).

Myles's coverage of the 1957 general election was, as in previous occasions, exceptionally detailed, albeit rapidly abandoned after the conclusion of the event—partly, perhaps, because O'Nolan himself had unsuccessfully contested the election as a candidate for the Seanad, the result of which was "a serious blow" (*ibid*: 211).[54] His rhetoric during the election remained essentially stable: distrust of either main political force, vituperative dismissal of any of the minor political parties and contempt toward the dynastic quality of Irish politics. The Dáil was dissolved on February 4 to mark the beginning of the election campaign; on the following day, precisely one month before the election, *Cruiskeen Lawn* contained an article specifically devoted to the election. After introducing his already long-held viewing of "Fyn Gael and Feena Fayl with almost equal contempt" and scorning "the lilyhanded poltroons who dub themselves Labour Party" (*CL,* February 5, 1957), Myles then moved to remorselessly criticize the outgoing Costello Administration and their economic policies: "This election will be a real one for the reason that large blocs of the electorate are thoroughly angry. I should say that the 85,000 unemployed are necessarily all electors, but countless thousands of others have been reduced to near-beggary by the Costello-Norton brand of statesmanship" (*ibid*). With an adverse trade balance of £73.5 million in 1956 (Keogh 1994: 232), Myles's critique was legitimate, even though it ignored the coalition government's rushed attempts to restructure Irish finance by attracting foreign capital and directly relying on banks (Bew and Patterson 1982: 103-7). Fianna Fáil, however, was also out of luck in terms of Mylesian coverage. He was essentially ironic and straightforward in dismissing the desirability of yet another Fianna Fáil Administration led by de Valera:

[54] Cronin rightfully indicates that "the *Irish Times* forbade him to canvass his candidacy in his column [and thus failed] even to circulate the rather unbalanced manifesto he showed to some of his friends" (1990: 210). O'Nolan's "manifesto" is housed in the National Library of Ireland (NLI NMP 24.3) in the shape of a letter to the Electors of Seanad Éireann. This letter was included in Long's *The Collected Letters of Flann O'Brien* (2018) and has been commented upon in section 2.5.3.

> How about Feena Fayl? Will *they* be able to form a Government after the election? I sincerely hope not. But suppose they do form a Government, who will be the head of it? It will certainly be a nice state of affairs if the answer is Mr. E. de Valera, a man who is pushing 80. If he was not so busy scheming and took time off for reflection, he might change his mind if he had an hour. (*CL,* February 5, 1957)

By mentioning de Valera's "busy scheming", he was likely alluding to the *Irish Press* controversy, which he nevertheless would only refer to obliquely and on few occasions prior to the presidential election. The word "hour" could also be linked to Churchill,[55] whom he frequently compared to de Valera during the late 1940s.[56] Indeed, further into the column Myles equates the de Valera-Lemass duo with Churchill and Eden,[57] taking advantage of the reference to mock de Valera's parochial origins and patriarchal attitudes: "Poor Seán Lemass is being shoved into the same ridiculous position of Eden *vis-à-vis* Churchill. If Mr. de Valera again honours himself with the post of Tear-Shark [sic], he will be acting precisely like a crabbed Irish farmer who refuses to get out of the way and hand over the farm to the eldest boy, now as grey as a badger and nearly 60" (*ibid*). In a way, Myles might have overlooked the fundamental strategy at the core of the de Valera-Lemass relationship: "Lemass needed de Valera to deliver the votes. De Valera needed Lemass to deliver the goods" (Lee 1989: 372).

Cruiskeen Lawn featured further attacks on Fianna Fáil during the days that followed, such as claims that the Constitution did not obey the desires of the people but those of de Valera and "certain clergymen" (February 7), the "veneration in which the Feena Fayl boys hold even the most trivial inventions of British bumbledom and bureaucracy" (February 13),[58] or the usual ironic slashes against the party's ideology: "Did it ever occur to you that

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[55] Churchill's "This was their finest hour" speech (1940) also included the now popular phrase "darkest hour".
[56] See p. 222 for one such instance.
[57] Anthony Eden (1897-1977, Conservative) was Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary before becoming Prime Minister from 1955-7.
[58] In the article, Myles references the existence of the figure of the comptroller, British in origin, in the Irish economic vocabulary, and jokingly remarks that "this would amount in the Feena Fayl mind to sanctification of the usage" (*ibid*). Kiberd notes that this was a common tendency in the different governments led by de Valera, who was "ever ready to agree with the guarded advice of a British-trained Department of Finance whose

we in Ireland are very lucky to be poor, have a native Government, have few opportunities for sinful living, have a real homespun station like Radio Eireann?" (February 28). On February 14, Myles wrote a rather uncharacteristic article in which he invited women to actively participate in Irish politics: "A woman's mind is cleaner than a man's because she changes it oftener. This is not to say that her mind is inferior, for a mind unstereotyped among a horde of parliamentary ownshucks [...] can be useful and stimulating" (*CL*). He added: "*The main thing is for women to organise and stand.* If they do nothing else, they will be the cats among the pigeons and cause many a party hack to lose, or fail to get, the seat he thinks it is the nation's duty to give him" (*ibid*). This sudden burst of support toward women, however, is unreliable within the O'Nolan and Mylesian canons—in fact, Long has spoken of "O'Nolan's sexism [...], misogynistic complacency, [....] lazy relegation of women to the domestic, and the disingenuous dismal of women as a credible literary study" (2014: 149). O'Nolan's most overt pronunciation on women's role in society was far from benevolent, and constituted a systematic denial of any possibility of political representation:

> Women are not important in Ireland in any sense of the social determinative, if there's such a word [...]. What I mean is they make our breakfast and they make our beds, but they're not really formative [...] they are not really a social force in this country [...]. You can't leave them out but you mustn't allow them to intrude too much. (Qtd. in Asbee 1991: 107)[59]

Myles's signature political inconsistency had been, at least so far, consistent enough regarding women's political ventures.[60] This article is, I believe, better read as a critique against the Civil War hegemony—the representatives of a "conservative social order [...] buttressed by essentialist ideology" (Brown 1981: 245)—still present at the time in the Dáil rather than a vindication of women's rights in the political realm. This is evidenced by Myles's oblique backlash against Sinn Féin's policy of abstentionism in the same column:

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addiction to economic orthodoxies was at least as great as the Department of Education's commitment to the curricular study of the Edwardian literary canon" (1996: 479).

[59] As reported from a 1962 interview with the BBC.

[60] See, for example, *CL* June 23, 1943.

"we have a parcel of chaps, who think we have not yet reached the year 1920, taking over the hallowed name of Sinn Féin and asking us to vote for them for the reason that under no circumstances will they sit in Parliament" (*CL,* February 14, 1957). Incidentally, the election would be contested by the Irish Housewives' Association, polling a total of 4,797 votes, a result far from the estimates desired by Myles's column.

Myles would also pronounce himself again on partition, an issue which, if obliquely, constituted the focus of the election. On this occasion, Myles adopted a more revealing and prescriptive tone, denouncing previous attempts as futile and exhibiting surprising dexterity as a political strategist:

> Ireland ceased to be a single State in 1800. Its territorial reintegration would have been much facilitated had there been shrewd and honest politicians in the south in the years following the 1914 war. The Orange demand for the entire province of Ulster should have been conceded. That would mean that the present disparity in population as between Unionists and Nationalists—heavens, what faded and moth-eaten terms!—, roughly now 2 to 1, would be much nearer evens [sic]. The latter result would be naturally accelerated by the superior fertility of the Nationalists, and by emigration caused by the recurring blizzards of unemployment in the north-east. (*CL,* February 25, 1957)

In a way, Myles's anti-violent and conciliatory proposals for solving partition would echo Lemass' own pragmatic approach. He "realised that northerners could only be attracted by a higher economic standard of life in the Republic" (Bew and Patterson 1982: 11); an idea, in essence, congruent with Myles's long-term plans. Partition, however, had always been a sideline for Myles, at least in the column; he never referred to it as consistently as other topics of political importance, such as the economy. Ferriter writes that "political dissidents and left-wing activists remained more concerned with poverty than the border" (2005: 489). Myles was definitely not a left-wing activist, but he is certainly closer to the concept of political dissident, with *Cruiskeen Lawn* being increasingly and recurrently used as a tool for political dissidence. As he put it in an August 27, 1964, letter to Hester Green: "I have quite

a name here for damaging public vituperation in print" (O'Brien 2018: 423). One such case was the final article written before the election, titled "Cut This Out!" and devoted exclusively to the Dáil dynasties. Myles radically reopened the question by warning his readers of how a "serious condition of dynastical dyscrasia threatens the State organism and continued pathogenic polity will entail the end of the mocracy [sic]" (*CL,* March 2, 1957). Subsequent to this general claim, Myles gave a detailed list of TDs whose relatives were at some point members of the Dáil, coming up with a total of 23 out of 146 members, among which the names of Cosgrave, Costello, de Valera or Lemass stood out.[61] Also denouncing the "ancillary abuse" of "parking in the Senate [...] persons categorically rejected by the electorate" (*ibid*), he intimated that "My Excellency knows and knows of the entire bunch of them [...]. I will be generous and content myself with saying that over half of them are quite unfitted for public life and, further, that they were chosen mainly because such unfitness was known to the party bosses" (*ibid*).

The final article for the 1957 general election was headed "Post Sortem", and it appeared on March 12, shortly after polling had concluded and de Valera's victory was announced. The article, which contained a reference to "the quotaless Gerald midst his levies nearly routed, you might say, tout de Suiteman"[62] (*CL,* March 12, 1957) followed by a quotation from Joyce's *Ulysses,*[63] was unequivocal in placing the blame on the coalition government's economic measures: "the voters did not believe the Fyn Gayl scaretalk, therefore regarded with anger the 'remedy' of taxing people to the point of destitution, and thought the Costello administration should be sent packing about such business as they had" (*ibid*). At the same time, however, it did not celebrate or comment at all on Fianna Fáil's victory, but remarked acidly that "*there are some intelligent people in this country and there is no group for whom they can vote*" (*ibid*). Lee notes that "the few genuinely professional

[61] Keogh (1994: 233) recounts how the question of Dáil dynasties posed a constant problem in cabinet formation upon the appointment of the 1957 government. De Valera had to mediate between Gerald (1885-1973, Fianna Fáil) and Kevin (1917-2001) Boland—father and son, respectively—and Lemass for the position of Minister for Justice. Apparently, Lemass was unwilling to take part in the cabinet alongside Gerald Boland, so de Valera chose his son Kevin instead, who became Minister for Finance upon being elected to the Dáil for the first time.

[62] Gerard Sweetman, former Minister for Finance in the 1954-7 government and responsible for the tax raise which, coupled with the resurgence of the IRA, precipitated the fall of Costello's government.

[63] "Gaptoothed Kathleen, her four green fields, the stranger in her house. The Tinahely twelve. In the shadow of the glen he cooees for them. My soul's youth I gave him, night be night. Godspeed". With some omissions, it is a word-by-word quotation from "Scylla and Charybdis", the ninth episode in *Ulysses*.

politicians in Fine Gael had cause to be bitterly disappointed at the blighting of the bright hopes of 1954" (1989: 327); in a way, Myles's words can also be read as disappointment, given the extraordinary degree of coverage devoted to the Second Inter-Party Government upon their election.[64] Eventually, the resurgence of Fianna Fáil would paradoxically come to signify all that Myles had been clamoring for during the late 1940s and 1950s; that is, effective governmental and economic management lead by Lemass, who for the first time had the opportunity "to slaughter sacred cows, including some of his own breeding" (*ibid*: 334) through a sternly "straightforward materialistic approach" (Keogh 1994: 243) completely anathema to Irish political thought before 1958.

5.3.1 The First Programme for Economic Expansion

The First Programme for Economic Expansion was launched in November 1958. On November 12, the *Irish Times* featured an outline of a five-year government-sponsored plan with the "long-term objective [...] to double national income" (*IT,* November 12, 1958). Its success, the newspaper predicted, would "be measured by the emigration figures" (*ibid*). The results would take time to become apparent, but as Lee (1989: 359) contends, emigration rate fell "from an annual rate of 14.8 to 3.7" from 1961 to 1966. Suddenly, Ireland started to attract the attention of a number of international bodies concerned with European economy. One such body was the Economic Commission for Europe, which acknowledged Ireland's parity in terms of national income investment with respect to other European countries, but ruled that "[their] return on that investment was almost unbelievably bad" (Tobin 1984: 5). This would be reflected in the new government's attempts to halt the progress of the housing program, one of the Fianna Fáil staples since the 1930s, as well as on the promotion of a more sustainable and efficient civil service (Lee 1989: 364). It was precisely from the service, particularly from the Department of Finance, that T. K. Whitaker came to prominence. His publication in May 1958 of the survey *Economic Development* was followed by its immediate transmutation in November into the government White Paper known today as the First Programme for Economic Expansion.

[64] See pp. 217-26 for *Cruiskeen Lawn* and the onset of the Second Inter-Party Government.

Despite his resignation from the civil service in 1953, O'Nolan still remained administration-savvy and alert to the inner workings and innovations in what had been his job for almost twenty years. It is surprising for that reason to learn that O'Nolan, or Myles, had not mentioned Whitaker at all in *Cruiskeen Lawn*. In fact, in an *Irish Times* biographical profile, Frank McNally wittingly said of Whitaker that "he also dodged such potential pitfalls as becoming well known to a colleague named Brian Ó Nualláin, aka Myles na gCopaleen [...] and having [...] successfully avoided mention in *Cruiskeen Lawn*" (*IT,* September 26, 2015). Whitaker was, however, mentioned; at least indirectly. And while they were definitely not on friendly terms, O'Nolan and Whitaker knew of each other's existence. In her biography of Whitaker, Anne Chambers reproduces Whitaker's somewhat sour recollections of O'Nolan, Myles and *Cruiskeen Lawn*:

> His identity was 'an open secret', Ken recalls. I think there was a reaction of indulgent eyes to heaven, provided he didn't write something too outrageous. He did poke fun at the civil service but nobody took his satirical observations too seriously… He [O'Nolan] and I had some contact on a professional basis. I regarded him with a certain amount of caution… not wanting to feature in any of his entertaining satires'—and nor, he adds, with a twinkle, on reflection, would Ó Nualláin 'be the one I'd choose as private secretary'. (2014: 44)

The implications of Whitaker's statement for an analysis of *Cruiskeen Lawn* as a tool to satirize the Irish political milieu are profound. They solidly sustain O'Nolan's self-awareness as a danger to the civil service, as well as the influence and extent of his opinions in the column. However, his thoughts on the *Economic Development* and the Programme, while consistent with prior attempts to undermine government-sponsored planning policies, were neither abundant nor substantial. The publishing of the White Paper in November completely eluded Myles, who was absent from the pages of the *Irish Times* for the entire month.[65] Both

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[65] *Cruiskeen Catalogued* (2019) lists no entries from October 30, 1958, to December 3, 1958. Cronin notes that "in any event in 1958 his ability or his willingness to write the six columns a week that had latterly been his target seems to have vanished. Whole weeks, sometimes whole months, passed without *Cruiskeen Lawn* appearing in the *Irish Times*" (1990: 228).

December and January 1959, as well as the following months were devoted to discussing the upcoming presidential election and the referendum on proportional representation. Only two articles, published in February 21 and 23, respectively, included mention of Whitaker's initiative. The first opened with a staple critique of the many systems devised by Fianna Fáil to perpetuate bureaucracy and policy-making, that of the creation of "commissions":[66] "The procedure of government in force at present in the Eerie 26 countries is not benevolent government or even bad government: it is ungovernment or non-government. If an important and contentious matter arises calling for a Cabinet decision, such decision is not taken; a commission is set up to make 'recommendations'" (*CL,* February 21, 1959).[67] While for Myles the Programme might have been one such example, he was quick to jump to the defense of Whitaker's *Economic Development* when attacked by the former Minister for Finance, Gerard Sweetman:

> Another change in the apparatus of government has been noted in the *National Observer* by Mr. Gerard Sweetman, T.D., writing of the survey 'Economic Development' by the head clerk of the Dept. of Treasury. 'This is the first time—to my knowledge,— he says with dismay, 'that a public servant has publicly not merely reviewed the past, but also proposed policy for the future. The whole structure of government here is built upon the thesis that the civil servant has no party policies and serves, unprejudiced, every Government.'
>
> Quite. We should have *laissez aller* and *laissez faire* at Government level. (*Ibid*)

In a way, Sweetman's statement concerned O'Nolan directly, as the latter had been a civil servant loyally serving a government he did not approve of but attempting, by any possible means, to circumvent the Official Secrets Act in the interest of public opinion. Myles's defense of *Economic Development,* then, was purely ironic, silently subverting the Minister's

[66] See, for instance, Myles's take on the Commission on Vocational Organization in section 3.2.3.2.
[67] This is yet another instance of convergence with Lemass, who was skeptical of heavy reliance on external bodies and preferred instead a more centrist approach to policymaking (Lee 1989: 364-5).

continuation of economic protectionism during his tenure.[68] In fact, it had been Sweetman himself who had promoted Whitaker to Secretary General of the Department of Finance on the basis of merit rather than time served, and was now perhaps feeling betrayed by the close cooperation between Whitaker and the upper spheres of Fianna Fáil.

Two days later, Myles reapproached Whitaker and his Programme, both of which becoming the object of scathing criticism with the absence of Sweetman as target:

> A ghastly smirk steals o'ver my leonine countenance every time I see a pronouncement by the Eerie Department of Treasury on what the cost of living is or what is the value of the £. Clearly the figures are produced by peons nourished on wholesome stirabout in the bohanus of the craggy south-western peninsula, who thought smoking was what was practised by the hole in the roof of scraws and who were forbidden to wear their boots on any day except Sunday. The economic and fiscal structure of this State is based on the monachal austerity of those slobs. (*CL,* February 23, 1959)

Ignoring Whitaker's qualifications and meteoric ascension through the ranks of the service (Chambers 2014: 72), Myles likened him to the generic brand of "thooleramawns" and "gawshkogues" spawning from the countryside and comfortably settling into Dáil seats, possibly on account that the Programme was a close collaboration between Whitaker and the more revolutionary Fianna Fáil ministries of Finance (Ryan) and Industry and Commerce (Lemass). Myles's insult actually took a personal turn when he followed the previous comment with the following description: "Could we have a Commission on this problem of Civil Service clerks possessed of heavy-lensed glasses, hobnails, long combinations and no mind? We have here an alarming perversion of the Descartes precept: *Sum ergo cogito*" (*CL,* February 23, 1959). While it did not mention Whitaker by name, he was distinctly known to wear glasses and Myles had also previously referred to him as the "head clerk of the Dept. of Treasury".

[68] This was not the first instance that Myles criticized Sweetman's pronouncements on the civil service. See *CL,* August 4, 1956 (p. 236) for Myles's mockery of Sweetman's proposals for saving money in civil service affairs.

In a way, Myles had reason to suspect Whitaker's proposals: Whitaker was a prominent member of the civil service, an institution which Myles intimately knew and abhorred, and was intimately attuned to the panacean varieties of "planning" put forward by the different governments throughout the years. Furthermore, "Whitaker's programme was by no means left-wing" since it promoted "cheap labour, low corporate taxes and the removal of tariff barriers" (O'Toole 1999: 227-9). Myles was unlikely to react negatively to the more conservative elements espoused by the Programme, but he would have likely been critical of the inexistence of concessions to the unemployed. His critique must have also stemmed from Fianna Fáil's use of Whitaker's proposals as an example of electoral propaganda destined to secure de Valera's incumbency as President in the coming months and the party's success in the referendum. Indeed, as Bew and Patterson note: "That popular conception which sees the period as being purely due to an intellectual revolution which allowed the application of economic techniques long available elsewhere obscures vital elements of political strategy" (1982: 14). The Programme was not innovative in terms of economic policy; the solutions it proposed, essentially the main tenets of liberalism and a love song to free trade (Mercille and Murphy 2015), had long been tried elsewhere. It was simply a matter of Ireland jumping onto the boats that, as Lemass would famously term (Keogh 1994: 243), the rising tide would eventually and inevitably rise.

5.3.2 1959 presidential election and PR referendum

Predictably, the 1959 presidential election and de Valera's last push for a referendum to abolish Proportional Representation—a system which clearly hindered Fianna Fáil's hegemony—were perfect targets for the most biting branch of satire in the Mylesian canon. It has been well established throughout this dissertation that O'Nolan's sentiments toward de Valera bordered pure hatred and disgust,[69] and this was reflected in *Cruiskeen Lawn*, especially from the early 1950s onwards. There are few constants in the political discourse of the column, but one of them is Myles's conclusive and unambiguous rejection of the traditional Fianna Fáil policies symbolized in the figure of de Valera, who was now, at the

[69] See p. 127, among other examples.

age of 75, the ideal Fianna Fáil candidate for the presidency. The politician's range of influence during the mid to late 1950s, however, had waned considerably. As O'Toole writes, "de Valera's resignation had happened long before he resigned. He had become resigned to the failure of his policies and believed that there was nothing for his people to do but endure" (1999: 205). Myles was certainly consonant with this idea, as his article of February 5, 1957, proves.[70] Nevertheless, some people were not necessarily aware of this; or, if they were, refused to accept it: "Many felt that Fianna Fáil could not flourish without 'The Chief'. The party was so intimately identified with him that his departure might herald its electoral eclipse" (Lee 1989: 330). In a curious parallel to *Cruiskeen Lawn*'s popularity among the *Irish Times* audience, de Valera had managed to unyieldingly retain a strong ideological hegemony for a period of almost 25 years, an ideology which most parties in the Dáil respected and even supported.

The 1959 presidential election and the PR referendum were both held on June 17, 1959. Myles started his anti-de Valera campaign as early as December 1958. That year, as mentioned above, had not been prolific in terms of *Cruiskeen Lawn* publication, even less so in articles of a political nature. Throughout the debate on the presidential election and the referendum, Myles kept a consistent pace of publication in a clear-cut attempt to undermine the ongoing sanctification of de Valera in newspapers such as the *Irish Press,* the Fianna Fáil ideological organ and the object of controversy regarding the Taoiseach's role as shareholder. Myles's first onslaught occurred on December 2, and was followed the next day by Myles's most anti-Fianna Fáil diatribe to date:

> Well how do you like living in the same country as a character who is an amalgam of Stalin, Mao Tse-tung, Ibsen, and… Rasputin?
>
> —*I don't quite understand.*
>
> —You have surely heard of the plan to abolish P.R. so that Feena Fayl will be affixed as a permanent blight on this people? Does than mean nothing to you? Does alien dictatorship mean nothing to you? Ah, smug, comatose thooleramawn! Read the *Irish*

[70] See pp. 246-7 for a detailed analysis of the article.

> *Times* to-morrow and read about a virus more deadly than the influenza lad. (*CL,* December 2, 1958)

Even if de Valera was not mentioned by name, it became evident that Myles was referring to the Taoiseach in likening this "character" with Stalin and Mao Tse-tung (dictators) and Rasputin (a self-appointed mystic and peasant). It was not the first time that Myles suggested the presence of dictatorial elements in de Valera's unnatural hold on power, nor the only instance when he remarked the Taoiseach's rural origins.[71] The reference to Henrik Ibsen is definitely more obscure; it could be tangentially linked to the writer's perceived foreignism (Marker and Marker 1980), as his origins were Danish and German rather than Norwegian. As will be seen in subsequent articles, Myles displayed a certain degree of distaste—which would nowadays likely pass as textbook xenophobia—toward the idea that de Valera, born in the United States to an Irish emigreé and a Spanish father, could be appointed President of Ireland.[72]

On the next day, Myles's premeditated attack on de Valera, Fianna Fáil and the PR referendum became public. There had been few fully-fledged criticisms of a particular political party or politician up until this point in time. What follows is undoubtedly a clear-cut example of candidness and frankness in Myles's political analysis:

> The plan to abolish P.R. is as low and sinister a thing as has ever been projected by the Feena Fayl or Gurrier Party. The scheme is more complicated than may at first appear, and the objectives may be stated thus:—
>
> 1. To disfranchise [sic] completely the Protestant and other minority groups.
>
> 2. To exterminate the Labour Party.

[71] See, for instance, p. 129 and p. 180, respectively.

[72] Neither the original text of the Constitution nor the updated version stipulate the need for the President of Ireland of having been born in the country. Article 12.4.1 states that "every citizen who has reached his thirty-fifth year of age is eligible for election to the office of President".

> 3. To drive out of public life such men as Dr. Browne and Sean MacBride because they are educated and decent and have the courage to speak the truth.
>
> 4. To 'fix' the impending vacancy above in the Park.
>
> 5. To perpetuate the ghastly structure of graft and jobbery which the Gurrier Party has so sedulously erected over the years.
>
> 6. To bamboozle once again the fuddled congregation referred to as 'de peepil.' (*CL,* December 3, 1958)

As intellectual guardian of the Plain People of Ireland, Myles felt driven to deconstruct the inner workings and designs of the referendum. Indeed, he had referenced in previous articles how the populace was unlikely to comprehend the full extent of the Irish voting system;[73] as such, they would be equally unable to see through de Valera's plan and understand the implications of a "first-past-the-post" system. While his passionate defense of Browne and MacBride feels forced and opportunistic, especially given his mercilessness toward MacBride in the past,[74] other points of contention demand our attention. As in the previous article, Myles made use of the occasion to attack de Valera directly: the fourth objective unambiguously suggested that the referendum was also devised to distract voters from the presidential election, and the sixth was point-blank mockery of de Valera's accent.[75] The fifth point is equally relevant, as it laid bare the existence of a set of sub-structures of government, especially in rural areas and County Councils, controlled by Fianna Fáil. Lee follows Myles in his consideration of de Valera's political reign: "The man who urged the Supreme Council of Sinn Féin in 1917 to [...] 'taboo the chicanery, the intrigues and the cliques which are the characteristics of modern party machined politics', came in due course to preside over the most professional machine Irish politics had yet seen, its multiple 'mafias' flourishing under the benignly blind gaze of the Incorruptible" (Lee 1989: 332). On a later date, Myles would accuse the party of corruption: "For my own part I could not vote for the Feena Fayl party

[73] See, for example, *CL,* May 22, 1954 and March 2, 1961.
[74] See p. 238.
[75] See *CL,* September 7, 1961: "The remarks of a senior politician have, over 55 years, been punctuated by references to 'our peeepil' and 'de nayshin'. Them words and names, I hold, mean nothing at all. Usually they evoke hand-clapping and cheers".

because I know it to be a corrupt organisation infested by scoundrels and half-wits" (*CL,* December 5, 1958).

Fianna Fáil would henceforth be known in *Cruiskeen Lawn* as the "Gurrier Party", Irish slang for corner-boy or hooligan. It was not to be the only insult uttered by Myles in the column to describe the members of the party, however. Later in the column he expanded, rather generally, on the Fianna Fáil substrata in the country: "let nobody think that the Gurrier Party is just a collection of uneducated Ministers grossly mismanaging public affairs. The party has its stooges, toe-rags, ward-heelers, fixers, jobberers, guts and gusterers [sic] in every nook and cranny up and down the country" (*CL,* December 3, 1958).[76] The article also referred to the PR referendum as a "deverendum" (on March 2 he would coin the term "devocracy") and claimed that, if successful, it would cause Fianna Fáil to perpetuate their "gigantic gerrymander in the new constituencies", arriving at the conclusion that de Valera's aim was none other than "that the Feena Fayl Gurrier junta must have permanent hegemony here and that government by any other group should be impossible, if not indeed illegal" (*ibid*). Opposition politicians and intellectuals, Myles included, interpreted de Valera's referendum as "a cynical attempt to copperfasten their majority" (Foster 1989: 574). In the Dáil debate of November 26, 1958, de Valera canvassed the PR referendum as an honest attempt to stabilize a political system in a constant state of flux: "speaking in the light of experience, those countries which have most successfully built up democratic institutions are the countries in which there is a single non-transferable vote [...]. The proportional representation system has a disintegrating tendency [which] will lead to multiplicity of parties" (Moynihan 1980: 591-3). In reality, as Fanning suggests, "he did not say so explicitly but his thinking was obviously prompted by the rise of Sinn Féin" (2015: 242). In an article published a few days later, Myles redirected the attention of his readership to de Valera's hypocrisy in terms of his mandates for the Constitution: "Mr. de Valera is the author of the fetid document known as the Constitution. In it he provided for P.R. and asked the people to approve. They did approve. Now he says they were all wrong and that they must disapprove. Apparently he has looked into his heart again [...]. But can you beat it for sheer cheek?" (*CL,*

[76] Richard Dunphy's seminal *The Making of Fianna Fáil Power in Ireland 1923–1948* (1995) looks at the microstructures of power erected by Fianna Fáil in different areas of the country and links part of its ideological success to the party's close connection to the church. See also Allen (1997) and Whelan (2011) for further insight into Fianna Fáil's organizational system.

December 5, 1958). Explaining again the effects that the abolition of PR would entail, he declared his intention not to vote for Fianna Fáil or Fine Gael, whom he dubbed as "The Wiggy-Wiggies" and its members "futile little bags, full of solemn blether [sic] and behaving remarkably like a character out of an *opéra bouffe* or pantomime" (*ibid*). These were likely references to Costello and Dillon, the latter being a favorite of Myles when it came to criticizing pretentiousness and excessive mellifluousness in the Dáil (Cronin 1990: 128).

In the meantime, Myles temporarily shifted his attention to the presidential election. On December 3, asking his readers "Who is next for the Park?" he put forward the names of the possible candidates—Aiken,[77] Mac Eoin, McCartan and de Valera—of which only de Valera and Mac Eoin would go forward. Myles made no mention of any of the candidates except de Valera, who was insinuated to be an "ego-obsessed politician" whose presidential events would look as follows: "Now wouldn't that last be grand? Think of the gay garden parties, the dinners, the card schools, and the flunkeys going in and out with trays of glasses full of usquebaugh,[78] with the Gaelic cods turning up in kilts, myself inside in the kitchen putting the comether on the cook! Now *that* would be a Nation Once Again all right!" (*CL,* December 4, 1958). The article finished with Myles's canvassing of Behan as the most optimal candidate for the presidency on the grounds that he had "the ultimate qualification: he has been in jail!" (*ibid*). A later article pushed his criticism of de Valera's Gaelic idyll to the financial sphere, raising claims against the President-to-be which highlighted his hypocrisy and undercut his well-known aura of frugality:

> I wonder can a successful politician be a tycoon? Mr. de Valera is a politician, very wealthy, and aims to be Viceroy (*vice* himself, by dad!) above in the Park, where industrious workmen are now spending £50,000 on the Lodge to make it worthy of a new and frugal incumbent. Is Mr. de Valera a tycoon? *Tai-seach* and *Tai-koon* are really not so far apart. Moreover, the Irish word *con* means 'pure, clean,' or so Dinneen alleges. *Tá-con* would mean 'he is pure, clean.' I suppose we would need another

[77] O'Nolan disliked Aiken almost as much as de Valera. In a September 6, 1958, letter which criticized Hogan's writings (p. 83), O'Nolan attributed Hogan's turpitude to being Aiken's subordinate: "His ministerial boss is Frank Aiken. I suppose that might excuse occasional dementia" (2018: 228).
[78] Whiskey.

> constitution-amendment to make that change. Perhaps the Lodge might be called the *Tycheion,*[79] a Greek word meaning Temple of Fortune. (*CL,* March 3, 1959)

Punning, as Hopper (2009: 31-3) reminds us, is central to *Cruiskeen Lawn,* not only in the Keats and Chapman stories, but also in the column as a whole. This fragment is an example of Myles's use of the pun as a subversive linguistic device in the line of the different strategies employed by him to circumvent the censors during the Emergency.[80] Not only did he undermine de Valera's self-appointed status as a frugal role model but he also managed to introduce the word "con" into the mix, which in informal English means "convict" as a noun or "swindle, scam or deceive" as a verb. In applying the word "tycoon" to de Valera, Myles was simultaneously referencing his US origins and comparing him to business magnates of the size of John D. Rockerfeller or Henry Ford on account of his ownership of Ireland's second largest newspaper chain.[81]

Myles concluded his commentary on the presidential election and the PR debate with the suggestion that if de Valera "is allowed to compete, then we seem to have, subject only to the minimum age condition, a possible selection of Presidents from an enormous *bloc* of the total population of the earth" (*CL,* April 11, 1959) owing to de Valera's USA origins. Even if abandoned abruptly, the articles discussed in the present subsection compose a panoramic view of Myles's negative thoughts on de Valera's election as President of Ireland and on his referendum. Specifically, the article dating from December 3, 1958, is undoubtedly germane to the idea, discussed in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, that Myles's writing is intrinsically intertwined with political and ideological developments, with *Cruiskeen Lawn* standing as a platform from which to challenge and denounce the political status quo erected and maintained by the Irish political class in order to support the hegemony

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[79] The Tycheion is a Greek temple in Apamea, Syria. The word *Tycheion* refers in ancient Greek to a place associated with luck, thus being an example of free translation on the part of Myles.

[80] See chapter 3, with a special emphasis on sections 3.2.1 and 3.2.2.

[81] Keogh has suggested that "de Valera did not leave politics a rich man. He was austere in his personal lifestyle and he expected high standards from members of his party" (1994: 241). It is difficult to estimate de Valera's exact net worth, but based on Myles's claims and the fact that the *Irish Press* was worth nearly £1 million towards the end of 1958 (Fanning 2015: 245), it is highly unlikely that the Taoiseach turned President was not as wealthy as Myles painted him.

of Fianna Fáil's ideology and policies. Myles's claims that the Taoiseach was using the referendum as a means to counteract the "irritating unreliability [...] displayed, from a party strategist's perspective" (Lee 1989: 330) by the public can also be read as an example of the Taoiseach's tactical handling of state apparatuses to satisfy an ideological necessity. The presidential and PR debate, more than any other political episode in the column, shed incriminating light on the figure of de Valera, depicted in dictatorial terms as the pinnacle of gerontocracy. Indeed, De Valera's biographer has recounted his last words as Taoiseach, uttered upon becoming President and leaving what had been his office for the better part of 25 years: "It's awfully hard to leave the levers of power" (Fanning 2015: 245).

5.3.3 The Lemass era

Lee reflects that "it was only through mastering the economic problems of emigration and unemployment that de Valera could hope to build a viable society, Gaelic or otherwise" (Lee 1989: 333). The general consensus among historians and academics is that, regardless of the illusion of economic stability, de Valera utterly failed to master either problem, nor was he able to eradicate the State's lifelong nemesis: partition. Myles surely agreed on this. The ascension of Lemass to the Irish political throne, therefore, would arguably offer solid ground to prompt Myles to revise and revisit his own preconceived ideas on Irish politics inasmuch as de Valera, a symbol of the country's recent (Civil War) and remote (Gaelic Ireland) pasts, had now moved on to the Presidency, an office entirely devoid of political agency. A surprisingly sympathetic Portrait Gallery in the *Irish Times* published on the inauguration of Lemass as Taoiseach highlighted a number of his most positive features:

> Dark, with sallow complexion, he has a quick, winning sympathetic smile and an easy relaxed charm of personality that hides the dynamism of the man at first glance. Quick as lightning to grasp and idea, to expand it and to implement it, he also has the gift of sensing the central core in any problem in seconds. He is a glutton for work, never spares himself and seldom rests [...]. In the Dail his policy speeches are uncommonly intellectual and consistent [...]. The biggest task of his life is now before him, and on

> that he will be judged by history. It is said he respects the past, lives for the present and plans for the future. (*IT,* June 27, 1959)

Such a grandiloquent profile was unlikely to impress Myles, but it was certainly a renewed response to all he had been clamoring for in Irish politics for the better part of twenty years: education,[82] efficiency, intelligence and lack of sentimentality. Ferriter has emphasized the new leader's qualities as opposed to the party's old stereotypes: "Superficiality and sentimentality were, at the same time, being quickly discarded by Fianna Fáil under the leadership of Lemass, who in his call for an upsurge in patriotism in his first speech as leader had meant [...] a serious coordination, elaboration and enlightenment in policy outlook and economic performance" (2005: 556). As will be seen in the pages that follow, Myles was, for the most part, unsatisfied with the two subsequent Lemass governments for a number of reasons to be explored later. Suffice it to say that Lemass, upon entering government, was unable to overcome the heavy presence of the Fianna Fáil hierarchy. As Keogh puts it: "As instinctive Keynesian, Lemass would like to have made radical changes in his first cabinet. The emphasis, he decided for the moment, had to be on continuity [...]. Lemass had erred on the side of caution in his selection of ministers" (1994: 245).

This was to be the first point of contention in Myles's rhetoric against the Lemass Administration. A month after Lemass's election as Taoiseach, Myles offered his own profile of the man, referred to as being "a holy terror in a game of poker",[83] having "never written a play" and a man who "can't sing [and] drinks not at all" (*CL,* July 18, 1959). However, he also acknowledged that "the present Taoiseach is a man of considerable sort of mercantile talent" (*ibid*) in reference to his ample experience as Minister for Industry and Commerce. His cabinet was another thing entirely. Upon Lemass's election, as on previous occasions, Myles reminded the Taoiseach of his willingness to help in smoothing out his political

[82] Lemass had no university education, an essential credential for Mylesian approval. However, John Horgan (1999), reiterates Lemass's exceptional ability with numbers from an early age. Bew and Patterson (1982: 9) have also gathered accounts of people's awareness of Lemass's possession of "unusual qualities" in an Irish politician.

[83] See Evans (2011). Lemass was renowned for his prowess as a poker player. This was a remarkable attribute, similar to Costello's legal background, which Myles was bound to exploit comically: "Mr. Lemass is 62, though he is a very well-preserved man, probably because he drinks next to nothing and plays only poker" (*CL,* June 29, 1961).

adventure. One of the items in Myles's agenda, as always, was the appointment of ministerial positions:

> Some Feena Fayl persons have never been fit for Cabinet office on grounds of deficiency in education and ability. But there are other grounds, not necessarily culpable. Here I mention Messrs MacEntee and Traynor.[84] In a month or two Mr. MacEntee will be 70. That is the full age beyond which useful service cannot reasonably be expected. Mr. Traynor is over 72. Both gentlemen should now accept honourable retirement. (*CL,* June 27, 1959)

He would reinforce this point in a later column: "Lemass, as Taoiseach, should sack at least half of his present Ministers, since they lack ministerial status and are persons destitute of attainment. Some suffer from senility or *dementia praecox*" (*CL,* July 18, 1959). Even though Myles admittedly paid excessive attention to front-line appointments and seemed to ignore Lemass's innovations behind the scenes[85]—Lee (1989: 361) underlines important changes made to Education, which resulted in an improvement on teacher/pupil ratios and number of enrolled students—he had reason to suspect a Taoiseach who would be described by *Time* magazine as a "New Spirit in the Ould Sod".[86] For Myles, Lemass was a central component of the Fianna Fáil party which he had come to hate over the past thirty years, and his treatment of him indicates that he saw in the new Taoiseach much of de Valera's baggage, both in terms of Ministers and also in institutional management, for Myles had previously demonstrated opposition to many of Lemass's flagship policies, such as the creation of state companies or the promotion of foreign investment:

[84] Oscar Traynor (1886-1963, Fianna Fáil) was Minister for Posts and Telegraphs (1936-9), Minister for Defence (1939-48, 1951-4) and Minister for Justice (1957-61). He retired in 1961 on the grounds of ill age, and was succeeded by Charles Haughey (1925-2006, Fianna Fáil), Lemass's son-in-law and future Taoiseach (1979-81, 1982, 1987-92).

[85] As Garvin (2010: 59) indicates, "Lemass was eager to attract to Fianna Fáil people of talent who were not of his own political tradition". One such example was Garret Fitzgerald, future Fine Gael Taoiseach.

[86] See cover of *Time,* July 12, 1963 (Vol. 82, No. 2).

> Here the Feena Fayl Party, an amalgam of conservative, uneducated and gurrier elements, has gone substantially further than the British semi-Red Labour Party—not so much by nationalising private business concerns as by founding State corporations *de novo*. The Turf Board, the E.S.B., Aer Lingus, the Sugar Company, Boord Fawlthah,[87] and even greyhound racing are examples. A modification—or expansion?—of this attitude is seen in the sale of fancy terms to aliens of indigenous industrial potentials such as oil and copper deposits, ship building and repair, and allied to this are other devices such as massive State subsidies on the export of butter, causing the home consumer to pay more for Irish butter than does the Englishman, and find the money for the subsidy as well.
>
> The techniques have been evolved by shopboys and peasants who cannot, by any elasticity of terminology, be called businessmen or have any true notion of what the science of sound business involves. (*CL,* March 3, 1959)

This article, published a few months before Lemass's appointment as Taoiseach, was likely directed at him, as the companies mentioned were promoted internally by Lemass as Minister for Industry and Commerce, coupled with the reference to "shopboys" (Lemass's family owned a hat shop where he started working from a young age). Myles's remarks are actually fundamental in understanding Lemass's political ideology and strategy, which went far beyond a simple do-gooder desire to expand services. Evans writes that "Lemass's logic was not solely to develop state enterprise to build up infrastructure for private capital [...]. The Minister for Industry and Commerce used the power of the state not only in a nurturing capacity but also, as he saw it, as a radical interventionist force" (Evans 2011: 135). This developed into what Myles saw as an inherent nepotism, not only in Fianna Fáil as a political party but also in Lemass himself. *Cruiskeen Lawn* frequently featured articles on the "so-called Semi-State companies" which were, in essence, "branches of the Civil Service but are not subject in their financial structure or behaviour to the scrutiny of the Committee of Public Accounts. They can do what they like and, above all, appoint whom they like to lucrative positions on their payroll" (*CL,* August 11, 1959).

[87] Bord Fáilte, the national tourism organization. Nowadays it has been rebranded as Fáilte Ireland.

In this regard, the Lemass era is also significant within the *Cruiskeen Lawn* political canon in that Mylesian attitudes to the politician, which so far had ranged from indifference and passivity toward a mixture of despondency and vitriol, now began to include a new component or profile which magnified slowly as the 1960s went on: that of the conspiracy theorist. As affirmed in the previous column: “This whole theme is evil and mysterious, for it means there is a country-wide conspiracy against him whom we may call the common man” (*ibid*). In other words, Myles was cautioning the Plain People of Ireland against being lured by the prospect of political change; as in the case of Costello, a radical change in leadership did not necessarily imply an upsurge of effective and benevolent management. This is yet one of a number of examples of “the bitterness of the later columns” (Young 1999: 115), and one of Myles’s occasional fits of megalomania as self-appointed custodian of the Plain People of Ireland: in detecting and denouncing the backstairs chicanery of the Lemass public conglomerate, “Myles does more than speak for Ireland: Myles becomes Ireland” (McNamara 2012: 36). Interestingly, then, Myles’s initial thoughts of the change in government did not dramatically vary in tone and content. There were, at least so far, no overt assaults on Lemass’s name, but his Ministers were incessantly lambasted and ridiculed, while Lemass’s state corporations were jeered at and suspected of more than ever. However, while Myles’s critique raged on, before the 1961 general election the new Taoiseach had already managed to promote a renewed Anglo-Irish Trade Pact, expedite the foundation of the Economic and Research Institute in July 1960, achieve a reduction in unemployment and kickstart negotiations for Ireland’s entry into the EEC. It remains to be seen whether Myles would acknowledge and appraise Lemass’s achievements during the 1961 and 1965 general elections.

5.3.3.1 1961 general election

Both the 1961 and 1965 general elections were scrutinized by Myles to a greater or lesser degree in the style of previous polls. However, commentary of both political events was particularly set against, and determined by, O’Nolan’s personal background which, as seen in section 2.5.3 of this dissertation, was beginning to take a turn for the worse:

> Now he found subjects more difficult than ever to come by, perhaps in truth because he cared about fewer things or was moved less often to protest or reproof. It is possible also that the more liberal and sophisticated Ireland which was beginning to emerge in the 1960s had less fundamental appeal for him as a humorist than the one which had preceded it. Subjects for satire still abounded, but he had been more at home among the earlier varieties of 'thooleramawn' or 'gawshkogue' than he was now among the later. To most readers he had appeared even angrier than he had been, but the new Ireland did not move him to the curious mixture of anger and a sort of affection which is the primary emotion of the satirist (Cronin 1990: 258)

Bearing in mind Cronin's testimony, reading the political articles of the 1960s as generic in nature and uninspired in tone becomes plausible. Much of the material, in a way, captured "a view of Ireland in light of its political and cultural capital, Dublin, a capital city that retained a small-town ambience of narrow-mindedness expressed via gossip and rumor" (McNamara 2012: 38). The problem was that, unlike in the past, detecting the presence of a well-formed and contrasted opinion from the early 1960s becomes problematic at best. Politically, many of the articles fed on what by now had become quintessential Mylesian tropes (the inadequacy of democracy and the voting system, political gerontocracy, denunciation of nepotism, corruption and peasantry, personalized attacks against particular politicians) and come dangerously close to materializing "the unavoidable subservience of the authorized funnyman" as a waste of Myles's "potential as a truly subversive writer" (Coulouma 2011: 162).

All the above is exemplified by Myles's first take on the 1961 general election, which was held on October 4. He quickly preempted Fianna Fáil's de Valerean tradition of holding snap elections when in doubt of a positive outcome: "A general election is due next year at the latest but the Feeny Fayl Party is already so thoroughly alarmed at losing office that they may rush an election sooner in the belief that opponents will be taken off their guard" (*CL,* February 3, 1961). Even if these thoughts acutely pinpointed the party's desire for absolute hegemony after the fluctuant 1950s, Myles quickly resorted to previously used arguments:

> A certain unwholesome technique or tradition of electioneering has grown up in this country whereby the electorate is implored to vote for *a party,* headed by some self-appointed great white chief, with no indication as to who the Ministers or Government will actually be. When it is too late, the names of ignoramuses and black guards are calmly announced as constituting the Government [...]. My own idea would be to forget completely about Fyn Gayl and the utterly futile Labour Party and simply present a panel of accomplished persons for election *as a Government.* (*Ibid*)

This argument collated his hackneyed judgments on the invalidity of the Irish electoral system, the appointment of inexperienced or inept ministers and his customary abuse of the Labour Party. In a similar fashion, he had already lambasted James Ryan, the then Minister for Finance, prior to the election: "Dr. Ryan [...] should not be blamed, for musha—God bless him—that poor man knows nothing at all about public finance" (*CL,* February 2, 1961). Other victims were the Minister for Posts and Telegraphs, Michael Hilliard,[88] of whom Myles remarked his "dereliction of duty" and reminded him, in the form of an ultimately inaccurate prediction, that "not much time remains for him to wake up, for the Feeny Fayl party will not form the next Government" (*CL,* February 14, 1961). MacEntee was, too, the object of increasing criticism, as he devoted an entire article (*CL,* June 29, 1961) to undermining his role as Minister for Health on the grounds that he failed to communicate effectively with the Irish Medical Association. He also observed that while MacEntee displayed "most agreeable personal manners [...]; public manners is another matter, and members of Dáil Eireann will not be unfamiliar with his capacity for a tornado of abuse" (*ibid*). In fact, aversion to anything or anyone closely related to Fianna Fáil became almost a hallmark of the column during the Lemass era. Earlier in the year he had responded to a review of *The Story of Fianna Fáil: First Phase* (1961),[89] an anonymous book published by the party with the aim of dismissing the ideas of corruption and graft associated by many to the party. Myles unsparingly described the book as "a farrago of distortions, concealments, half-lies, downright lies and

[88] Michael Hilliard (1903-82, Fianna Fáil) was Minister for Posts and Telegraphs (1959-65) and Minister for Defence (1965-9). He was also a Member of the European Parliament for Ireland on the occasion of Ireland's entry into the EEC in 1973.

[89] The review, signed by P. MacA. and entitled "Party Manners", appeared in the *Irish Times* on February 18, 1961.

quite exceptional achievement in the science of *suppressio veri*.[90] (The L. word *suppressio*, by the way, also means embezzlement.) This book, clearly intended as electioneering pap, goes far beyond other items of what I call Feeny Fayl devotional literature" (*CL,* February 27, 1961). Three days prior to these comments he had returned to the Civil War, this time around placing the blame almost entirely on Fianna Fáil, as he saw in the ongoing pre-election strikes the possibility of "the annihilation of the State, such as was attempted in 1922 with guns by the Feeny Fayl junta" (*CL,* February 24, 1961).

There were still a number of ingenious and penetrating comments in terms of party ideology, though. One such example was an article, published on February 23, titled "Mislabels":[91]

> Years ago, possibly just after 1916, the country was treated to a massive enseánment. A great number of Johns just vanished: a prominent example is that of John Francis MacEntee, the sacred poet, who became Sean MacEntee, the politician. The true name of a person, legally and otherwise, is the name he was christened. The ironical [sic] thing is that the name Séan and Seon are in nearly all literary use jeering titles [...]. Is the seánity of Lemass real or phoney? I cannot say but I suspect it.[92] The correct name of Mr. De Valera senior is Edward, not Eamon. (*CL*)

The playfulness and intricacies of this fragment will not be lost on any O'Nolan reader, as the author himself was prone to deliberately obscure his own name in the interest of literary anonymity and intellectual appropriation. Most Fianna Fáil (and some Fine Gael) politicians intentionally rendered their names into Irish as a means to homogenize their public image and their ideology: if they were seeking the constitution of a Gaelic Ireland, they had to use Gaelic-sounding names as founding fathers to sustain a consistent ideology. Incidentally, the

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[90] Latin for "suppression of truth".

[91] *CL,* October 3, 1961 was also devoted to the "enseánment" phenomenon. Myles argued that candidates who were not using their birth names were contesting the general election illegally, thus offering sufficient grounds for cancelling the proceedings.

[92] Myles's suspicions were actually on target: Seán Lemass was born John Francis Lemass and declared preference for the name "Seán" after the Rising.

politics of naming is central in O'Nolan's work, both as O'Brien and Myles.[93] Coulouma has remarked of O'Nolan's writings that they stand as "a forceful answer from the periphery to the colonial centre" (2015: 171). Criticizing the renaming of politicians to discard colonial authority, in a way, could also be read as "a forceful answer from the periphery" in its deconstruction of the uninformed and politically motivated reasons for doing so. O'Nolan's pseudonyms performed a "role in the struggle internal to the cultural field" (Crowley 2017: 135) and, as such, he saw through the dishonesty and instrumentalism of the politicians with respect to said cultural field, thus reflecting the *An Béal Bocht* Gaelic Leaguers and their parasitic interest in the Irish language who, "upon arrival in the Gaeltacht, they abandoned their original names and instead made up more ideal names, projecting a more perfected vision of themselves" (Beatty 2019: 44). In a similar fashion, Myles censured the 1961 Spring Show, sponsored by the Royal Dublin Society, as presenting a misleading and wishful image of Irish agriculture.[94]

Questions of political influence through state companies were revived once again in the light of Lemass's contest in the election. Myles blamed him for the February bus strikes for the reason that "he put all public transport under C.I.E. thus ensuring that any local or provincial strike would be countrywide. One actual result has been that Dublin bus fares are extortionately high and show a large profit" (*CL,* February 24, 1961). Some days later, he criticized political nepotism in Fianna Fáil by wondering

> what would happen if Mr. McQuillan, T.D.,[95] were to ask the Taoiseach [...] how many persons since 1932 related by blood or marriage to Feeny Fayl Ministers, Parliamentary Secretaries or other party members were quartered *sub rosa* on the taxpayer either directly or on the staff of the 21 or so State companies. I predict that Mr. Lemass, on rising, would preface his reply with a blush. (*CL,* February 27, 1961)

[93] See the anonymity of the main characters in *At Swim-Two-Birds* and *The Third Policeman* or the uniformity of identity enforced by Osborne O'Loonassa, the master in *The Poor Mouth,* among plenty of other examples. See also Meyer (2010), Oţoiu (2011a, 2011b), Laurenti (2017) or Crowley (2017).

[94] See *CL,* May 1 and 2, 1961.

[95] John McQuillan (1920-98, Clann na Poblachta, Independent, National Progressive Democrats) was a Clann na Poblachta TD from 1948 to 1951, and an independent TD from 1951 to 1957. In 1958 he joined Noël Browne's National Progressive Democrats and remained a leader until 1963. McQuillan was known to be an inquisitive TD in the Dáil.

On the eve of the election, he went on to define politics as "the science of getting [...] sons, nephews, brothers, uncles and hanger-on a job in the Board of Works, the E.S.B., C.I.E., the Turf Board, the Sugar Co, or any other body having a connexion with State funds" (*CL,* October 4, 1961).[96] Dullness of commentary was not simply restricted to Myles. The renewal of the economy was likewise a burning issue which did not feature much in the election or *Cruiskeen Lawn.* Lemass had described the country as "an aeroplane taking off: it has become airborne at the stage of maximum risk and failure could lead to a crash" (*IT,* August 3, 1961). The 1961 general election was actually described by Quidnunc in *An Irishman's Diary* as "The Quiet Election" (*IT,* September 27, 1961), even if the situation demanded a higher degree of political engagement, taking into account the question of Ireland's entry into the EEC. As Keogh intelligently notes, "[n]either the gravity of the international situation nor the quest for membership of the EEC dominated the campaign speeches" (Keogh 1994: 247). Myles's only pronouncement on EEC membership was, again, an attack on Lemass; this time, paradoxically enough, the Taoiseach's hallmark urbanity was his target. In attempts to garner support for EEC policy, Lemass spoke in late July of how "energetic hard-working farmers are entitled to be able to earn standards of living comparable to those of urban populations" (*IT,* July 24, 1961), which would be made possible by participation in a wider economic area such as Europe. In an inversion of his traditional mockery of all things rural, Myles sprang to the defense of an archetypical Corkonian encouraged by Lemass and the EEC to modernize his lifestyle:

> I don't know what the European Economic Community can know about Paudrig Crohoore, the bodagh[97] in the County Cork who furnishes myself with a saddle of mutton to accompany my claret on Sunday evenings. But both Mr. Lemass and E.E.C. are comically mistaken if they imagine that Mr. Crohoore craves 'urban standards'. If anybody were to attempt to *impose* urban standards on him, be sure he would put his

[96] And again on September 19: "No Festival or other drollery should be allowed to impede the carrying out by de peepil of its sacred trust, which is that of lurrying up the back stairs and into jobs on the back of the taxpayer of a fresh horde of Feeny Fayl chums, pennyboys, patriots, gawskogues, guramagahuts and relatives matrimonious, consanguineous, collateral and race-meeting" (*CL,* September 19, 1961).

[97] An old peasant. In Gaelic Folklore, it is also used to designate a conman or trickster.

> hand up the chimney and haul down the pike. Mr. Lemass has never lived down the country, and knows nothing about rural life. How then can he discuss the magical bucolic *milieu* without being clownish? (*CL,* July 28, 1961)

Tongue-in-cheek as the comments were, they also served as a reminder that Lemass was a proud inheritor to "the magical bucolic *milieu*" of which Fianna Fáil was so fond. As Long has put it, Myles's works reveal how "'real' Ireland is populated by inauthentic character types, as many of these clichés are, to various degrees, lived realities" (2017b: 53). That Fianna Fáil was now attempting to deconstruct for the common good the stereotypes they had helped construct for 30 years was felt by Myles as paradoxical. He had traditionally downplayed the party's ideology, but the 1961 general election was one in which he launched his sternest attacks. A month before the election, for instance, he denounced de Valera's political use of the English language as void and meaninglessness: "The remarks of a senior politician have, over 55 years, been punctuated by references to 'our peeepil' and 'de nayshin'. Them words and names, I hold, mean nothing at all. Usually they evoke hand-clapping and cheers" (*CL,* September 7, 1961). He was also perceptive of the dramatic quality of Irish politics and suggested a production of *Hamlet* with Fianna Fáil actors. Hamlet would be played by Lemass, who "bears the saturnine aspect of tragic woe, and has a natural aptitude for striking an attitude" whereas Polonius would be MacEntee, "for of silly portentous talk, that gentleman from the wee North is a Master" (*CL,* September 19, 1961).

No *Cruiskeen Lawn* columns of political interest appeared until the conclusion of the election. Fine Gael and Labour increased their seat count (47 and 16, respectively) to the detriment of Fianna Fáil, who lost 7 seats owing to CIE and ESB strikes in February and August, respectively. They nevertheless managed to retain 70 seats which, with the consent of two independents to form a government on October 11, made it possible for Lemass to seek a second term for Fianna Fáil. Myles's response to the success of Fianna Fáil in retaining power was characteristically unenthusiastic and illustrated once again the taint of institutional xenophobia that he had branded de Valera in the past:

> Nothing in the foregoing, of course, should be taken as expressing my respect for the Dail. The new Government announced over a week ago is a queer bunch. I would think long before employing one of them as a butler at my house in Santry.
>
> And what have we? There are twelve fully-fledged Ministers and a swarm of Parliamentary Secretaries, each man-jack with a buckshee limousine [...]. If this Upper House is to be continued, membership should be confined to persons of Irish birth who have attained international distinction, and they should have power devising legislation. And they should not be paid. (*CL,* October 25, 1961)

5.3.3.2 John F. Kennedy and the visit to Ireland

John Fitzgerald Kennedy, formerly Democrat Senator from Massachusetts (1953-60), was elected President of the United States on January 20, 1961. Kennedy epitomized a "New Generation" (Burner 1988) in American politics and civil society, one freed from the shadows of the Second World War—symbolized by Kennedy's predecessor, Dwight D. Eisenhower[98]—and unhesitant to look into the future. His importance in Ireland was paramount, as his paternal and maternal family were both of emigrant Irish background. As specified previously, Kennedy was also revered in Ireland on account of his Catholicism: gallant and successful, he "provided an astonishing image of Irish Catholic success in the modern world" (O'Toole 1999: 230). Kennedy is to date the only Roman Catholic President in the history of the United States. His Irishness and amiable foreign relations policies offered Ireland a political opportunity to reconnect with the United States on a number of levels: diplomatically, Kennedy's visit could help to improve on Irish-American relations;[99] economically, American influence on Irish economic thinking made "possible to believe that the Lemass tide would raise all boats" (Keogh 1994: 252); and, culturally, Kennedy

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[98] Dwight David "Ike" Eisenhower (1890-1969, Republican) was the 34th President of the United States from 1953 to 1961. Eisenhower was a war hero, having overseen American intervention in Europe during the Second World War.

[99] A CIE briefing report purporting to inform the President of the state of Irish domestic and foreign affairs prior to his visit described "Ireland as a very friendly, pro-American country which the US president could visit with little risk to his safety" (Keogh 1994: 251). This was due to a number of factors among which a growing similar economic temperament, an ongoing rejuvenation of politics and strong anti-communist credentials stood out.

embodied the successful yearnings and aspirations of those who had left the island out of economic necessity from the Famine onwards in search for a better life in America.

His importance for O'Nolan, Myles and *Cruiskeen Lawn* is also justified for several reasons. Cronin recounts how O'Nolan "admired Kennedy enormously, the young and handsome President seeming to bring out in him a latent idealism and even a suspension of disbelief in the sincerity of politicians" (Cronin 1990: 257). He also intimates that O'Nolan was eager for a chance to meet Kennedy, as he asked Kavanagh a number of times whether he knew someone who had been invited to de Valera's garden party: "It became obvious that he would have liked to be invited. He wanted to meet Kennedy" (*ibid*). After Kennedy's assassination on November 22, 1963, O'Nolan was apparently very distraught and watched a good deal of television coverage of the event (*ibid*). The American President also shows up in the index of O'Nolan letters quite regularly, being featured more times (8) than de Valera (7) or Lemass (2) (2018: 589). The reason for such an interest in Kennedy was decidedly both personal and professional, as O'Nolan's last (unfinished novel), *Slattery's Sago Saga,* found inspiration for its plot in the Kennedy family. As stated in a letter to Patricia Connolly on May 8, 1965: "the finished book will turn out to be a comic but unmistakable attack on the Kennedy family. Dead President Jack will be let off lightly for undoubtedly he had some fine qualities, but the Pop is a crook and the surviving brothers contemptible hangers-on" (O'Nolan 2018: 497-8).[100]

Myles's coverage of the President's visit, which lasted from June 26 to 29, 1963, was not particularly exhaustive or detailed, but he certainly referenced Kennedy a number of times, especially in an attempt to contrast him with leading Irish politicians. The first instance occurred over a week after Kennedy's election as President on January 20, 1961:

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[100] Also on a letter to Cecil Scott of November 22, 1965: "Though never stated, the analogy with the Kennedy reign will not escape any reader over the age of 8. No censure whatever of the late J.F.K. will be implied but I do consider Old Joe a crook and the two Senator bostoons as lickspittle time-servers, eternally dining out on the late President's corpse" (O'Nolan 2018: 544). "Old Joe" was Joseph Patrick Kennedy (1888-1969), father of the dead President; the "two Senator bostoons" were Kennedy's brothers, Robert Francis Kennedy (1925-68) and Edward Moore Kennedy (1932-2009).

> Astute readers will be aware that my Astute Holiness has not yet issued bull, brief or pronouncement on the election of John Fitzgerald Kennedy to be President of the greatest show on earth. Here one discerns on my part prudence, a cunning watchfulness, a desire to know more. Comment will come in due time, and in a turgid flood. I predict that it will be most favourable, for Kennedy and myself have much in common. Both of us—and I intend no witticism—suffer from swollen heads. The name Kennedy (O Cinnéide) in Irish means 'head-clothes,' and denotes the bandage that is called for when prolonged and monstrously intricate thinking induces a cerebral oedema. (*CL,* February 1, 1961)

He would later claim, rather pejoratively about Eisenhower, that Kennedy "will have to be pretty bad if to be worse than his *efféte* predecessor" (*CL,* April 13, 1961). These comments corroborate Cronin's account and are also in line with O'Nolan's letters on the President. It was decidedly an unusually amiable portrait of a politician in the column. It was here that one of Myles's most common criticisms of the Irish political scene came to the fore: Irish politicians's old age. In relation to Kennedy's relative youth (he was 43 when elected), Myles conjectured that "those who would like to sneer would probably call the Kennedy Administration a Boy Scout Government. I wonder what does Feeny Fayl think? Our own revered President sits above in the Park in his 78th year. Mr. Traynor, Minister for Justice, is 75. Mr. MacEntee, Minister for Health, is 72" (*ibid*). In fact, the image of de Valera and Kennedy upon the latter's arrival in Dublin Airport on June 26 depicted very distinctively the political and cultural contrast which Myles kept bringing to the table: "Critics delighted in contrasting the sexy, youthful and smiling John F. Kennedy on his visit to Ireland in 1963 with the ageing and blind President de Valera as symbols of Ireland past and future" (Ferriter 2005: 555). For Myles, and for many Irish people, de Valera was a living symbol of the Rising, the War of Independence or the Civil War and, despite his modernizing political tendencies, so was Lemass. In a way, Kennedy's "youth, charisma and urbanity appealed in particular to a generation born after the Rising and Civil War which now felt ready to possess its inheritance. Better still, President Kennedy was a proud Irishman, a glorious illustration that perhaps one could be Irish and modern at the same time" (Kiberd 1996: 565). This duality between traditional Irishness and modernity at all levels was a central concern for O'Nolan,

as reflected in his love for the language and distrust of its political uses and usages. The President can indeed be seen as personifying "the brash, self-image of the new Fianna Fáil: he was young and handsome, he was wealthy and almost self-made; he was a conservative social reformer who favoured free enterprise" (Keogh 1994: 252).[101] Kennedy represented the political and economic charter of a new, expansive Ireland: "His visit—though this only became clear in retrospect—made Ireland safe for western-style consumerism: henceforth, foreign policy would be less independent, less sympathetic to decolonizing peoples and more securely locked within the American sphere of influence" (Kiberd 1996: 565).

Another instance in which Myles compared the President with his Irish counterparts came upon the news that Kennedy suffered from severe back pain. Myles was quick to wish him well: "All decent people pray that these are only temporary set-backs, for Kennedy is an excellent man" (*CL,* June 27, 1961). He later added that "in some quarters there were attempts made to denigrate him for appointing his inexperienced younger brother Attorney-General.[102] By Dad and that's one jeer that it will not lie in the mouth of people in this country to spew out. Our true sovereign here is King Nepos" (*ibid*). As always, he was referring to nepotism, which Myles thought to be part and parcel of Irish politics and a watermark of Lemass's political style. Ironically, Kennedy's CIA briefing had also profiled Lemass as prone to nepotism: "he is not averse to using political patronage to get things done" (qtd. in Keogh 1994: 250). The visit itself prompted little commentary, as few articles were published in the vicinity of the event. In 1963, *Cruiskeen Lawn* did not run for the whole of May and half of June and July; only a single column was published in August, and none in September or October. Cronin attributes this to quarrels with copy and illness (1990: 258). On July 6, Myles vandalized the journalistic furore generated by the visit, represented most notably in the "Enseánment" tendency of referring to the President as Seán. There was only an article, titled "Aw, Mister President!", published during the visit. Shaped as an open letter to Kennedy, he declared his "own duty to mark the President's card, for it is more than possible he may come again" (*CL,* June 28, 1963) by informing him of "convulsions and collapse in Ireland, the psychotic irresponsibility of our people as shown in history, the small heed given to my

[101] This new breed of charismatic Fianna Fáil politicians would be epitomized by future Taoisigh Lynch and Haughey, as well as by Donogh O'Malley (1921-68), Minister for Health (1965-6) and Education (1966-8) for the first Lynch Administration (1966-73).
[102] Robert F. Kennedy, who was Attorney General from 1961 to 1964.

innumerable warnings, the shameless preoccupation of our politicians with the baubles of office" (*ibid*). He then proceeded to welcome the President "to the western fastness which we mutually inherit" (*ibid*), recounted the history of the Kennedy tribe and told him of Newtownmountkennedy, a town in County Wicklow founded by one of his ancestors. In later years, Myles would return to the figure of the President, often in mockery of his reception amid Celtic fanfare.[103]

5.3.3.3 1965 general election

What with the republication of *At Swim-Two-Birds* and the publication of *The Dalkey Archive,* the composition of *Slattery's Sago Saga* and O'Nolan's personal difficulties in terms of health and finances, *Cruiskeen Lawn* came very close to being virtually discontinued during the early years of the 1960s.[104] Myles, however, seemed bent on persevering in his reports on Irish general elections, as the year 1965 featured an equally deep Mylesian account of the political proceedings at work. For the most part, his analysis remained ensnared in the column's traditional discourse of the 1950s, one which showed impatience, fatigue and apathy toward politics yet at the same time was steadfastly determined to counter Fianna Fáil's hegemonic ambitions and the feeble opposition of other parties.

Unlike on other occasions in 1965 and 1966, Myles did not fail to take note from the pages of the *Irish Times* of a key political event which took place at the beginning of the year: Lemass's diplomatic visit to Northern Ireland on January 15, where he was welcomed by Captain O'Neill, the Prime Minister of Northern Ireland.[105] The event was generally applauded by commentators, with the *Irish Times* wishfully declaring that the "meeting ends period of despondency" (*IT,* January 15, 1965) and both Premiers issuing a communiqué afterwards: "We have to-day discussed matters in which there may prove to be a degree of common interest, and have agreed to explore further what specific measures may be possible or desirable by way of practical consultation and co-operation" (*ibid*). Even though a few

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[103] See, for instance, *CL,* January 27, 1965 and January 21, 1966.

[104] See Appendix 2 for a detailed table showing the decline in publication from 1960 to 1965.

days later (January 25) O'Neill would caution the people of Northern Ireland and the Republic not to be too optimistic about the outcome of the Lemass-O'Neill meeting, he would visit Dublin a few days later, on February 9, thus completing their diplomatic contact. The visit was arranged by Whitaker, technically responsible for what was accounted on May 5 as a 4% growth in Irish GNP for 1965. Whitaker was at the time head of the Irish civil service and someone who knew O'Neill well. The meeting reflected Lemass's energetic disposition to "create a society that might conceivably prove attractive to others, both by improving economic and social opportunity, and by promoting a policy of 'detente' towards Stormont" (Lee 1989: 368).[106] Indeed, as Keogh indicates, "Lemass was the first Taoiseach to approach Northern Ireland not so much as a 'problem', but as a neighbouring state requiring the development of friendly relations" (1994: 287) even if, as Patterson (1999: 146) remarks, the Taoiseach was prone to including anti-partitionist propaganda in his speeches. A few days following the event, Myles launched a 3-day series devoted to the visit. Referring to it as the "Belfast romp" (*CL,* January 18, 1965), Myles first pointed out how once again foreigners were dealing with Irish affairs. He was referring to Lemass, whose Huguenot background was well known at the time and was the source of many Mylesian jokes. Later, he shrewdly pointed out that it was "the secrecy of the operation [...] what has caused an enormous mark in high places. Tanist [sic] MacEntee, for example—himself a native of Belfast—wasn't given as much as a fwhishper [sic]" (*ibid*).[107] The meeting was indeed planned in utmost secrecy, as it was apparently intended, as McCann notes (2015), as a private visit. Myles's first article provided an account which intensified the air of mystery surrounding the visit:

> The big black Mercedes sneaks out of Dublin in the early morning, with curled almost invisibly in the back a smallish dark man fingering 'The Northern Iron' by George Birmingham.[108] In front with the driver, taken by ignorant bypassers to be a 'helper', is Kenneth Whitaker, the arch-deacon of the civil service, about whom more anon. The

[106] See *CL,* February 25, 1957 (p. 249). Myles had put forward a similar proposal; that is, attracting Northerners by offering a better quality of life in the South.

[107] The relationship between Lemass and MacEntee, by the time the former became Taoiseach, was strained at best. In 1965, according to Feeney (2008: 221), Lemass announced that MacEntee would not be considered for a ministerial role if Fianna Fáil won the general election.

[108] Published in 1907, George A. Birmingham's *The Northern Iron* was a historical novel based on the 1778 Rebellion, also known as the United Irishmen's Uprising.

> great Jairmin [sic] automotive beast devours the miles. At Dundalk the eye of the driver mildly glances around at his passengers, wondering is there to be a stop, as is the rule with all Christians.[109] But no. Onward. (*CL,* January 18, 1965)

There were no further references to Whitaker in that particular article, but he resumed commentary of the event the following day, retaining the cloak-and-dagger atmosphere evoked by referring to the visit as "the infiltration by a lone Free Stater" (*CL,* January 19, 1965). After joking about Lemass's poker skills and his personal detective, Myles referred to Whitaker as a "whizz-kid" (*ibid*) and proceeded to comment on border smuggling:

> Apart from all that, there is an enormous mass of people who will bitterly oppose the ending of the border, and they comprise the clergy, public servants, doctors, layabouts, parliamentarians, botany students, journalists, girl scouts, BBC men, and old age pensioners. Have you guessed? I'm talking about the smuggling classes. (*Ibid*)

As Toby Harnden (1999) and Patterson (2013) indicate, border smuggling was a commonality during the period. Myles was intelligently categorizing the whole population as smugglers as a way to point at the growing economic differences between both countries. His new epithet for Northern Ireland was "The Sick Counties" (*CL,* January 19, 1965), evidence in itself of Myles's clear anti-partition sentiments. His next article, however, was conciliatory in tone, and suggested the opening of an embassy in Belfast for a further normalization of relations between North and South: "if we are to be friendly with County Belfast and the surrounding *Nordreich,* we should immediately set up an embassy there" (*CL,* January 20, 1965), and suggested MacEntee, as expected, to become the ambassador on account of his Northern origins and his old age.[110] By this point, it was clear that the respect and political consonance from Myles toward MacEntee, derived from O'Nolan's role as his

[109] Dundalk is the county town of County Louth. It is known to be a central point between Dublin and Belfast, located near the border to the south.

[110] In the same article, Myles criticized MacEntee's decision as Minister for Health to add fluoride to running water as a means to halt the early decay of children's teeth. MacEntee faced a number of objections on many fronts because of this measure. See Feeney (2008: 218-21) for further information on the episode.

personal secretary, was no longer extant: MacEntee is pictured in the column as the utmost representative, along with de Valera, of the mustiest variety of Irish politics, represented by the Fianna Fáil old guard.

Even if one can effortlessly appreciate a higher degree of assertiveness in his opinions as the 1960 progressed, there were still certain topics he was unable to cover in the column due to being potential causes for libel or because they were simply downright offensive to a particular individual or collective. Examples in this regard were discarded columns on the Irish UN-sponsored intervention in the Congo in 1961 or a 1965 set of columns on John Charles McQuaid: in both instances, the then Editors refused to publish the articles; in the latter case, it was argued that the columns contained "gross errors of fact which Myles refused to acknowledge" (Cronin 1990: 265).[111] Another example was the issue surrounding the remains of Roger Casement, which were repatriated to Ireland in 1965. A state funeral ceremony was held on March 1 and was attended by the entire political class of the country and over 30,000 people. De Valera, who attended the event as President of Ireland, declared in his speech that "each one of us will resolve that we shall do everything to work so that the people of that province [Ulster] and ourselves may be united in cooperation" (qtd. in Keogh 1994: 288). In lieu of using the *Irish Times* as a platform from which to denounce the Irish government's handling of the issue, Myles—or, rather, Flann O'Brien—resorted to sending letters to the editor of the *Sunday Telegraph*. A first letter, titled "Whose Bones at Glasnevin Cemetery?", suggested that Casement's body had been mislaid in the British cemetery of Pentonville prison and someone else's remains had been repatriated instead.[112] In later letters (April 9 and 11), his claims turned more controversial and political. In the first suggested that "the re-opening of the Casement was a calculated election prank by the Government party" (O'Brien 2018: 472), while in the second letter, titled "A Skeleton in Party Cupboard?", O'Nolan criticized the "hole-and-corner furtiveness of this whole episode [...] as an example of ghastly necrophilia messed up with religion and patriotism" (*ibid:* 473) while later adding that

[111] On August 17, 1960, O'Nolan sent a letter to Brian Inglis telling him that he had "written stuff about the Irish Army's Imperial exploit in the Congo but this was all utterly killed" (qtd. in Cronin 1990: 239).
[112] A debate followed in which many conjectured whether Casement's remains were, in fact, those of murderers Hawley Harvey Crippen or Frederick Henry Seddon, who were buried next to Casement.

> at the material time only one man in the country—Premier Lemass—knew that a lightning general election was about to be sprung. The milder English reader may be shocked that the 50-year-old grave of a noble Irishman should be plundered, or purported to have been plundered, to rope the dead man in to be 'one of the boys' in a brazen election jamboree. (*Ibid:* 473-4)

It was a profile of Lemass as a Machiavellian politician, but the circumstances in which the event took place, the grandiosity of the funeral and de Valera's own ideological intervention in the debate—despite his non-political role as President—were indeed suspicious to Myles. As a whole, Lemass's handling of the 1965 general election was not well received in the column; as always, its author saw through Fianna Fáil's ideological twists and turns very easily. For instance, on March 11 Myles laudably reported that Lemass had decided to turn down an invitation by TCD to confer him doctoral honors. He declared his disposition to "forget some utterly small, mean and false things he said over the years, the odd disreputable deed to which he was party, and I overlook even his psychotic concern for the immediate parliamentary welfare of his relatives" (*CL,* March 11, 1965), although he later implied that Lemass's decision was politically motivated, as a TCD honorary degree, "a diploma from this alien Elizabethan firm" (*ibid*), would be seen as an affront to Catholics and to his party supporters. Over a month before he had also criticized the Department of Local Government's decision to promote housing in the Ballymun area, with the different buildings being named after the Rising leaders. Myles feared that "it will inevitably and quickly become a new concrete slum, like Crumlin and Ballyfermot, and workers drafted there can face a lifetime of poverty by having a substantial slice of their earnings earmarked for extortionate bus fares" (*CL,* February 8, 1965). In retrospect, Myles's fears seemed to have materialized, as "failure to back up the project with adequate facilities and services meant they became a symbol of acute social and economic depression and enduring controversy" (Ferriter 2005: 564).[113]

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[113] A July 23, 2016 feature in the *Irish Times* by O'Toole, "Ballymun: From High Stakes to Sink Estate", commented on the Ballymun scheme and how Myles's prophecy had become a reality by the early 1980s.

As the election came closer, Myles's references to the Dáil dynasties started to reappear in the column, as well as his usual misgivings with uneducated public representatives. Claiming that "still another general election means that Oul Erin is encountering still again a recurring crossroads at which political slosh and bosh will be ladled out for the benefit of the indigenous natives" (*CL,* March 30, 1965), he advanced his intention of conferring the title of "NLTLOASD" (Never Lifted The Latch Of A School Door) to public representatives instead of the usual "MMAACR" (Minding Mice At A Crossroads). More interestingly, Myles offered a few thoughts on Lemass, the general election and the 1966 celebrations of the 50th anniversary of the Rising:

> Recently Mr. Seán Lemass reminded his hearers that 1966 will be the 50th anniversary of 1916, and will be 'a glorious year for Ireland'. I won't discourse on the unbelievable cheek of Lemass in appropriating 1916 as a Feeny Fayl party prop but the remark seems to verify my own view that the immediately approaching election will be indeterminate, resulting in another Labour F.G. arrangement. (*Ibid*)

In a way, Myles's statements were somewhat hyperbolic: it was true that Fianna Fáil, from its leading governmental position, led the 1916 celebrations; however, as Tobin notes, "the invocation of the spirit of the Rising seemed anachronistic" and while "there was much traditional speechifying", there was "also a considerable amount of reflection and self-criticism" (1984: 146-7), some of which came from Lemass himself, whose political ideology relied heavily on avoiding "the politics of populism" (Keogh 1994: 294) and projecting the image of a dynamic and efficient government. Myles, however, was pursuing his reading of Fianna Fáil's ideology as "the link or nexus between discourses and power" (Eagleton 1984: 210); that is, the party's appropriation of the leaders and originators of the nationalist movement as a means to legitimize their aspirations to newly renewed political hegemony. Furthermore, for the first time in the history of the column, Myles's predictions were wrong: under Brendan Corish's leadership, Labour had recently discarded the idea of a coalition

government[114] and decided not to support either party, preferring instead to pursue an independent course in the Dáil. Consequently, Fine Gael's poor results—also constrained by internal disagreements over the party's economic modernization—was unable to overcome Fianna Fáil's exhaustive electoral apparatus. After the election on April 7, it was announced three days later that Lemass was able to form a majority government with 72 seats as opposed to Dillon's 48.

The previous article was the last one in the column to offer coverage of an Irish general election, as Jack Lynch's election as Taoiseach in 1966 following Lemass's retirement did not take place until November 10, several months after O'Nolan's death. It was not Myles's final comment on the election itself, however. The new government was appointed on April 21, and less than a week later one of Myles's shrewdest articles on the new ideology espoused by the Lemass Administration was published. The article was a response to a manifesto issued by the Industrial Development Authority which highlighted the need for further industry in order to complete Irish economic development. With the aim of ascertaining that such was the case, Myles decided to visit the offices of Córas Tráchtála, the Irish Export Board, a state-based institution designed to efficiently market and export Irish products abroad. Upon arriving at the office, Myles was welcomed by an unidentified man with "a nice cut of a suit on his back", who rapidly set out to describe the aims and purposes of the Board: "Yes, *sir,* he said, we're modern here. We go out after the business. And we don't believe in talking to foreigners in Leeside English. Apart from French, German and that sort of thing [...] I know Turkish, modern Greek, Kurdish, Hindi, Ukranian, Russian, Swahilli" (*CL,* April 26, 1965). Myles was undoubtedly picturing the concept of the well-rounded American entrepreneur, an individual properly equipped to succeed in business. After being asked by Myles if he spoke Irish, the man unequivocally responded: "Listen, my good man, I spent seven years with the Brothers. I wore out ten of those instruments they call the leather. Those sadist zombies aspirated me and eclipsed me. When I got my release I applied for a military pension" (*ibid*). This time he was describing his prototype of a Fianna Fáil politician, as they were usually pictured by Myles as being unable to speak Irish and with a preference for military titles despite dubious martial skills. The man proceeded to show Myles the Córas

[114] See *IT,* March 26, 1965. Corish would take a different course in the 1973 general election by entering a coalition with Fine Gael's Liam Cosgrave.

Tráchtála business model by playing a recording on which two American voices were having a conversation:

> —Listen, bud, I'll give you all that in writing. We're not hoods or scrufflers here, we're straight guys. You pay practically nothing.
>
> —But say, back home we're taught to look at both sides of the note. See? No pizazza here?
>
> —No pizazza. Make a million bucks here in a week and you can take it home in a crate.
>
> —Well, somebody shoulda told me about this Ireland. Do we have to wear harps, or spend hours in the church or… well… you know?
>
> —Listen pardner [sic] I'm gonna get you straight on one thing. This is the new Ireland, see? We don't mess up religion with business. We'll do a deal with niggers, seamen, kangaroos, bustlers from the Wild West and even limeys. Do you understand English? (*Ibid*)

After listening to the conversation, Myles asked whether the cost of such an economic program would impact the Irish taxpayer. The man's reply was ambiguous, but added: "look what he gets? Prosperity, a rising industrial index and the fattest gross national product in Western Europe" (*ibid*). The implications of these comments are wide, and serve to acknowledge that Myles was attuned to the new course Irish politics and economy were taking. In itself, the article was a reflection of the changing realities in Irish economic life: "business management and marketing techniques were professionalized; financial analysis was introduced on a large scale; research councils for economic and industrial affairs attained a new importance" (Foster 1989: 579). This was also true of political realities, as the 1961 cabinet already contained representatives of this new economic state of affairs, such as Haughey, Lemass's son-in-law, who "represented the new face of a Fianna Fáil party with a close affinity to the younger Irish business community, the people with the tailor-made clothes and the white cuffs [who] had nothing in common with Seán Moylan's 'ass and cart' owners" (Keogh 1994: 292). In a way, the article can be read as a comic jeer at, and

underhand critique of the government's radical swing in ideology, as well as its use of Córas Tráchtála, a state company and thus an inherent part of the state apparatus, as a means to perform said ideological maneuvers. For Myles, the new Fianna Fáil ideology felt forced and dramatic, and his suggestion that politicians "don't mess up religion with business" underscored a reference to Lemass, who was known to have pursued a policy of estrangement from the Church;[115] indeed, Myles's article brought to the fore a concept which has been consistently associated with the Lemass era: that of the "corporate state" (Murphy 1997; Lee 1989). The column concluded on a somber note: Myles put forward a proposal to import "a million niggers and settle them in Connacht" with the aim of producing cotton at American rates and allow for Ireland to be "adopted as the 51st of the United States" (*CL,* April 26, 1965).[116]

5.4 Conclusions

This chapter has traced Myles's political commentary in *Cruiskeen Lawn* from the election of the Second Inter-Party Government (1954-7) to Lemass's second term as Taoiseach (1965-6), a period framed in the backdrop of economic expansion into Europe and the world. The first main section, devoted to Costello's final term as Taoiseach during the 1954-7 government, also places focalized attention on a number of events of political nature which took place within the 15th Dáil: Ireland's admission to the United Nations in 1955, the height (1956-7) of the IRA Border Campaign which extended into the 1960s, as well as general considerations of the government's economic policy as seen by Myles. The second main section specifically addresses Fianna Fáil's resurgence and the reinstating of the party's hegemony, which would last until the early 1970s with Taoiseach Lynch. Different subsections within this period tackle with special emphasis the publication and enactment of

[115] See Lee (1989: 160-1). At the beginning of his career, Lemass's political concessions to the Catholic Church were virtually nonexistent; in fact, he virulently opposed it: "Whenever the Irish people came within sight of achieving their national independence the full political power of the Church was flung against them, and forced them back. That political power must be destroyed if our national victory is ever to be won".

[116] In the context of the American Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, both signed into law by President Johnson, Kennedy's successor, Myles's use of the word "nigger" and O'Nolan's racist undertones were growing in frequency. Long (2014: 184-5) aptly examines a row surrounding the script of the theatrical adaptation of *The Dalkey Archive*, in which O'Nolan insisted on using the word "nigger" against the advice of others.

the First Programme for Economic Expansion (1958), an almost word-for-word application of Whitaker's essay on potential Irish economic improvement, "Economic Development" (1958), and the 1959 presidential election, which saw the end of de Valera's political career and Lemass's ascension to the office of Taoiseach, as well as the referendum on Proportional Representation. A subsection on the Lemass Era (1959-66) includes a detailed discussion of Myles's intervention in the political debate surrounding both the 1961 and 1965 general elections and the official visit of the then President of the United States, John F. Kennedy (1963).

That Myles's imagination and analytical depth were waning at the turn of the 1950s is irrefutable. The articles discussed throughout the chapter show a generalized sense of impatience and bitterness which is nowhere to be seen in the more imaginative periods of the 1940s and early 1950s. Myles, however, duly compensated the lack of creative potential with constancy and an absolute dedication to his readers. Instances of Myles's relentlessness can be found in his detailed discussion of the presidential election and the PR debate or the Kennedy visit, topics to which he returned with energetic frequently. Other events, however, were scantily discussed; one would have expected a more meticulous examination of the IRA border campaign or the First Programme for Economic Expansion, both of which were, in a way, tangentially connected to O'Nolan as a northerner and civil servant. Likewise, the years 1965-6 evidence a dramatic decrease in the rate of publication, with the consequent near-absence of political articles. Except for a brief mention of Lemass in January 14,[117] 1966 mostly featured reprints and no articles of political nature. Repetitiveness and paucity of publication notwithstanding, the later period of the column evidences that, politically and socially speaking, Myles's conservatism remained unaltered or, if anything, perhaps subtly incensed by his weariness of the political establishment. This was reflected in his economic vision: other than criticizing the inability of the Inter-Party Government to escape the worn-out economy of protectionism, Myles refused to advance any particular solution to Ireland's troubles, nor showed any special enthusiasm for Lemass's radical policies of foreign investment and industrial expansion. Perhaps more clearly than any of the previous periods, this chapter shows Myles's independent and nonaligned political perspectives: for him,

[117] See *CL,* January 14, 1966: "Keep leading with Lemass".

neither the Fianna Fáil postwar protectionist ethos nor Lemass's modernizing agenda were viable options for the optimal management of the country. Kiberd has aptly perceived the contradictions inherent in O'Nolan in this regard: "a senior civil servant by day and […] a savage satirist by night" (2005: 286). Interestingly, he adds that "if the Anglo-American world viewed the intelligentsia as a loyal and logical extension of the establishment, the European world has generally preferred to [cast] intellectuals in the role of a perpetual and vigilant opposition" (*ibid*). This is, in cultural materialist terms, the central question to be answered in relation to O'Nolan's politics; that is, whether he was a subversive or complying force through his literary column regarding the Irish political establishment through his literary column. This period unambiguously shows Myles as standing on the border between subversion and compliance, between conforming to the new directions in Irish politics and resenting change and evolution.

The relevance of the present chapter within the *Cruiskeen Lawn* canon is paramount. Of the few scholars that have consistently analyzed the column in detail, none have turned their attention to the later period of the 1950s and 1960s, with the result that part of Myles's body of work remains critically underdeveloped. For instance, Coulouma (2011, 2015), while shrewd and precise in her commentary on the linguistic and social features of *Cruiskeen Lawn,* mostly cites from the published compilations, none of which engage at length with the column's final days. As stated at the beginning of this dissertation, the most complete account of *Cruiskeen Lawn* published to date is Taaffe's *Ireland Through the Looking Glass: Flann O'Brien, Myles na gCopaleen and Irish Cultural Debate* (2008), but the focus of said study is largely restricted to the early 1940s. Other academic productions have appeared over the years but, excepting the present chapter, the later period of *Cruiskeen Lawn* still necessitates further analysis.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The history of *Cruiskeen Lawn,* and indeed that of O'Nolan and his Myles persona, is one fraught with incongruities. Setting aside the ambiguities inherent in Myles's fluctuating personality and background, the act of writing the column for over twenty-five years in itself was a contradiction. Not only had early critics repeatedly downsized the achievement of composing a cultured, daily newspaper column as opposed to the arguably nobler and more profitable undertaking of writing novels, but his pay-per-column rate was also far from satisfactory for most of his career; not to mention that the column was visibly interfering with his day job as a civil servant. On top of that, O'Nolan's insecurities on both a personal and professional level made him fall prey to the opinions, oftentimes harsh, of his contemporaries—Kavanagh often spoke of him and the column in terms of "that poor little na Gopaleen" (qtd. in Cronin 1990: 211). Why, then, did he persevere in its composition instead of attempting to revisit *The Third Policeman* or trying his hand at writing another successful satire in the line of *The Poor Mouth*? With the exception of a short number of stories, essays and plays, most of O'Nolan's production from the early 1940s to the early 1960s—when he somehow resumed his traditional writing career—was centered around achieving a consistent publication rate for *Cruiskeen Lawn.* This sense of ineluctable contradiction present in O'Nolan's career reverberates on a thematic level in *Cruiskeen*

Lawn. In his famous essay *Shooting an Elephant* (1936), George Orwell lamented the frustrations of serving as a police officer in British-controlled Burma: "All I knew was that I was stuck between my hatred of the empire I served and my rage against the evil-spirited little beasts who tried to make my job impossible" (Orwell 2000: 42). I believe these feelings of discomfiture fit O'Nolan and *Cruiskeen Lawn* perfectly: as a civil servant in the newly-birthed State, he had come to hate the fabricated political scaffolds raised to elevate the heroes of the Civil War, but he was also constantly patronizing and condescending toward those he served and defended, the Plain People of Ireland. Indeed, if one has to think about the most contradictory aspect within all of *Cruiskeen Lawn*, Myles's treatment of Irish politics is a likely answer.

Throughout the lifespan of the column, O'Nolan was witness to twenty-six years' worth of Irish political developments on a number of levels. First—and perhaps of generally underemphasized importance—as a civil servant and Private Secretary to high-ranking Fianna Fáil ministers, O'Nolan was responsible for the application of many of those developments or was close, physically (during Dáil debates or Custom House meetings) and psychologically (as a member of the service and colleague of high officers), to the environment in which they were envisaged. Second, as a citizen, and thus recipient of said policies, and as a member of the Dublin intelligentsia who frequented well-informed circles and engaged in heated across-the-bar conversations with fellow intellectuals. Third, as a writer of a newspaper column who had to work alongside political material on a daily basis (Smyllie's editorials, for instance, or Aknefton's *Pinpointing Politics*) and was therefore subject to an uninterrupted flow of information on all things social and political. Such an intimate relation with all that was political and administrative would reasonably call for a congruent set of political ideas, even if covert or merely hinted at. However, as seen throughout this dissertation and concluded in the pages that follow, a thorough study of *Cruiskeen Lawn* from a political standpoint hinders the possibility of any tailored reading or systematized vision of O'Nolan's politics. Even if some loose threads can be salvaged amid the deliberately tangled chaos of the column, any overview of political material in *Cruiskeen Lawn* necessitates meticulously tracing the existing irregularities and inconsistencies in Myles's whimsical commentary in order to assemble the resulting set of varied viewpoints.

This dissertation has attempted to recover O'Nolan's politics through a close reading of the entirety of the *Cruiskeen Lawn* columns in relation to the historical, social and political context in which they were produced. This process has been carried out by dividing the history of *Cruiskeen Lawn* into three different historical periods: Years of Emergency (1939-45), Years of Stagnation (1945-54) and Years of Expansion (1954-66). This division, admittedly artificial and not prompted by the column in itself, is nevertheless generally perceived by historians as safe and convenient when discussing mid-twentieth century Ireland. Chapter 2 of this dissertation has offered a detailed yet concise historical background to further contextualize the analysis of the columns. A number of individual articles have been selected for each period as constituting O'Nolan's political thought during every particular phase of the column and Irish history. They have been selected among hundreds of other articles for their inclusion, implicit or explicit, of political material.

Such a wide-ranging analysis, however, would be of little substance without the consistent support of a solid theoretical background. This dissertation as a whole has been built on the theories of cultural materialism, a current of socio-political and literary thought initiated by Marxist philosopher Raymond Williams (1984) and formally conceptualized by Alan Sinfield and Jonathan Dollimore (1994). As sketched in Chapter 1, cultural materialist analysis seeks to explore the relations between a work of art and the material conditions of its production. Throughout this dissertation *Cruiskeen Lawn* has been situated in conversation with the historical period in which it was conceived and composed on an almost daily basis. I have attempted to elucidate the dynamics of interaction between the column and the reality of its time, and how it sought to subvert but also to legitimize the socio-political status quo to which it was both directed and subjected. I have supported this cultural materialist view of *Cruiskeen Lawn* with like-minded theories by renowned scholars close to Irish literary and historical realities such as Kiberd (1995), Eagleton (1995) and Gibson and Platt (2006). These have informed my dissertation on both conceptual and structural levels while at the same time serving as a source for inspiration in terms of my theoretical scope.

In my discussion of *Cruiskeen Lawn* during the Emergency in Chapter 3, I have mainly attempted to discern Myles's real thoughts on World War II through the fog of censorship and the early Irish language columns. As a nation isolated both physically and

diplomatically, the de Valera Administration was keen on enforcing a policy of neutrality of opinion directed at political pronouncements and national publications by means of a no-nonsense, state-powered censorial mechanism. As an *Irish Times* columnist, Myles was inevitably subjected to such censorial pressures; one could go as far as to say that, as a popular opinion column in an openly pro-Allied publication, *Cruiskeen Lawn* must have been among the most heavily scrutinized texts in Emergency Ireland. Even if later columns revealed his abhorrence of genocidal Nazi Germany, my exhaustive reading of the Emergency *Cruiskeen Lawn* has revealed that attempts were made by Myles to circumvent the censor in a bid to get his opinion across. Perhaps more importantly, however, Myles's thoughts on Irish home affairs were not as deliberately withheld. Many of the recurrent political themes in *Cruiskeen Lawn* originate at this point, especially the administrative ineptitude of the ruling class, Myles's sneers and jibes at the political instrumentality and hypocrisy of Irish culture (most notably the Irish language and Gaelic myths), his dissatisfaction with contemporary models of governance or his suspicions regarding the imitative adoption of foreign planning measures without a background analysis of the Irish case. The columns analyzed in this section are nevertheless relevant for bringing into contention the figure of de Valera as father of the Constitution and leader of the Irish people. As opposed to the overall majority of Irishmen and women, Myles is often reluctant to place his trust in de Valera given the Taoiseach's archaic cultural values and the impracticality of his "ideal Ireland"—this becomes very apparent in the analysis of the articles leading up to the 1943 and 1944 general elections. In spite of this, Myles did not necessarily align himself with the opposition; in fact, both Fine Gael and General Mulcahy are mercilessly criticized on several occasions. Actually, Myles goes as far as to condone Fianna Fáil's policy of neutrality and openly back MacEntee's anti-planning vituperativeness. This leaves us with a confusing picture of Mylesian Emergency politics: did he support Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael, or neither? One is thus forced to acknowledge the sophistic and meandering nature of Myles's political commentary and his refusal, as Myles himself would put it, to "back any horse" while at the same time foreshadowing an innate sense of social and economic conservatism.

His postwar and early 1950s material, which has been examined through Chapter 4, persists in this line. Even when freed from the hindrance of the Emergency Powers Order of 1939, O'Nolan was still restrained by his civil service position in terms of public

pronouncements on politics and the state. This was about to change, as Myles's increasingly derisive rhetoric would culminate in 1953 in his forced resignation from the service. The late 1940s were devoted to an examination of Ireland's postwar challenges, in terms of both international and domestic affairs. During this particular period, Myles seemed increasingly preoccupied with Ireland's isolationism, which became reflected in the country's conspicuous absence from the San Francisco Conference, despite the valuable underground assistance provided to the Allies during the war. The column was also concerned with the Potsdam Conference and the USA as self-appointed leader and moral compass of the world, as he was remarkably critical of Truman's atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Myles sees Ireland's forced internationalization through the Marshall Plan as a hypocritical move on the part of a de Valera who had kept Ireland out of the war on the grounds that an international conflict was not a desirable prospect for a newly-created small country. Domestically, the present period can easily be seen as one of the most active in the column in terms of political engagement, especially toward the discontinuity of the Fianna Fáil hegemony and Costello's coalition. Myles's response to the 1945 presidential election and the postwar partition debate betrayed a desire to state his preferences concealed behind forced non-partisanism: a bias toward O'Kelly, his former Minister, can be perceived in the case of the presidential election debate, whereas partition is hinted at being a timeworn and thorny state of affairs. In the case of the 1947 Health Act, Myles persevered in his opposition to socialized medicine and rejected the inevitable tax raise implied in the Fianna Fáil policy.

The years that followed, shaped by the 1948 and 1951 general elections and the key events targeted by Myles, evidence—perhaps more transparently than at any other point in his journalistic career—the unclubbable nature of O'Nolan's political commentary. Throughout both general elections, Myles unequivocally demonstrates a refusal to side with any of the given parties. It is true that he is violently critical of Fianna Fáil on occasion, but this is far from being synonymous with a pro-Fine Gael or pro-coalition agenda. In fact, while he was not as critical of either Costello's declaration of the republic in 1949 or the Mother and Child debacle of the early 1950s, he dismissed the former as the new Taoiseach's whimsical obsession with legal terminology and the latter as a mere extension of the Fianna Fáil health planning policies he had ravaged in the past. It is noteworthy, and also another example of Myles's ideological contradictions, that he engaged in an intellectual dispute with

Alfred O'Rahilly, publicly seen as the posterboy of the Catholic right and thus biased against the scheme, instead of pursuing his own line of conservative-minded attacks toward the socialization of medicine. The 1951 general election reinforced Myles's sense of disillusionment with Irish politics, as neither of the options seemed viable for him. While an exhaustive analysis of this period suggests closer ideological affinity with Fianna Fáil, his aversion to a continuation of de Valera rule is made very clear early on, and especially after his denunciation of the An Tóstal festival in *Kavanagh's Weekly* as a cultural fabrication merely designed to attract American tourism and spending.

Myles's individualist and ambiguous views on Irish politics continued into the 1950s and 1960s, as scrutinized in Chapter 6. This is clearly seen in the columns pertaining to the 1954 general election, which concluded with the formation of Costello's Second Inter-Party Government. This time around, Myles reverts to his anti-Fianna Fáil discourse ("K.T.O. & K.T.O.) while at the same time placing some hope on the new, more ideologically consistent, coalition government. This sense of hope rapidly turned to disappointment, as the new coalition government's financial practices revisited protectionism and failed to introduce economic innovation in the state. Myles also condemned Ireland's entry into the United Nations, an organization which he had always repudiated, as well as the tarnishing of the national and political atmosphere by the IRA Border Campaign and the rebirth of Civil War passions. Ultimately, Myles felt, the second Costello Administration was as severely unequipped as the traditional Fianna Fáil circle to deliver Ireland to economic prosperity. In fact, during the years of expansion Myles would constantly allude to Ireland's underdevelopment with respect to other nations, especially America. If this was so, one would expect, at least, a certain degree of ideological closeness with those in Ireland striving for economic expansion and innovation; namely, Lemass and Whitaker. Herein lies one of Myles's most glaring political contradictions: this affinity is nowhere to be seen. While he undoubtedly welcomed de Valera's retirement from active politics after his failure with the 1958 PR referendum, the columns of the period do not evidence a modicum of excitement or expectation upon Lemass's appointment as Taoiseach, or the officialization of Whitaker's "Economic Development" as the First Programme for Economic Expansion. In fact, a generalized feeling of aloofness and fatigue hovers over the late 1950s and 1960s *Cruiskeen Lawn* political columns. Barring the official visit of President Kennedy, whom he deeply

admired, Myles's political commentary during the 1961 and 1965 suffered from the tried and tested yet worn-out formula of mocking the Dáil dynasties and lamenting the uneducated and garrulous nature of Irish politicians.

That Myles traced the development of mid-twentieth century Irish politics with a dedication amounting to surgical precision is hard to be disputed. To a greater or lesser degree, no party, political figure or piece of policy escaped his attention. The column became a site of contention where laudatory mention or tacit approval were rare while denunciation and verbal abuse became increasingly paramount. The question that arises, then, is how is one to give a logical, coherent shape to all the political material analyzed throughout this dissertation, especially in terms of O'Nolan's own ideology as a postwar Irish citizen and public intellectual. Early in his *Cruiskeen Lawn* career, Myles deprecated the idea that he should be held accountable for his opinions in print: "Am I then to be held to everything I have said in writing? *Everything*? It is a disquieting destiny, ill reward for my services to mankind" (*CL,* July 24, 1945). This can be read as the author's clear warning not to identify Myles with O'Nolan or to take Myles's statements at face value, to which one must necessarily add the many caveats against the Myles-O'Nolan ambivalences espoused by critics over the years and discussed throughout previous chapters. Notwithstanding this, I believe that, with a few compromises, isolating O'Nolan's ideological position by a close reading of the columns is indeed possible.

First, the *Cruiskeen Lawn* articles betray a lack of identification on the part of O'Nolan with any major political party. Publications such as journals and newspapers often align themselves with a particular ideology, which is in turn represented by a given party. In the Ireland of the time, this was the case of *The Irish Press,* a publication funded by de Valera and Fianna Fáil, or the *Irish Independent,* which was essentially pro-Fine Gael. Writers for newspapers will often support said ideological position, as was the case with Smyllie himself, whose Protestant, unionist and increasingly progressive views surfaced strongly in his opposition to Franco's Catholic dictatorship or his pro-Allied discourse during World War II. O'Nolan's voice as Myles within the *Irish Times* and the broader Irish political and social atmosphere was staunchly and irreverently independent. He did not ascribe himself to the paper's main ideological line—as was the case with the late 1940s debate around socialized

medicine—and also refused to be identified with a Fianna Fáil or Fine Gael agenda, or with any other political party, for that matter. The ideological differences between the two major parties were minimal, and there was little enthusiasm on the part of Myles for the Labour Party, Clann na Poblachta or Sinn Féin, among others. Even if at times one encounters certain ideological coincidences or indications that O'Nolan's ideology was closer to either party, the majority of his political *Cruiskeen Lawn* career was dedicated to sabotaging rather than constructing upon the ideologies and policies that any given party put forward in the Dáil. All seems to indicate that, as an intellectual but also a "man in the street", Myles basically desired a proper management of the economy and the country regardless of the party or figure in power. Despite this, none of mid-twentieth century Irish leaders was the object of Myles's admiration: they are invariably pictured as breathing relics of a recent past which was violent and bloody. Only President Kennedy, a charismatic young Irishman unspoiled by the conflict of independence and adorned with the glamor of American presidential life, warranted his respect and approval.

Thus, all of the above leads me to conclude that O'Nolan did not display public preference for any of the Irish political parties operating at the time of his *Cruiskeen Lawn* career. While his family background, his education, his job and even certain individual articles seem to indicate that Fianna Fáil would be his main preference, I find sufficient evidence to the contrary in his dismissal of some of the party's main tenets, his disdain for their hegemonic presence in Irish politics and the tribal-like system of succession promoted to secure control over the administration of post-independence Ireland.

Second, and perhaps more importantly, I have detected throughout my examination of the columns the presence of social conservatism as constituting the author's ideology. As stated in the Introduction to this dissertation, some critics have pointed out the fact that O'Nolan privately upheld a strong conservative outlook on social matters throughout his entire life. However, other than stressing the author's flagrant misogyny, few have gone beyond O'Nolan's biography to sustain claims of his conservatism. My analysis of the *Cruiskeen Lawn* columns allows me to re-emphasize that O'Nolan's ideological position is best described as "social conservative". My argument is based on a number of aspects or events commented on by Myles in the column; namely, the planning and health debates of

the late 1940s and early 1950s and the activation of the Irish economy after Lemass's appointment as Taoiseach. For instance, after the introduction of the Beveridge Plan in Britain, attempts were made in Ireland to promote social and infrastructural planning through the National Planning Exhibition in 1944, which Myles heavily satirized in the column. So were Bishop Dignan's proposals, the 1947 Health Act and, to a lesser extent, the Mother and Child Scheme, all of which advocated the unprecedented creation of a solid state-funded health system in the style of the British NHS. Myles's criticisms were, for the most part, based on the idea that implementation of said measures would consequently imply a tax raise which citizens were ill equipped to face. He also hinted at the dangers of state centralization, likening the proposed concept of social security to communism and dictatorship. However, and as stated by Curran (2001) and Wills (2007), Myles did not offer any plausible alternative or potential solution to the tax problem. This denial of social progress in terms of a fairer medical system would likewise point to a brand of economic liberalism congruent with a low taxation system and the promotion of private enterprise as a substitute of an all-encompassing, state-controlled welfare system. This was nevertheless far from the case, as Myles often complained of Lemass's privatization policies and showed little interest in the Taoiseach's attraction of foreign companies and fortunes to Ireland. Some of his commentary in this respect was undoubtedly xenophobic and racist, as was his opposition to the postwar planning of social initiatives. His economic philosophy seems to lean toward economic conservatism, with the caveat that Lemass's liberal agenda during the 1960s failed to have resonated with him. His social philosophy as perceived in the columns, however, can be clearly defined as social conservatism, which is in agreement with several critics and his biographer.

From this turbulent picture of an author's political views in a newspaper column spanning twenty-six years emerges, rather confusingly, the image of a man of the people, a twentieth-century Irish intellectual who presents himself as a polyhedron of ideologies and beliefs: in his career as a journalist, O'Nolan made use of the Myles persona to, in a way, fuse himself with Ireland, to assert the views of the people by speaking in absolutes and to fight what he perceived as the authoritarian drive of a country bent on isolation and self-determination at all levels. Myles embodied the Plain People of Ireland, a blurry-faced member of a multifaceted collective who feared for the future of his country if left in the

hands of negligent administrators. However, O'Nolan took pains to make clear that he was not an average member of the Plain People: he was an intellectual, someone who could see through the charades of politically motivated cultural constructs and believe in an idea, such as neutrality or partition, without falling into the trap of party allegiance. I resolutely believe that O'Nolan forged Myles as a learned version of the everyman, a dissident literary-journalist fictional construct infused with a life of his own, someone through whom the real person could safely catalyze his permanent disatisfaction with Irish politics, while being exempt from the consistency of discourse which is often required in serious debates about the state of the nation.

Even if it is not possible to offer a transparent, clear-cut vision of O'Nolan's politics as represented by Myles's *Cruiskeen Lawn,* I can nevertheless hope that it opens future and innovative lines of study with respect to the author himself and the column as a whole. I believe it would be profitable, if perhaps unpopular, for these new directions to disassociate with the more formal and theoretical aspects of O'Nolan's work and should rediscover the social dimension in O'Nolan's writing through exhaustive engagement with history and the archive. One of the central aspects of *Cruiskeen Lawn* which this dissertation has not tackled is the question of the columns written in Irish and whether this affects O'Nolan's politics in any particular way beyond the question of linguistic instrumentality in the political realm. Other minor texts, such as his contributions to other newspapers and journals, or even his personal letters, have only been explored insofar as they concerned the topic of the present dissertation. They doubtlessly call for a more focalized and specialized analysis than what has been hitherto attempted. For instance, the Irish political atmosphere at the time of O'Nolan's column-writing was intimately interrelated with the Catholic Church. Even if several observations of O'Nolan's religious temperament have been made, a detailed, comprehensive study of O'Nolan's works and the Church has yet to appear; so is a major political overview of his narrative and dramatic writings. Be that as it may, all of the above, as well as recent archival developments and the international furor in the shape of conferences and academic publications, as well as popular debates and celebrations, surrounding this enigmatic figure, makes me strongly believe that the time is ripe for fresh approaches to the work of the man of many masks, Brian O'Nolan, Flann O'Brien, Myles na gCopaleen.

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APPENDIX 1. IRISH CABINETS, 1938-66

1. Government of the 10th Dáil (1938-43): Fianna Fáil

<table>
<tr><th>Position</th><th>Holder</th></tr>
<tr><td>Taoiseach</td><td rowspan="2">Éamon de Valera</td></tr>
<tr><td>Minister for External Affairs</td></tr>
<tr><td>Tánaiste</td><td rowspan="2">Seán T. O’Kelly</td></tr>
<tr><td>Minister for Local Government and Public Health</td></tr>
<tr><td>Minister for Justice</td><td>P. J. Ruttledge</td></tr>
<tr><td>Minister for Industry and Commerce</td><td>Seán Lemass</td></tr>
</table>

Minister for Finance	Seán MacEntee
Minister for Agriculture	James Ryan
Minister for Defence	Frank Aiken
Minister for Education	Thomas Derrig
Minister for Lands	Gerald Boland
Minister for Posts and Telegraphs	Oscar Traynor

Changes during The Emergency:

<table>
<tr><th>Position</th><th>Holder</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">September 8, 1939</td></tr>
<tr><td>Minister for Education</td><td>Seán T. O’Kelly</td></tr>
<tr><td>Minister for Local Government and Public Health</td><td>P. J. Ruttledge</td></tr>
<tr><td>Minister for Supplies</td><td>Seán Lemass</td></tr>
<tr><td>Minister for the Co-ordination of Defensive Measures</td><td>Frank Aiken</td></tr>
<tr><td>Minister for Lands</td><td rowspan="2">Thomas Derrig</td></tr>
<tr><td>Minister for Posts and Telegraphs</td></tr>
</table>

Minister for Justice	Gerald Boland
Minister for Defence	Oscar Traynor
September 16, 1939	
Minister for Finance	Seán T. O'Kelly
Minister for Industry and Commerce	Seán MacEntee
September 27, 1939	
Minister for Education	Éamon de Valera
Minister for Posts and Telegraphs	Patrick Little
June 18, 1940	
Minister for Education	Thomas Derrig
August 15, 1941	
Minister for Local Government and Public Health	Éamon de Valera
August 18, 1941	
Minister for Industry and Commerce	Seán Lemass

Minister for Local Government and Public Health	Seán MacEntee

2. Government of the 11th Dáil (1943-4): Fianna Fáil

Position	Holder
Taoiseach	Éamon de Valera
Minister for External Affairs	
Tánaiste	Seán T. O'Kelly
Minister for Finance	
Minister for Industry and Commerce	Seán Lemass
Minister for Supplies	
Minister for Local Government and Public Health	Seán MacEntee
Minister for Agriculture	James Ryan
Minister for the Co-ordination of Defensive Measures	Frank Aiken

<table>
<tr><td>Minister for Education</td><td>Thomas Derrig</td></tr>
<tr><td>Minister for Justice</td><td>Gerald Boland</td></tr>
<tr><td>Minister for Defence</td><td>Oscar Traynor</td></tr>
<tr><td>Minister for Posts and Telegraphs</td><td>Patrick Little</td></tr>
<tr><td>Minister for Lands</td><td>Seán Moylan</td></tr>
</table>

3. Government of the 12th Dáil (1944-8): Fianna Fáil

<table>
<tr><th>Position</th><th>Holder</th></tr>
<tr><td>Taoiseach</td><td rowspan="2">Éamon de Valera</td></tr>
<tr><td>Minister for External Affairs</td></tr>
<tr><td>Tánaiste</td><td rowspan="2">Seán T. O'Kelly</td></tr>
<tr><td>Minister for Finance</td></tr>
<tr><td>Minister for Industry and Commerce</td><td rowspan="2">Seán Lemass</td></tr>
<tr><td>Minister for Supplies</td></tr>
<tr><td>Minister for Local Government and Public Health</td><td>Seán MacEntee</td></tr>
</table>

Minister for Agriculture	James Ryan
Minister for the Co-ordination of Defensive Measures	Frank Aiken
Minister for Education	Thomas Derrig
Minister for Justice	Gerald Boland
Minister for Defence	Oscar Traynor
Minister for Posts and Telegraphs	Patrick Little
Minister for Lands	Seán Moylan

Changes after the 1945 presidential election, the creation of the Department of Health and the Department of Social Welfare, respectively:

Position	Holder
June 19, 1945	
Tánaiste	Seán Lemass
Minister for Finance	Frank Aiken
January 22, 1947	
Minister for Local Government	Seán MacEntee

<table>
<tr><td>Minister for Health</td><td rowspan="2">James Ryan</td></tr>
<tr><td>Minister for Social Welfare</td></tr>
<tr><td>Minister for Agriculture</td><td>Patrick Smith</td></tr>
</table>

4. Government of the 13th Dáil (1948-51): coalition government between Fine Gael, Labour Party, National Labour Party, Clann na Talmhan and Clann na Poblachta

Office	**Holder**
Taoiseach	John A. Costello
Tánaiste	William Norton
Minister for Social Welfare	William Norton
Minister for Education	Richard Mulcahy
Minister for External Affairs	Seán MacBride
Minister for Lands	Joseph Blowick
Minister for Posts and Telegraphs	James Everett
Minister for Agriculture	James Dillon

Minister for Finance	Patrick McGilligan
Minister for Justice	Seán Mac Eoin
Minister for Defence	Thomas F. O’Higgins
Minister for Industry and Commerce	Daniel Morrissey
Minister for Local Government	Timothy J. Murphy
Minister for Health	Noël Browne

Changes after the death of Timothy J. Murphy, cabinet reshuffle and resignation of Noël Browne, respectively:

Position	**Holder**
May 3, 1949	
Minister for Local Government	William Norton
May 11, 1949	
Minister for Local Government	Michael Keyes
March 7, 1951	
Minister for Justice	Daniel Morrissey

Minister for Industry and Commerce	Thomas F. O'Higgins
Minister for Defence	Seán Mac Eoin
April 12, 1951	
Minister for Health	John A. Costello

5. Government of the 14th Dáil (1951-4): Fianna Fáil

Position	Holder
Taoiseach	Éamon de Valera
Tánaiste	Seán Lemass
Minister for Industry and Commerce	
Minister for Health	James Ryan
Minister for Social Welfare	
Minister for Finance	Seán MacEntee
Minister for Agriculture	Thomas Walsh
Minister for External Affairs	Frank Aiken

Minister for Education	Seán Moylan
Minister for Justice	Gerald Boland
Minister for Defence	Oscar Traynor
Minister for Posts and Telegraphs	Erskine H. Childers
Minister for Lands	Thomas Derrig
Minister for Local Government	Patrick Smith

6. Government of the 15th Dáil (1954-7): coalition government between Fine Gael, Labour Party and Clann na Talmhan.

Position	**Holder**
Taoiseach	John A. Costello
Tánaiste	William Norton
Minister for Industry and Commerce	William Norton
Minister for Education	Richard Mulcahy
Minister for Lands	Joseph Blowick

Minister for Justice	James Everett
Minister for Agriculture	James Dillon
Minister for Defence	Seán Mac Eoin
Minister for Posts and Telegraphs	Michael Keyes
Minister for External Affairs	Liam Cosgrave
Minister for Social Welfare	Brendan Corish
Minister for Finance	Gerard Sweetman
Minister for Local Government	Patrick O'Donnell
Minister for Health	Tom O'Higgins

Changes after the creation of the Department of the Gaeltacth and assignment of non-acting Minister for the Gaeltacht:

Position	**Holder**
July 2, 1956	
Minister for the Gaeltacht	Richard Mulcahy
October 24, 1956	

Minister for the Gaeltacht	Patrick Lindsay

7. Government of the 16th Dáil (1957-61): 8th Government of Ireland (1957-9), Fianna Fáil

Position	Holder
Taoiseach	Éamon de Valera
Tánaiste	Seán Lemass
Minister for Industry and Commerce	
Minister for Health	Seán MacEntee
Minister for Finance	James Ryan
Minister for External Affairs	Frank Aiken
Minister for Agriculture	
Minister for Justice	Oscar Traynor
Minister for Local Government	Patrick Smith
Minister for Social Welfare	

Minister for Lands	Erskine H. Childers
Minister for Education	Jack Lynch
Minister for the Gaeltacht	
Minister for Posts and Telegraphs	Neil Blaney
Minister for Defence	Kevin Boland

Changes after Seán Moylan's appointment as Minister for Agriculture through the Seanad, Mícheál Ó Móráin's appointment as Minister for the Gaeltacht and different cabinet reshuffles after Moylan's death:

Position	Holder
May 16, 1957	
Minister for Agriculture	Seán Moylan
June 26, 1957	
Minister for the Gaeltacht	Mícheál Ó Móráin
November 16, 1957	
Minister for Agriculture	Frank Aiken
November 27, 1957	

Minister for Agriculture	Patrick Smith
Minister for Local Government	Neil Blaney
Minister for Social Welfare	Seán MacEntee
December 4, 1957	
Minister for Posts and Telegraphs	John Ormonde

8. Government of the 16th Dáil (1957-61): 9th Government of Ireland (1959-61), Fianna Fáil

Position	**Holder**
Taoiseach	Seán Lemass
Tánaiste	Seán MacEntee
Minister for Health	
Minister for Social Welfare	
Minister for Finance	James Ryan
Minister for External Affairs	Frank Aiken

Minister for Justice	Oscar Traynor
Minister for Agriculture	Patrick Smith
Minister for Lands	Erskine H. Childers
Minister for Industry and Commerce	Jack Lynch
Minister for Local Government	Neil Blaney
Minister for Defence	Kevin Boland
Minister for the Gaeltacht	Mícheál Ó Móráin
Minister for Posts and Telegraphs	Michael Hilliard
Minister for Education	Patrick Hillery

Changes after the creation of the Department of Transport and Power:

Position	**Holder**
July 27, 1959	
Minister for the Gaeltacht	Gerald Bartley
Minister for Lands	Mícheál Ó Móráin
Minister for Transport and Power	Erskine H. Childers

9. Government of the 17th Dáil: Fianna Fáil

Position	Holder
Taoiseach	Seán Lemass
Tánaiste	Seán MacEntee
Minister for Health	
Minister for Agriculture	Patrick Smith
Minister for Defence	Gerald Bartley
Minister for Education	Patrick Hillery
Minister for Finance	James Ryan
Minister for External Affairs	Frank Aiken
Minister for the Gaeltacht	Míchéal Ó Móráin
Minister for Lands	
Minister for Industry and Commerce	Jack Lynch
Minister for Justice	Charles Haughey
Minister for Local Government	Neil Blaney

Minister for Posts and Telegraphs	Michael Hilliard
Minister for Social Welfare	Kevin Boland
Minister for Transport and Power	Erskine H. Childers

Changes after Patrick Smith's resignation and the appointment of Brian Lenihan as Minister for Justice:

Position	**Holder**
October 8, 1964	
Minister for Agriculture	Charles Haughey
Minister for Justice	Seán Lemass
November 3, 1964	
Minister for Justice	Brian Lenihan

10. Government of the 18th Dáil (1965-9): 11th Government of Ireland (1965-6), Fianna Fáil

Position	**Holder**

Taoiseach	Seán Lemass
Tánaiste	Frank Aiken
Minister for External Affairs	
Minister for Agriculture	Charles Haughey
Minister for Defence	Michael Hilliard
Minister for Education	George Colley
Minister for Finance	Jack Lynch
Minister for the Gaeltacht	Mícheál Ó Móráin
Minister for Lands	
Minister for Health	Donogh O'Malley
Minister for Industry and Commerce	Patrick Hillery
Minister for Justice	Brian Lenihan
Minister for Local Government	Neil Blaney
Minister for Posts and Telegraphs	Joseph Brenan
Minister for Social Welfare	Kevin Boland
Minister for Transport and Power	Erskine H. Childers

No further changes occurred before April 1, 1966 (O’Nolan’s death).

APPENDIX 2. CRUISKEEN CATALOGUED

This information featured below has been extracted from Catherine Ahearn's online catalog, *Cruiskeen Catalogued* (2018), and reproduced with kind permission of the author. The graph below represents the number of *Cruiskeen Lawn* columns published per month and year. The blank spaces in 1940 account for periods before the first and last columns, respectively.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
1940										10	15	12	**37**
1941	14	12	13	13	14	11	14	13	26	27	25	25	**205**
1942	27	24	26	25	26	26	26	26	26	27	25	24	**307**
1943	26	24	26	25	25	26	27	14	26	26	24	25	**293**
1944	26	25	26	22	26	26	13	10	26	25	26	24	**274**

1945	27	24	26	25	27	25	26	15	20	27	26	20	**287**
1946	22	24	25	25	27	25	26	13	13	10	10	12	**194**
1947	5	0	13	13	13	13	13	7	13	14	11	13	**127**
1948	12	12	13	11	7	13	12	13	13	12	13	13	**143**
1949	13	11	13	10	7	13	12	13	13	13	13	11	**141**
1950	13	11	13	8	14	13	11	7	11	11	7	12	**130**
1951	11	12	11	11	14	7	10	11	9	12	2	15	**124**
1952	12	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	**27**
1953	5	7	6	5	6	9	26	21	12	22	20	24	**162**
1954	25	20	22	13	22	19	16	24	22	24	18	19	**243**
1955	18	20	7	10	17	16	13	17	22	25	16	6	**186**
1956	12	19	24	8	19	14	16	25	15	25	11	14	**201**
1957	12	24	25	15	22	20	23	15	21	21	16	23	**236**
1958	9	14	24	11	3	16	15	16	16	21	0	15	**159**
1959	25	19	12	15	18	13	4	17	15	12	3	4	**159**
1960	22	15	20	5	22	24	6	11	13	5	16	10	**168**
1961	12	18	4	8	6	7	9	15	19	10	11	11	**129**
1962	6	6	6	8	3	9	11	7	5	10	9	7	**87**
1963	8	8	6	1	0	5	6	6	1	0	9	8	**51**
1964	10	5	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	**23**
1965	14	12	9	8	4	0	0	0	6	7	0	13	**73**
1966	9	3	12	1									**25**
													Total: 4,032